



Information Governance Team

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Dear Sir/Madam

**Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)
Request ID: FOI806951856**

Thank you for your request for information relating to Inclusivity initiatives for Public art and museums.

You have requested the following information:

For projects from January 2024 up to date. And for ongoing work and upcoming, planned work

Public art

1. What is being done to make the town hall space more inclusive in terms of race, and LGBT inclusion?

The use of flags on the front of the Council House to demonstrate support for inclusive communities, including the rainbow flag during Pride. It should be noted that there is a flag protocol in place overseen by the current political membership. There are also a number of internally facing activities, including employee noticeboards which are used to promote inclusive opportunities for members of staff.

2. What artworks have been installed or removed to help with this? Paintings linked to empire and slavery for example.

The Council House is a Grade II listed building and limited in character. We are not aware of any changes in the last 12 months.

3. What public art more generally, has been commissioned to improve diversity and inclusion?

The Council does not generally commission public art works, but will review public art proposals from external bodies via its Public Art Gateway Group. It will positively consider approval for proposals that promote a greater understanding and celebration of equality, diversity and inclusivity in the city.

4. What public art more generally, has been removed, or given greater context, or reviewed for links to offensive or outmoded issues - statues linked to empire and slavery, for example.

All public artworks, within the Council House and wider public realm have previously been reviewed (2022) to ascertain possible negative links to empire and slavery. No areas for concern or re interpretation have been identified. We are not aware of any public art being removed or reviewed for wider links.

Local Museums

- What is being done to make local museums (if applicable) more inclusive in terms of race, and LGBT inclusion?

Culture Coventry who currently operate Coventry Transport Museum, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum and Lunt Roman Fort have managed several projects in the last few years that are intended to diversify collections and programmes.

In 2023 they opened Divided Selves an exhibition drawing on Coventry's own collections as well as those of the British Council. The exhibition explored ideas of community, belonging and collective identity and was curated by Hammad Nasar MBE. The exhibition included a community project with four diverse groups who produced work in response to Larry Achaimpong's Pan African flag. The Herbert Art Gallery & Museum is currently showing a project developed in collaboration with Hardish Virk called 'Stories that Made Us' which tells the story of Southeast Asian immigration to Coventry through the Virk archive. There is more information about this and other projects available through our online platform Culture Space Coventry:

[https://url.uk.m.mimecastprotect.com/s/VUpRCwjXEfEORKVtVfQSJz99f?
domain=culturespacecoventry.com](https://url.uk.m.mimecastprotect.com/s/VUpRCwjXEfEORKVtVfQSJz99f?domain=culturespacecoventry.com)

At St Mary's Guildhall, a monthly Queer Writing Group was held at St Mary's during the delivery of the National Lottery Heritage Fund grant activities, until September 2025, with just under 350 individual engagements. St Marys Guildhall also worked with Sandra Godley OBE on a project over three years celebrating black history, culminating in a Cultural Conversation podcast/interview/performance in October 2024, and open event on Heritage Open Days 2025.

- What displays have been added or updated to help with this? For example, have outdated displays been taken down?

In 2024 Culture Coventry opened a 12 month display entitled 'Collecting Coventry', The purpose of this exhibition was to display a broad range works from the collection, giving people an opportunity to get a glimpse of 'behind the scenes' and to have a discussion about what museum's collect and why.

There were a number of ways that people could provide feedback both within the galleries and as part of three focus groups. Culture Coventry are now using the findings of Collecting Coventry to inform programming and collecting policies. They have been involved in the 2020 project, a partnership with University of Arts London, which saw 20 artists from global majority being commissioned to produce work for the collections of 20 regional museums. As a result they

commissioned Cora Sehgal Cuthbert to produce an installation 'A Prayer of Coventry, Life Starts Here', based on oral history recordings from Coventry's diverse communities. Other relevant artists whose work has recently been added to the collection include Leilah Babirye and Emma Prempah. In 2025 they acquired a rugby shirt from the region's first and only LGBT inclusive Rugby club, Coventry Corsaires.

