

# What has the Warneford Hospital meant to its community?

## Objectives:

- Use evidence from the past to construct an idea of experiences at the Warneford hospital over its 200 year history
- Use this understanding to consider how the Warneford should be remembered today
- Contribute to the commemoration of 200 years of the Warneford Hospital



# LESSON ONE:

## What was life like at the Warneford Hospital over its 200 year history?

- Use primary sources (letters, poems, photos, records) to reconstruct what life was like at the Warneford.
- Describe and analyse how the Warneford might have been experienced differently by its staff and service users



# Content warning



We are going to be exploring the Warneford Hospital today, which has acted as a hospital for people with mental health conditions for 200 years. There will therefore be mention of mental health today.

---

This can be upsetting so please let an adult know if you're struggling, and use the resources we have provided to find out about where you can access help and support.

# A note on language...

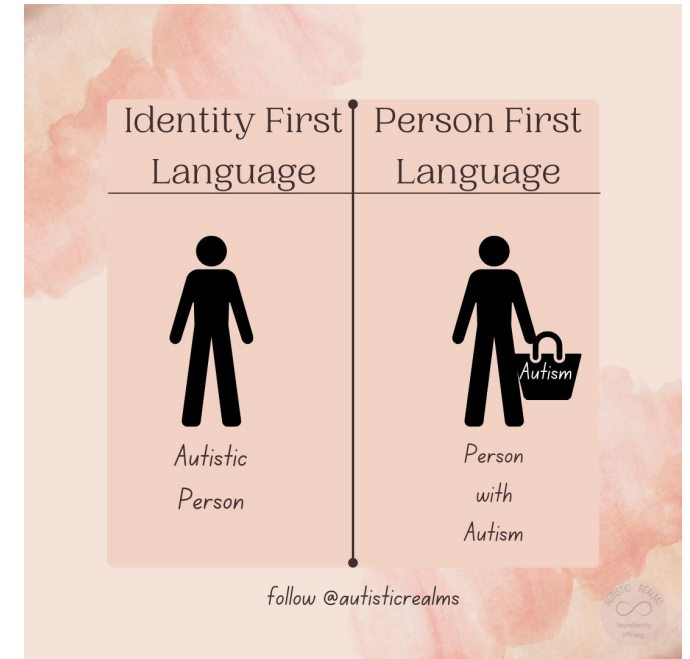
In the past people used many different terms to refer to mental health conditions that we might not use today.

You might see words like insane, mad, lunatic. These are words that people might use in everyday conversation, but we don't use these words anymore to refer to people with mental health conditions.

This is because over time these words became dehumanising.

We shouldn't define a person by their mental illness or disability. We should try to use more respectful, 'people first' language that emphasises someone is a person first – they have a disability rather than they are disabled, they have schizophrenia rather than they're schizophrenic.

We also try to be more specific with their mental health condition.



# Task

1. What do you know about the Warneford Hospital?
2. What do you know about how people with mental health conditions were treated in the past? Don't worry if you don't know for sure, we just want to get your initial assumptions

