



NIGHTLIGHT LULLABIES DERBY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
NOVEMBER 2025



Royal School
for the Deaf Derby

Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nightlight Lullabies Derby was a journey into the heart of parenthood—capturing the lullabies and profound joys that cross all cultures and communities. Developed by Murmuration Arts in partnership with Derby Museum and Art Gallery, this heritage project brought deaf and hearing families together to share their memories, create new works of art, and reimagine whose voices belong in our historical record.

At its core, the project asked: How do we lull our children to sleep? The answers revealed a tapestry of experiences spanning Nigeria, Iran, Ghana, Ireland, Pakistan, India, and Derby itself, told in spoken words, song, British Sign Language, and Visual Vernacular.

The project's success lay in genuine partnership and extended engagement. Murmuration Arts spent twelve months building relationships—attending parent groups, visiting deaf social evenings, and earning trust. The Royal School for the Deaf Derby and Action Deafness unlocked access to deaf families and young people. Derby Family Hubs reached diverse local families and removed financial barriers to participation. Derby Museums created a bridge between heritage institutions and communities who had never visited before.

The creative heritage outputs tell their own story. Twenty-one hearing mothers crafted 'A Lullaby for Derby'—recorded in audio and British Sign Language. Forty-one deaf students and parents developed 'The Signing Mother,' a Visual Vernacular film. Sixteen deaf young people and ten museum volunteers trained as oral and video historians, learning that their own stories constitute heritage worth preserving.

The impact was profound. One young deaf participant realised he could be a father himself. Another enrolled in college after working on the film shoot to study tv and film makeup. Museum volunteers gained professional skills that shifted their understanding of whose voices matter. Parents formed lasting friendships and created legacies for their children. A six-week exhibition at Derby Museum and Art Gallery (MAG) featured five bespoke installations and achieved 100% positive feedback. At Derby Festé, a large-scale projection, live performance and exhibition reached 7353 people. Twenty-eight oral and video histories were archived. Thirteen podcasts and six vlogs now extend the project's reach online.

Most significantly, the project created infrastructure for lasting change. Derby Museums gained new skills and began planning future co-created projects. Family Hubs are organising museum visits. Young deaf people met deaf professionals and discovered new career possibilities.

The project demonstrated that genuine co-design requires extended time, authentic power-sharing, and deep trust-building. The results: 46% of participants and 63% of volunteers identify as D/deaf, disabled, or neurodivergent; 57% of staff identify similarly; 56% of participants identify as global majority. These represent a fundamental shift in who gets to tell stories about heritage.

Nightlight Lullabies proves that creative heritage work can be a vehicle for social change. When we create space for voices historically excluded from the record, we don't just enrich our archives—we transform our understanding of what heritage means and who it serves.



OUTPUTS SUMMARY

Partners

Derby Museum and Art Gallery (MAG)
Derby Festé
Beckett Family Hubs Derby
Action Deafness
D-Youth Hub
The Royal School for the Deaf Derby
Communication Unlimited
Culture Derby
Derby City Council Penguin
PR Derby Deaf Club

Oral History

1 training session with Oral History Society
1 training sessions with Murmuration Arts
4 mentoring sessions with trainees
10 Derby Museum Volunteers trained and mentored
20 Oral Histories recorded

Video History

3 staff training sessions with Murmuration Arts
5 training sessions with students
16 deaf students trained
8 Video Histories recorded

Archives

13 Oral Histories deposited at Derbyshire Records Office
8 Video Histories deposited at Media Archive for Central England (MACE)
1 Lullaby deposited at Derbyshire Records Office
1 Visual Vernacular film deposited at MACE

Lullaby Recording

6 workshop sessions
21 hearing mothers and 21 children in creative writing workshops
A Heritage Lullaby for Derby audio recorded:
<https://www.murmurationarts.co.uk/derby-lullaby/> A Heritage Lullaby for Derby signed film version:
<https://www.murmurationarts.co.uk/derby-lullaby/>

Visual Vernacular Film

6 workshop sessions
41 deaf students and parents in devising workshops
The Signing Mother recorded:
<https://www.murmurationarts.co.uk/signing-mother/>

Audio Soundtrack

Lulled to Sleep edited from oral histories:
<https://soundcloud.com/user-804191193/lulled-to-sleepderby>

Exhibition

Derby Museum & Art Gallery for 6 weeks
24 Museum Volunteers and Murmuration staff in Deaf Awareness Training.
67 at Private view including 15 deaf attendees
Exhibition of 5 bespoke installations with 6096 audiences
'A Lullaby for Derby' crescent moon featuring the lullaby
'The Signing Mother' daffodil bedside lamp featuring the visual vernacular film
'Lulled to Sleep' mobile featuring parents good night whispers
Parents Signs' vlogs screening
'A Lullaby for Derby' signed song screening