Culture Coventry's approach to collecting can be found within their Collections Development Policy available here:

<https://edemocracy.coventry.gov.uk/documents/s64662/Appendix%208%20CCT%20Collections%20Development%20Policy%202024.pdf>

Appendix 8 CCT Collections Development Policy 2024.pdf.

New displays have also been created at St Mary's Guildhall in collaboration with different community groups.

- What research is being undertaken?

Contested history will be referenced in the forthcoming Heritage Strategy/Plan, developed by the Council and expected later in 2026. For Culture Coventry, when research is undertaken it is usually in relation to forthcoming programming. They also have access to sector specific decolonisation, anti racism and EDI approaches through the Museums Association and other sector specific networks and bodies.

Culture Coventry are an Arts Council England National Portfolio organisation and have access to EDI toolkits and other useful research. St Mary's Guildhall has also supported research to e.g. a Coventry Caribbean community History Project, with a table tour being created.

- What tours are available?

Culture Coventry provides tours which are available on request, and they also have a range of tours available on Smartify. St Mary's Guildhall provides LGBTQ tours for groups and have also been working with the Coventry Refugee and Migrant Society, providing tours every 12 weeks as part of their induction in Coventry.

- What advice on racial inclusion and LGBT issues is provided to staff?

In 2023 Culture Coventry worked with a Diversity and Inclusion consultant who delivered EDI training to staff, directors and board. This informed Culture Coventry's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Action Plan. Over the next three years Culture Coventry are part of a programme called 'Empowering Curators' funded by Art Fund that provides professional development for one member of staff from a global majority background and institutional development supported by People Make it Work.

Hardish Virk who is the curator of Stories that Made Us has provided training for staff, including visitor assistants about inclusive approaches to customer care and we also have mandatory EDI courses that all staff undertake. St Mary's Guildhall provide in-house training and some external training was also delivered through the NLHF grant activity.

Libraries

• If applicable, what is being done to make local libraries more inclusive in terms of race, and LGBT inclusion?

The Library Service Stock Policy states the aim of to provide an overall stock that will meet the needs of the whole community, recognising the needs of people with disabilities and those from diverse cultural, social and economic backgrounds. We also have a specialist set of staff who lead on our diversity offer details can be found at:

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/libraries-1/inclusive-library-services/4>

The Library Service provides a full programme of events and celebrates a number of key cultural dates including:

LGBTQ+ History Month in February
International Mother Language Day in February
Stephen Lawrence Day in April
Gypsy Roma and Traveller History Month in June
Pride in June
Windrush Day in June
Black History Month in October

The Library Service also supports the City of Sanctuary vision that the UK will be a welcoming place of safety for all and proud to offer sanctuary to people fleeing violence and persecution. More information can be found at: <https://www.coventry.gov.uk/libraries-1/inclusive-library-services/4>

Our Central Library also provides a Multi-faith and quiet contemplation room:

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/libraries-1/library-room-hire/2>

• What books have been added to stock in relation to this?

The Library catalogue(<https://librarycatalogue.coventry.gov.uk/#/>) allows for keyword searching with results showing year of publishing. Search terms of race and LGBT inclusion are not specific enough to provide a detailed answer

• What books have been removed or moved to a reserve stack, or a less prominent place, because their content might be problematic; for example, outdated, racist, homophobic, transphobic, Islamophobic ?

0.

• Can you provide details of any complaint received in the timeframe relating to the above issues?

0.

The supply of information in response to a FOI/EIR request does not confer an automatic right to re-use the information. You can use any information supplied for the purposes of private study and non commercial research without requiring further permission. Similarly, information supplied can also be re-used for the purposes of news reporting. An exception to this is photographs. Please contact us if you wish to use the information for any other purpose.

For information, we publish a variety of information such as: [FOI/EIR Disclosure Log](#), [Publication Scheme](#), [Facts about Coventry](#) and [Open Data](#) that you may find of useful if you are looking for information in the future.

If you are unhappy with the handling of your request, you can ask us to review our response. Requests for reviews should be submitted within 40 days of the date of receipt of our response to your original request email: infogov@coventry.gov.uk

If you are unhappy with the outcome of our review, you can write to the Information Commissioner, who can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or email icocasework@ico.org.uk.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in your response.

Yours faithfully

Information Governance