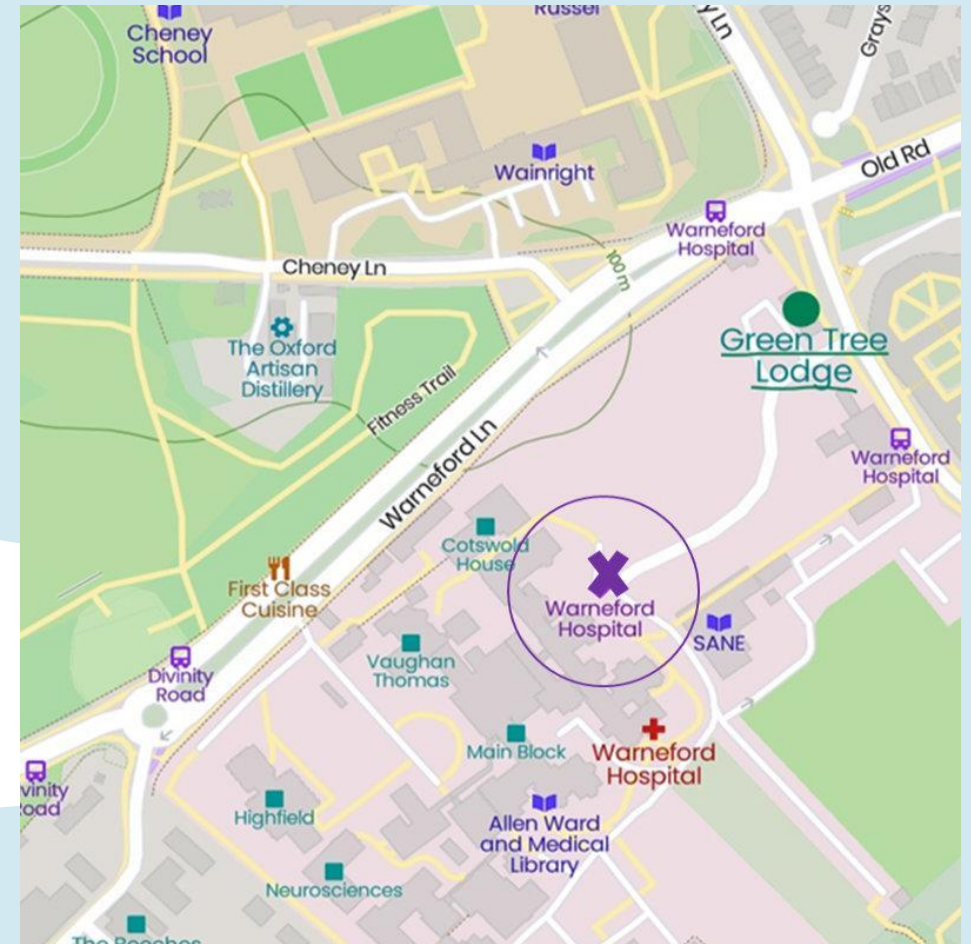


# Introduction to the Warneford Hospital

- Officially opened to the public in July 1826
- Purpose was to cater for the genteel middle classes; the clergy and professionals, who were frequently neither rich enough for private care or poor enough to apply to the parish.
- Sliding scale of charges so you could pay what you could afford
- In 1846 the Littlemore Hospital was opened to cater for poorer patients

## Think:

Can the Warneford tell us about the experiences of all types of people who struggled with their mental health around 200 years ago? Whose stories might be missing?



