



This project is funded by the European Research Council, Project ID 714615

## Abstract

London is probably host to the most diverse deaf community in Europe.

**Project focus:** deaf migrants who moved to London



### ENCOUNTERS:

- assistance of (deaf and migrant) organizations,
- meeting deaf people in London
- gender, age, ethnicity, class, education
- barriers and privilege

### LANGUAGE:

- communication strategies
- language learning - British Sign Language (BSL), English, International Sign (IS) - by immersion and in class
- working with sign language interpreters

### Researchers:

Steve Emery

Sanchayeeta Iyer

## Methodology

• Observations and informal conversations with deaf migrants at deaf events and places, and writing field notes about this, examples:

- City Lit College
- Deaf pub gatherings
- Deaf clubs
- Churches, Mosques
- Many others, e.g. Cryptocurrency investment meetings, Deaf Rave
- Interviews and focus groups
- Filmmaking
- Other visual methods

## Countries of origin of deaf migrants we met for this project

Lithuania  
Bulgaria  
Poland  
Ukraine  
Ireland  
Slovakia  
Romania  
Russia  
Italy  
Hungary  
Estonia  
Latvia

Albania  
Portugal  
Czech Republic  
Somalia  
Somaliland  
Ghana  
Kenya  
Tunisia  
Sierra Leone  
Sudan  
Algeria  
Burundi

Tanzania  
Kuwait  
Lebanon  
Iran  
Iraq  
Israel  
Syria  
Lebanon  
Israel  
India  
Bangladesh  
Pakistan

Sri Lanka  
Nepal  
Bengali  
Mongolia  
Venezuela  
Guatemala  
Brazil  
USA  
Canada  
Australia

## Mobile Deaf Team

*Deaf mobilities across international borders:*  
Visualising intersectionality and translanguaging

Dr Annelies Kusters

Dr Erin Moriarty

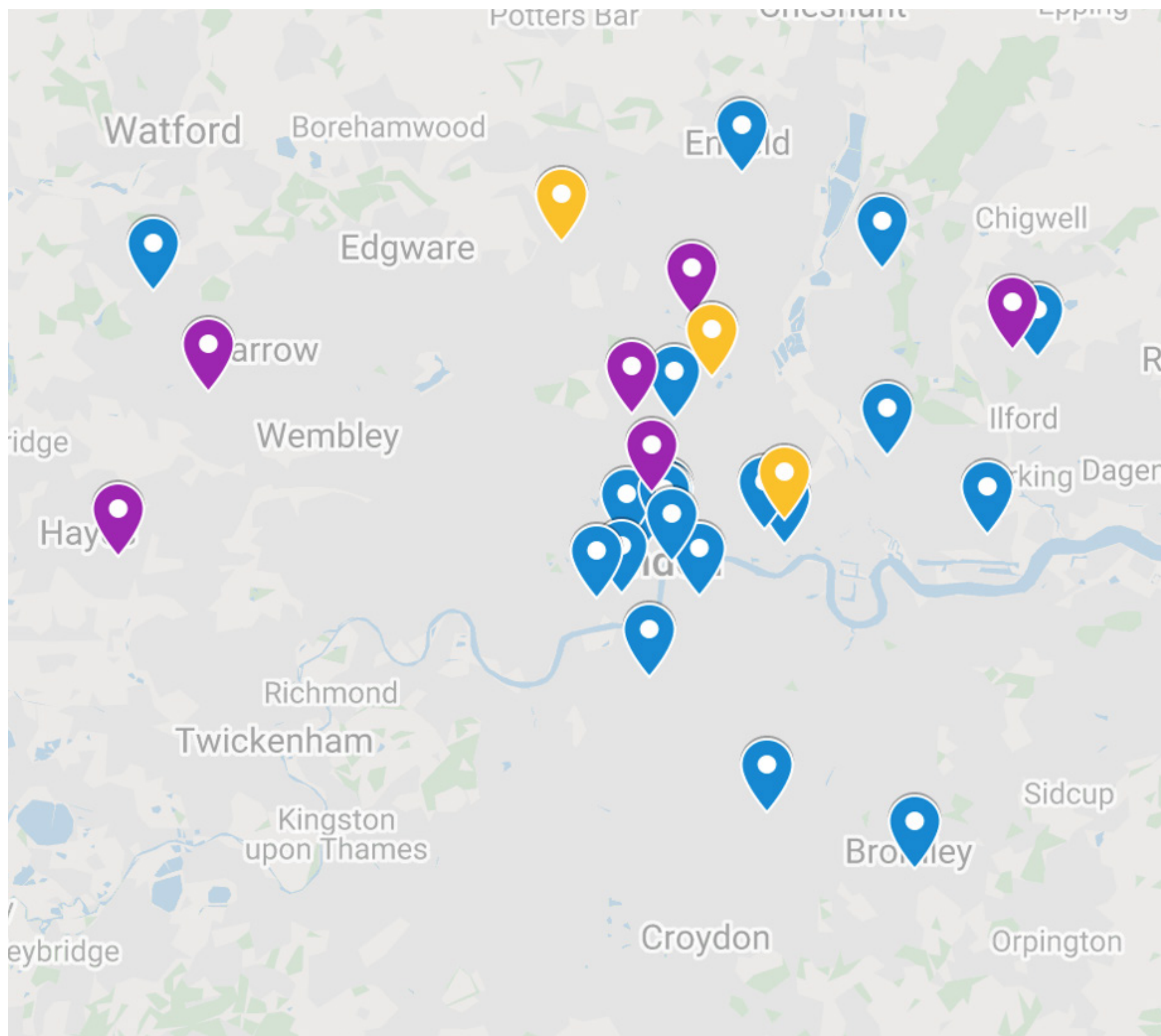
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# Deaf Migrants in London



