

**HEART
OF
THE
NATION**



**MIGRATION
MUSEUM**

MIGRATION AND THE MAKING OF THE NHS



Introduction

This pack has been created to support the Migration Museum's exhibition *Heart of the Nation: Migration and the Making of the NHS*. This exhibition launches around the 75th anniversary of the creation of the National Health Service (NHS). Based on personal stories from NHS workers who migrated from around the world, these learning resources will help your students see how migration and the NHS have always been linked and how migration has shaped the NHS we see today.

The NHS was created after the Second World War and its mission was to make healthcare available to everyone for free. For hundreds of years previously Britain's healthcare had been supported by migrants, particularly from Ireland and Central and Eastern Europe. The new and ambitious NHS needed workers on a scale never seen before in Britain. After the Second World War, there weren't enough medical professionals in Britain to staff the new health service, so Britain actively recruited healthcare workers from across its current and former colonies. This pack tells their stories, alongside stories of people from around the world who have created, shaped and sustained the NHS at all levels over the past 75 years.

Discover the lives of Allyson Williams, Don Sydney, Mae Appleton and Nitha Naqvi. Use our fact files to find out their stories; where they were born, about their families and how they ended up working for the NHS. Then colour in images of them, created by illustrator Jess Nash based on photographs.

ALLYSON WILLIAMS

Allyson came to Britain in **1969** from **Trinidad and Tobago**, a country in the Caribbean over 4,000 miles away. She came to train as a **nurse** in the NHS and worked at the **Whittington Hospital** in London in.



In 1974 Allyson met her husband Vernon Williams, who was one of the founding members of the **Notting Hill Carnival**. Vernon took Allyson to workshops where other people from the Caribbean made **costumes** – it was a way of sharing creativity and celebrating culture.

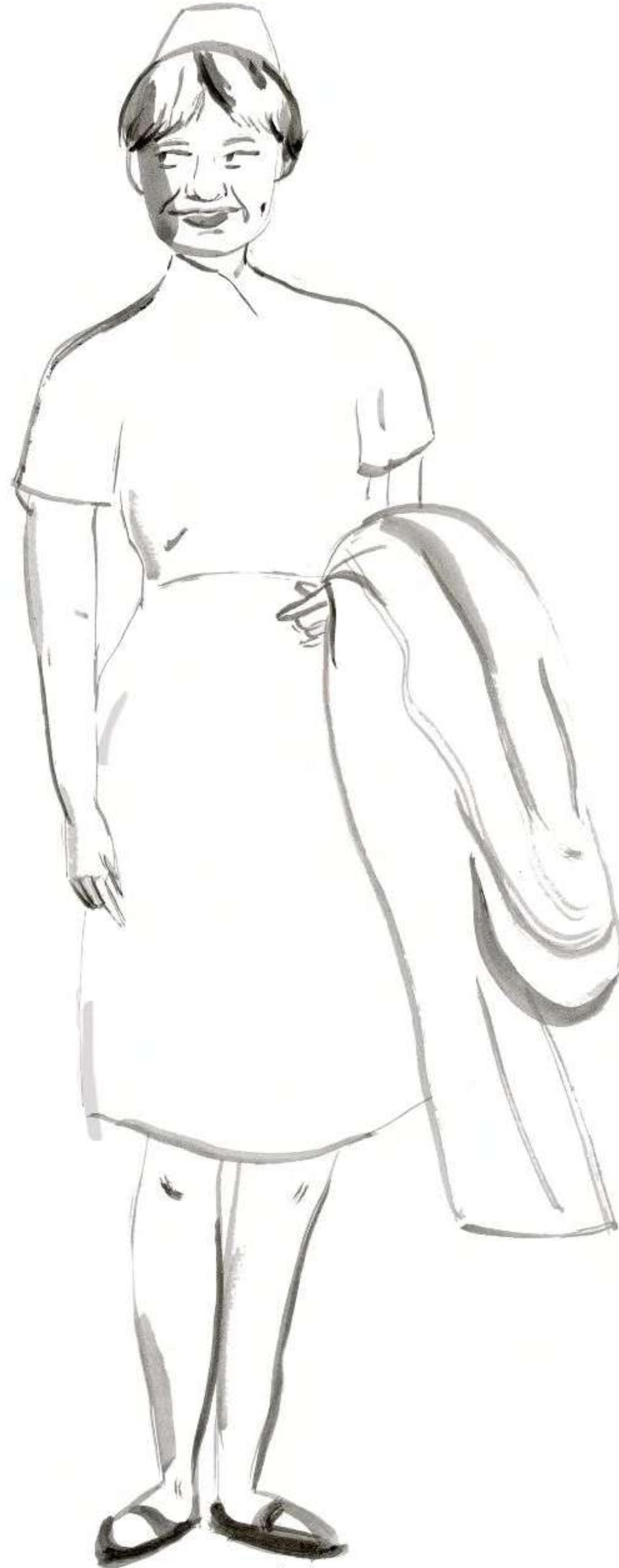
They formed a Carnival band called **Genesis** in the 1980s, which Allyson still runs with her daughter today!