OUTPUTS SUMMARY

Deaf Student Mentoring

Visual Vernacular filming and editing training x 2 sessions
Video Mapping x 1 session
Guided Exhibition and Private View visit
Guided Derby Festé visit
8 deaf students mentored

Celebration event

Derby Festé
Presentation of 2 outdoor installations with 8840 total audiences:
'The Signing Mother' large-scale projection of the visual vernacular film at Derby Museum of Making - 1149 visitors
Nightlight Lullabies Exhibition - Festé alone 338 visitors
'The Singing Mother' performances of The Lullaby For Derby - 7353 audience on streets
15 people at BSL Tour

Digital assets

13 podcasts edited from 20 Oral History interviews:
<https://www.murmurationarts.co.uk/podcasts/>
6 vlogs edited from 8 Video History interviews:
<https://www.murmurationarts.co.uk/vlogs/>
'A Lullaby for Derby' signed song: <https://www.murmurationarts.co.uk/derby-lullaby/>
'Lulled to Sleep' soundtrack: <https://soundcloud.com/user-804191193/lulled-to-sleepderby>
'The Signing Mother' film: <https://www.murmurationarts.co.uk/signing-mother/>
Behind the scenes exhibition setup film:
<https://www.instagram.com/reel/DPoKBdCIOR2TG-sf03EbsKz9MGQvu8svBAXTUw0/>
Documentary film: <https://www.murmurationarts.co.uk/evaluation2025/>

New staff

Derby-based deaf Filmmaker / Editor
Derby-based deaf Performers x 2
Derby-based deaf Workshop Facilitator
Derby-based Composers / Singer / Songwriters x 2
Derby-based BSL Interpreters x 8
Company Manager
Marketing Manager (maternity cover)
Installation Fabricator
Office Intern
Derby Crew x 2
Derby PR Agency

Marketing

We achieved strong multi-platform reach and engagement, with over 75,000 total views, plays, and interactions across social media, press, and partner channels. On Instagram, posts reached 5.7k people and generated 27.8k views, while Facebook content gained 7.4k views and was shared by partners such as Derby Museum, Derby City Council, and Visit Derby, extending reach to over 20k followers. BBC Radio Derby featured the project to approximately 19,000 listeners, and press coverage through Penguin PR reached more than 5,000 readers. Podcasts and vlogs generated over 8,000 online views and 250 audio plays, complemented by partner listings on over ten arts and heritage websites. Direct marketing via museum and magazine mailouts reached over 6,500 subscribers, with 2,000 leaflets distributed locally.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Community Engagement & Representation

- Achieved exceptional diversity: 56% global majority; 46% of participants and 63% of volunteers D/deaf, disabled, or neurodivergent
- 12-month residency model proved highly successful for trust-building with marginalised communities
- Created lasting infrastructure connecting Derby Museum, Family Hubs, and Deaf organisations

Skills Development & Capacity Building

- Museum volunteers gained professional oral history skills for long-term collecting legacy
- Volunteers shifted understanding of whose voices constitute heritage
- Young deaf people developed transferable communication skills and expanded career aspirations
- Museum staff gained confidence welcoming deaf visitors; now practising BSL in daily briefings

Institutional Transformation

- Museum reconsidering gallery spaces for family-friendly experiences and planning co-created projects
- Previously underutilised projection equipment now integrated for future programming
- Museum reached significant new audiences: deaf visitors, multigenerational families
- Beckett Family Hub now organising museum visits with their groups

Participant Impact

- Parents developed confidence, formed friendships, and created tangible legacies for their children
- Young deaf people's confidence noticeably grew; one realised he could become a successful parent
- Intergenerational connections formed between young deaf people and deaf parents
- Parents applied new reflective practices to their parenting

Historical Record & Representation

- Communities under-represented in historical records are now permanently archived
- 100% of interviewees came to understand the importance of their stories as historical records
- Large-scale public projection and performance gave prominence to work by and for local communities

Co-Design & Authentic Partnership

- Deaf consultant's influence transformed delivery through genuine authority to shape decisions
- Adapted workshop delivery models were created based on participant needs
- Museum staff described Murmuration planning as 'absolutely first class'

Public Perception Change

- 100% positive visitor feedback; reports of transformed perceptions of deaf and hearing parenting
- Visitors gained awareness of visual communication's power for inclusion
- Private view brought deaf and hearing communities together in shared celebration

Organisational Learning

- Company Manager role generated transformative systems for project management and operations
- Developed replicable model for extended community residency
- Demonstrated genuine co-design requires extended time and shared authority, not brief consultations
- Creative heritage work can be vehicle for social change through genuine partnership.