This map provides a visual indicator of places and spaces where deaf Londoners frequent but which are also a vital means whereby deaf migrants socialise, make friends and find out information.

***Can you add  
to the Deaf  
Spaces?***

## List of places where we met deaf migrants

### Blue:

Redbridge Deaf Centre  
Enfield Deaf Club  
888 Club  
Clapham Deaf Club  
Harrow and Brent Deaf Centre/Diwali  
Slug & Lettuce  
Shakespeare's Head  
Conduit Street  
Deaf Church events  
Saint Marks Church & Community Centre  
City Lit  
Deaf Day  
BSL (Cafe) Social  
The Rooted Forum & Al Isharah Deaf Club  
Bromley Deaf Pub  
The East London Mosque & London Muslim Centre  
British Deaf Association  
Deaf Unity Cafe  
Deaf Social Event Victoria  
Holy Trinity Church  
BSL Social (Cafe) Meet up

### Purple:

Deaf Rave  
Deaf Street Party  
Somaliland Event  
Hare Krishna event  
Cryptocurrency Investment Opportunity event  
Somalia Event

### Yellow:

St John's Deaf Community Centre  
Jewish Deaf Association  
DeafPlus

## Types of Spaces

**Yellow:** Traditional (2) - Deaf Clubs or Buildings

**Blue:** Mainstream (13) - Deaf clubs or events held regularly in mainstream buildings, e.g. community centres, cafe's, education, pubs, etc. Includes organisations.

**Purple:** Temporal (8) - One off or temporary meeting places, e.g. Deaf Rave, Cryptocurrency meetings, ad hoc meetings, etc.



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## Findings

- Deaf migrants are in London for a wide range of reasons.
  - looking for a job
  - escaping war
  - moving to be with their partner
  - wanting adventure
  - broaden their life experience
- Deaf migrants are from all classes, and
  - working in professional positions supporting other deaf people:
    - as tutors
    - in pastoral services
    - In mental health services
  - doing volunteer work
  - working in unskilled and skilled occupations
  - having their own business
  - working in the arts
  - being students
  - aspiring to making wealth
- No clearly marked migrant-specific groups or organisations in London
- Migrants are dispersed throughout the capital, visiting deaf spaces and places in the city and attending deaf themed events.
  - to socialise with new and known people
  - to learn British Sign Language
  - share and exchange knowledge
  - learn the cultures of the UK
- Challenges:
  - to adjust to the languages (BSL/English)
  - the culture of the UK
- Strategies of communication:
  - mixing their native language signs (e.g. Somalian Sign Language, American Sign Language), International Sign and BSL
  - using spoken languages (native and English)
  - pen and paper, typing text on mobile phones
  - using video relay services.
- While migrants found the environment to be generally welcoming there were incidents of hostility.

### Dissemination of the findings:

- workshops at three locations in the UK: London, Manchester and Glasgow (2020-2021)
- ethnographic film will be streamed at the MobileDeaf website (2020) ([www.mobiled deaf.org.uk](http://www.mobiled deaf.org.uk))
- Vlogs and blogs on MobileDeaf website <https://mobiled deaf.org.uk/labour-migration/>
- Academic journal articles, and book on MobileDeaf project.

***Check our website regularly for updates, or follow us on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram!***

## Special Thanks

We wish to express our deepest gratitude to all deaf migrants who agreed to be interviewed and filmed as part of this study. Thanks are also due to City Lit College, and all the Deaf centres, the clubs and spaces, places of worship, and organisations, who met with us and welcomed the researchers and enabled us to observe them and their social events and lives.

We wish to give special thanks to Jorn Rijckaert for recording and editing the ethnographic film.

The political climate in the UK when we undertook this study (2017-2019) was fraught with tensions due to the Brexit process and every little bit of solidarity counted. Thanks to everyone who offered advice, moral support, insights and expressed interest in the research, who participated in our events, and who are too numerous to mention.

MobileDeaf takes full responsibility for the results of the project, the findings and their interpretation.