Allyson was homesick at first, so she made friends from her training course and from hospital. She found other people who had migrated to Britain from across the world to make friends with. She also made the most of living in a vibrant city by going out to parties, clubs and music venues.

EVERYDAY HEROES

ALLYSON WILLIAMS



Country of origin:

Year arrived in Britain:

Job:

Hobbies

⚡ DON SYDNEY ⚡

Don Sydney was born in **Trinidad and Tobago** in **1940**. He arrived in **Plymouth, England** on a ship in **January 1961**.



Moving to an area of the UK in the 1960s that was not very diverse, Don experienced racism from some patients and members of the public. However, he made sure not to let the prejudice and ignorance of others bother him as he focused on achieving his goals.



Don was a military Cadet in Trinidad and joined the **army reserve** in the UK in 1962. He eventually rose to the **rank of Major**. He met and married his wife Carol, a midwife, in 1966 and bought their home in Grays in Essex where he raised his family.



He worked as a **mental health nurse** in Trinidad but he wanted to gain more experience in the UK. He applied for jobs and got a nursing post in **South Ockendon Hospital in Essex**. Don lived and worked in the nursing home attached to the hospital, and at the time he was the only Black man working there.

Now retired, Don offers his services to schools as a mentor, having previously qualified as a teacher.

EVERYDAY HEROES

DON SYDNEY



Country of origin:

Year arrived in Britain:

Job:

Hobbies

MAE APPLETON

Mae Appleton is a **midwife** that came to England from the **Philippines** in the **1960s**. She came with her friend Tanny, and on the first night it was so cold that they couldn't get to sleep - they both had to wear hats and gloves in bed to get warm!

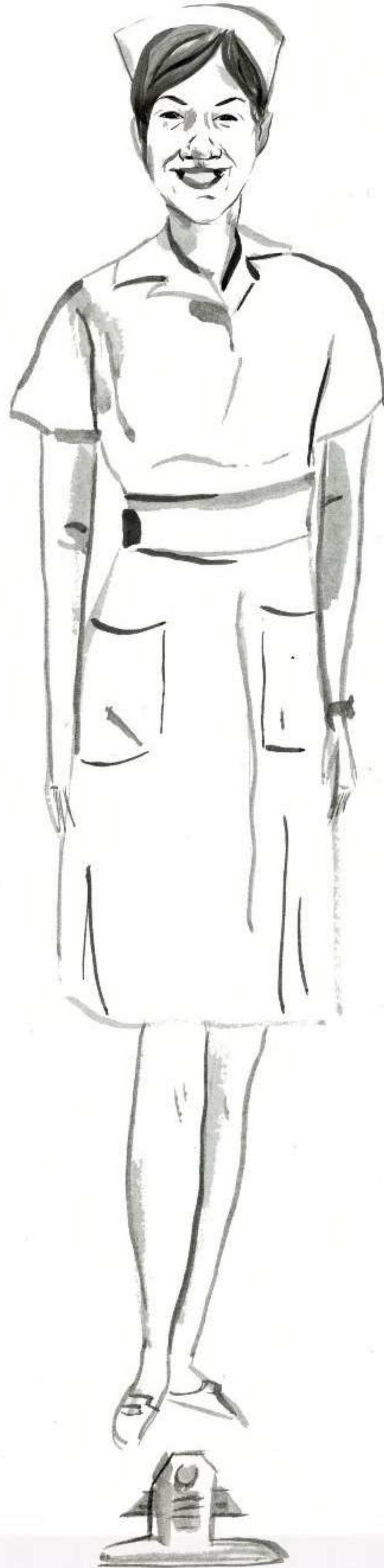


Mae retrained as a nurse helping look after older people, which she continued to do until retirement. She met her husband while working alongside him on the hospital wards. They had two children together.