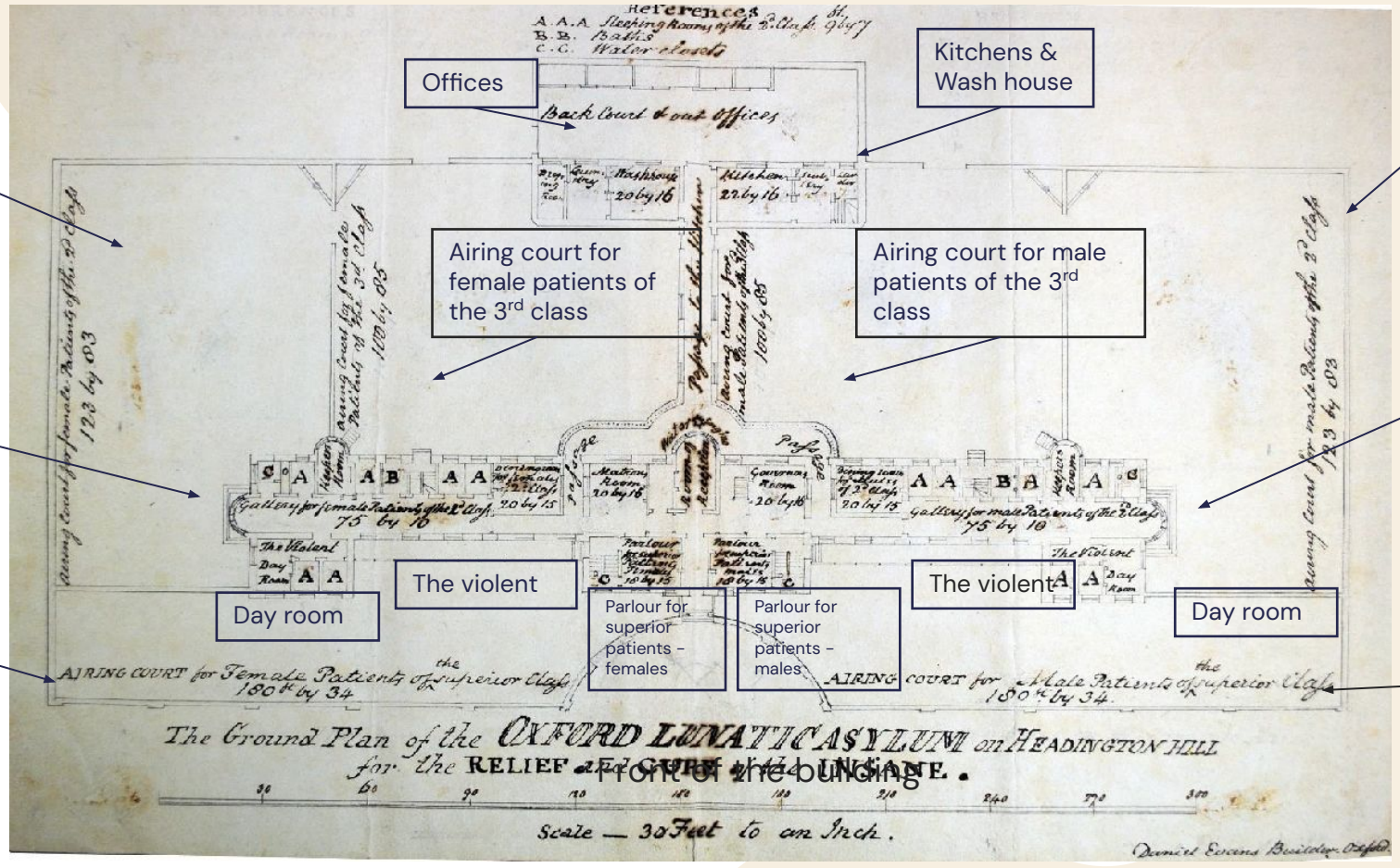
# Ground Plan: Warneford Hospital

Airing court for female patients of the 2<sup>nd</sup> class

Gallery for female patients of the 2<sup>nd</sup> class

Airing court for female patients of superior class

The airing courts were walled and for exercise



Offices

Kitchens & Wash house

Airing court for male patients of the 2<sup>nd</sup> class

Airing court for female patients of the 3<sup>rd</sup> class

Airing court for male patients of the 3<sup>rd</sup> class

Gallery for male patients of the 2<sup>nd</sup> class

The violent

The violent

Airing court for male patients of superior class

**Think:**  
 What do you notice about the plan of the hospital?  
 What can this tell us about class and gender?

# What was life like at the Warneford Hospital?

**TASK:** You are going to work in groups, and using the primary sources, you'll construct an idea of what life was like at the Warneford Hospital.

1. What type of source is it?
2. Who does it tell us about?
3. What does it tell us about experiences at the Warneford?  
(e.g. daily life, feelings, treatments)

# Plenary – discuss

1. Was life at the Warneford the same for all patients and staff? Why/Why not?
2. What surprised you most about mental health care in the Warneford? Think about what your initial ideas were at the start of the lesson. Have they changed?




# LESSON TWO:

## What has the Warneford Hospital meant to its community?

- Explain why the Warneford matters to their community, both in the past and today.
- Identify whose voices are heard in the history of the hospital and whose voices are missing.
- Use historical evidence and their own ideas to decide what should be remembered about the Warneford.



# Introduction

- What source stood out to you the most from last lesson? Why?
  - If you weren't here, what do you know about the Warneford hospital?
  - What does it mean to commemorate something?
- 

# Commemoration

Commemoration usually refers to remembering and honouring an event or person from the past. We'd like you to help us with our commemoration of 200 years of the Warneford Hospital.

But, sometimes people think commemoration should only be about the positives – we acknowledge that the Warneford has a complicated past and people's experiences of it differed. We want you to tell the stories you think are important, whether they are positive, negative, or somewhere inbetween.



# The Warneford Hospital today

Watch the video from 14min-16.17:

<https://warneford200.co.uk/the-history-of-the-warneford-film/>

What is the mission of the Warneford Hospital today?



# Why is history important to mental health today?

## A view from Lived Experience

“Looking back at the history of mental health, it shows **how far we have come** with people’s views about mental health.

Through reading the **incredible stories**.

From moving away from **unkind words** describing people who struggle with mental health.

The care we have now is **more community based** and people don’t feel so scared and alone, **breaking down the stigma**.

We have **more empathy and conversations**, more open to talking about feelings and emotions, and struggles with mental health

**More research which is ongoing to look at the treatments**, so they are kinder and not so invasive.”

"I really believe knowledge is power; **to learn and understand my own journey with mental and physical health I now have the tools and coping strategies to manage it.** I now **help other people** with my own lived experience and now I am Tutor at Oxfordshire Recovery College."

*Sharon, Tutor at Oxfordshire Recovery College who has Lived Experience with Mental Health.*

What does it mean to you to have this hospital in your community?

Whose voices and what stories should we try to remember as the Warneford gets redeveloped?

- We're going to be thinking about how we can contribute to remembering the histories of the Warneford in the present and future
- Most of the early histories of psychiatric hospitals were written by doctors. Historians started to take more of an interest in patient voices around 50 years ago
- Doctors, nurses and unseen teams kept the Warneford running

# Commemorating the Warneford:

Work in small groups to design something to commemorate the Warneford's history.

This could include:

## Words

- a short message to the community
- a poem, quote, or sentence inspired by the sources
- something you think people should remember about the Warneford

## Images and symbols

- drawings of the hospital, gardens, or wards
- symbols of care, hope, healing, or change

## Voices from the past

- short quotes from the sources you studied
- a patient's words
- a nurse's or doctor's words

## Creative materials

- colour, collage, textures
- play-dough or 3D elements
- a small 'memorial garden'

Your design could try to show:

- how people experienced life at the Warneford
- what the hospital has meant to this community
- what/how it should be remembered as it changes in the future

Send submissions to

[Dee.Kyaagba2@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk](mailto:Dee.Kyaagba2@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk)