

Nursing Records Related to Migration

A significant proportion of the UK nursing community have origins outside of the UK. Migration can occur for a variety of reasons. Over the course of the twentieth century, many economic migrants came from Europe (particularly Ireland) and from further afield (such as the Caribbean) to enter the nursing profession. The impact of war around the world has also led to refugees migrating to the UK and working as nurses, for example from Germany and Austria during the Second World War.

Oral History Interviews

This collection includes a number of interviews with people who came to train and work as nurses from outside the UK. The interviews include questions on family background, choices around nurse training and career development, working conditions, economic and social circumstances etc.

Two examples of these types of interviews are the interviews with Neslyn (Eugenie) Wason-Druée ([T/340](#)) and Margaret Sellars ([T/358](#)).

You can search for interviews like these by using the names of nurses, hospitals, countries, or cities as keywords. The overall oral history collection reference is 'T', and you can browse by searching 'T*' in our catalogue.

Oral history interviews are accessible for research by appointment at the RCN Archives in Edinburgh and at the RCN libraries in London, Cardiff, and Belfast. Contact archives@rcn.org.uk for an appointment.

Personal Papers Collections

The RCN also holds collections of personal papers from migrant nurses. Two of the largest collections are the papers of [Lisbeth Hockey](#) ([C300](#)) and the papers of [Annie Altschul](#) ([C305](#)). Both Hockey and Altschul came to the UK as refugees during the Second World War.

Other examples of personal papers from migrant nurses are Uma Halder (nee Dutta) ([C414](#)) and a manuscript from Edith Bown (nee Jacobwitz) wherein she recounts her experiences as a refugee in the UK ([C611](#)).

You can search for collections of migrant nurses by using geographic keywords such as 'Ireland' or 'Kenya' or you can browse the overall collection by using the reference 'C'.

Corporate Records

Two other avenues of records that could provide a broader context of migration and the RCN are [historic RCN Publications](#) and the records of the annual **RCN Congress**. While both types of records are available through our digital archive, [records of Congress](#) are only available to RCN members. Records of Congress can provide an insight into debates on migration and the experiences and concerns of its members.

Historical RCN publications are full-text searchable by everyone through our [public digital archive](#) and can give an idea of the RCN's position on migration and

nursing throughout its history. The RCN publishes advice to nurses coming to the UK to register and work, works with international nursing organisations, and has provided vocational training for international nurses. It can be useful to use a truncation and wildcard (*) in your search. Enter the start of a search term and replace the ending with an asterisk, e.g., migra* will yield results from migration, migrant, and migrate.

The [RCN Library](#) catalogue also has several publications regarding immigration. These resources can be consulted to give a wider context to research questions about migration in the UK.