Most people that Mae met in hospital didn't know what the Philippines was like, so she **taught them about its culture**, putting on dances with costumes with other Filipino nurses. There was a large network of nurses placed in hospitals around the country, so Mae **travelled** and made lots of friends.

EVERYDAY HEROES

MAE APPLETON



Country of origin:

Year arrived in Britain:

Job:

Hobbies

NITHA NAQVI

Nitha Naqvi and her sister were born in the hospital where her mum was working, in Wigan near Manchester. Her dad Nayar and mum Nasreen came here in the late 1960s and early 1970s from Pakistan.



They had fantastic birthday parties in the hospital canteen, and Nitha always felt at home while in the hospital because she knew the staff and their families.

She remembers a great childhood – although many would think it was weird that she lived in hospitals until she was nine years old. However, there were many other children also living in hospitals, because lots of junior doctors were people who had migrated to the UK from all over the world.

Nitha was inspired by watching her parents and spending so much time in the hospital, so when she grew up she became a doctor too! Nitha is a very specialist heart-doctor for children.

EVERYDAY HEROES

NITHA NAQVI



Country of origin:

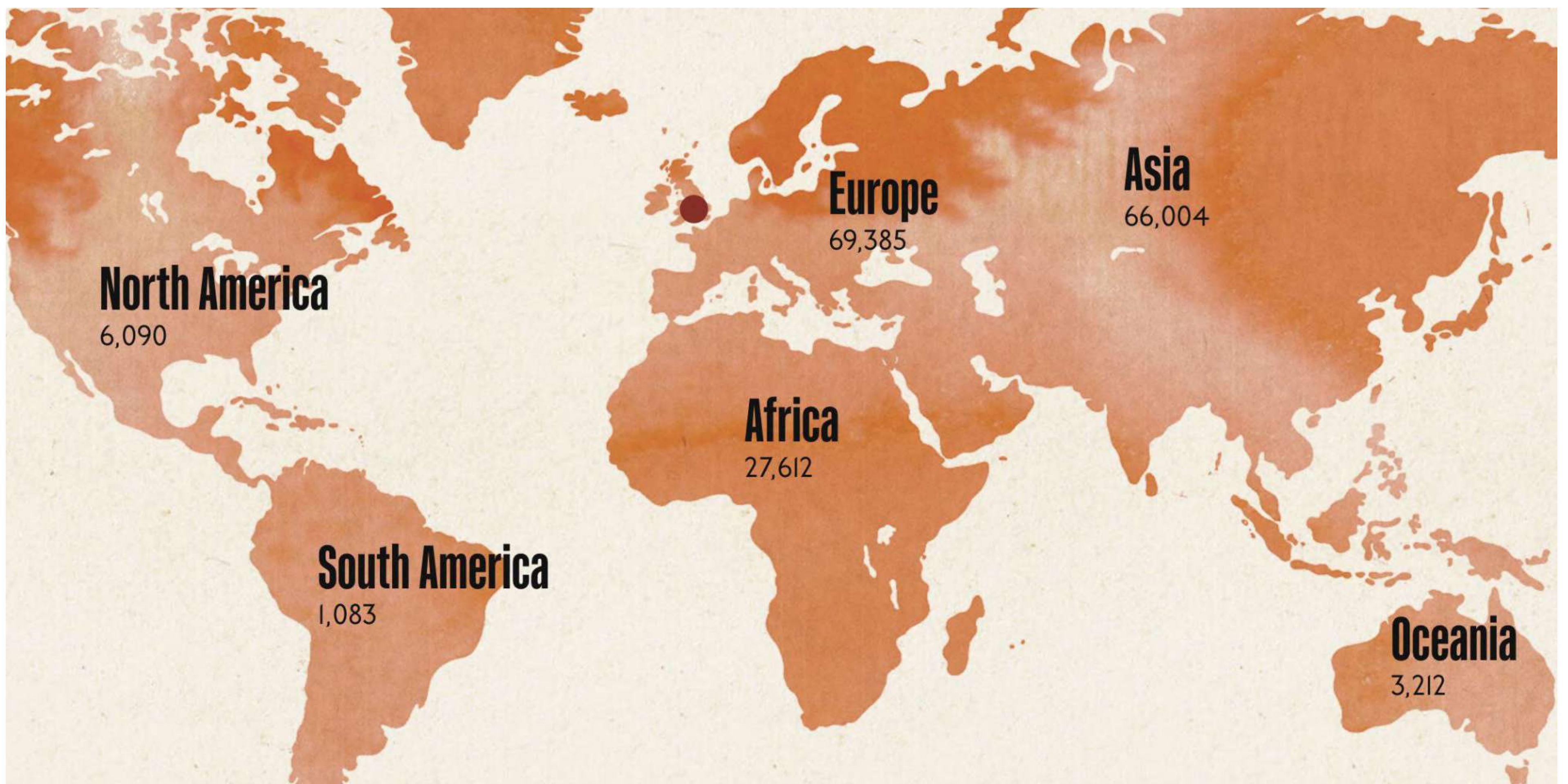
Year arrived in Britain:

Job:

Hobbies

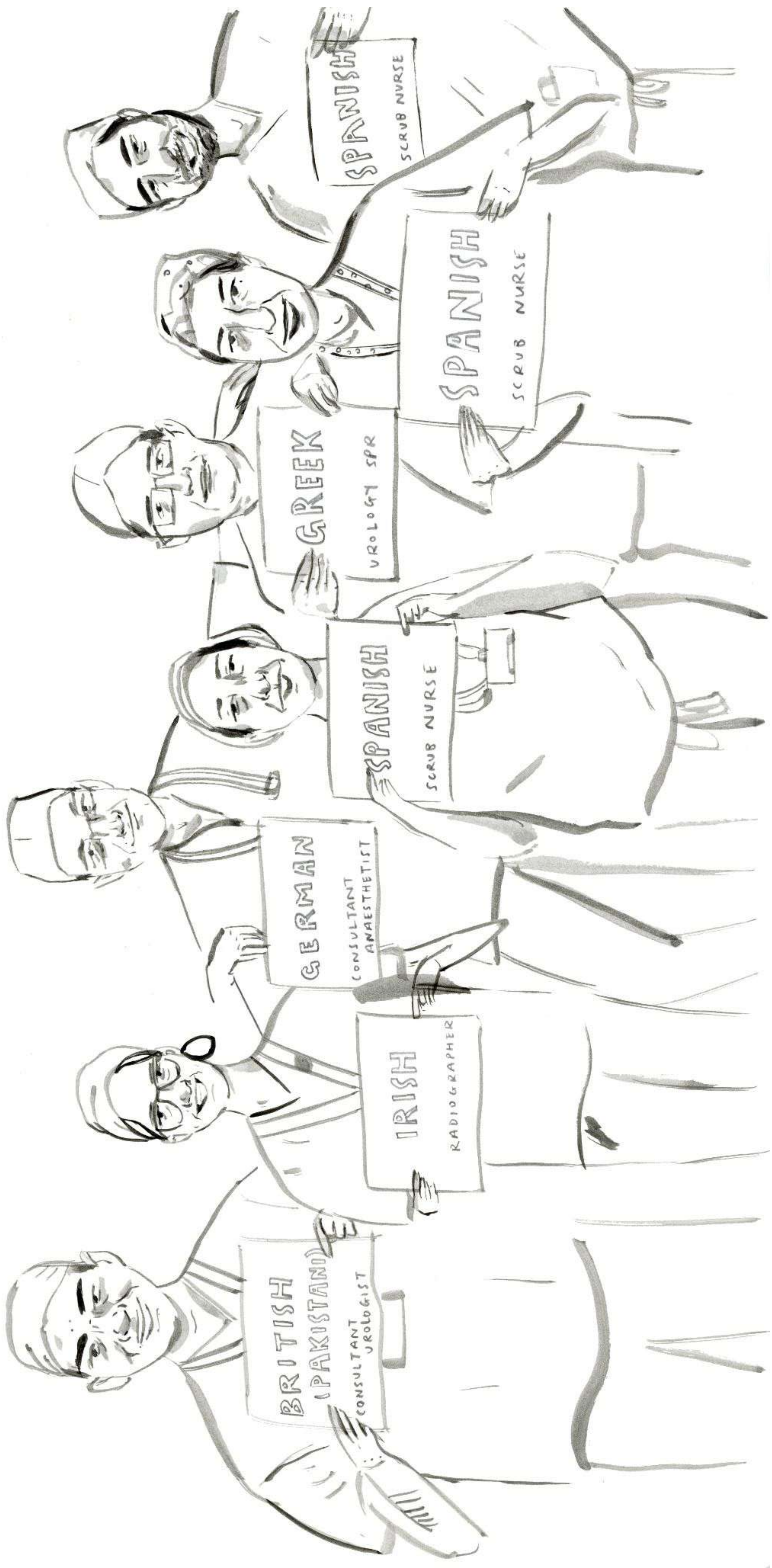
NHS Migrants: Mapped

Looking at this world map you can see how many NHS workers come from different continents around the world. Thousands of people come from all around the world to help make the NHS work. If you want to explore these numbers more you can interact with this map online, <https://heartofthenation.migrationmuseum.org/map/>



On the next page is a colouring page highlighting workers from Homerton Hospital in London, the work they do and the country they migrated from.

EVERYDAY HEROES



Additional resources for teachers

We recommend you check out the online version of our [Heart of the Nation: Migration and the Making of the NHS](#) exhibition. This is a highly interactive exhibition where you can explore hundreds more stories and a Medical Migrants Timeline. You may also want to view the [Heart of the Nation Video](#) online with your class.

Travel checklist activity

Aim: To think about what migrants from other countries needed to bring with them to start a new life in Britain

Print out a set of pictures of different objects for each student e.g. coat, scarf, chairs, passport, fridge. Students can cut and stick them into two columns; one column for items students think people would bring with them when migrating, and the other column with items they think would be left behind. Then discuss as a class what was put in each column. This discussion can be used to discuss the practicalities of migrating – for example differences in weather and culture, as well as how it might be different to migrate from some countries to Britain, for example Poland to Britain versus Jamaica to Britain.

This activity could be tied into learning about Windrush by using photographs of people arriving on the Windrush and their luggage. There are some good photographs [here](#). This exhibition from Reading Museums is all about the arrival of the Empire Windrush and includes a section on [‘What Shall I Bring to England?’](#)

Continued...

World Map Activity

Aim: To understand how many different countries people have migrated from to work in the NHS

Print out an A3 world map for each group which has countries labelled on it, for example this [one](#). Using this [infographic](#), either create a list or read out the countries listed; each group of students needs to find the countries on the map and draw a line from them to the UK. Then they need to count how many countries they have drawn lines from in each continent.

Alternatively you could do this activity with a big world map to display on a board in the classroom.

This activity could be taken further to then discuss which continents have the most countries with people travelling from them and why. This could also be used as a starting activity to talk about the connection between Empire Windrush, the British Empire and the NHS.

Letter writing activity

Aim: To better understand how it would feel to migrate from another country

Imagine you have recently arrived in Britain to work in the NHS – what would you be writing to your loved ones in your country of origin? Would you talk about your job and the people you experience? Would you talk about the environment around you and how it differs to where you came from? Would you talk about your hopes for the future? Or how you miss them and are homesick?

Decide what you are going to focus on and then write your letter. After you are done, read it aloud to the person next to you and see how your letters might be similar or different.

Conclusion

From its creation 75 years ago to today, the NHS has always been staffed by migrants. Without people from all over the world, our healthcare service would simply not be able to function. Each NHS worker's story is different, but they have all contributed an immeasurable amount to caring for Britain. The story of the NHS is the story of migration.

Many healthcare migrants have faced huge challenges, both in work and outside work. From discrimination to learning a new language and customs and balancing family needs with the demands of the job, it wasn't always easy. But as Allyson, Don, Mae and Nitha's stories show, in spite of these challenges they have not just cared for our nation; they have also made homes, begun friendships, started families and contributed to their communities.

Special thanks to designer and illustrator Jess Nash:

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And thanks to the contributors for sharing their personal stories with the Migration Museum.