



## Senior Manager



**Tesfay Sebhat** was born in Eritrea in 1955 and came to London in 1980. He now holds a senior position as the Town Centre Youth and Play Services Manager for one of the London borough councils.

*Tesfay in his office*  
*Photograph by Museum of London*

'I think the transition in my life from guerrilla fighter, Liberation Army, and to come here, to live in Europe was harder than to become a blind person. The weather, the culture, the language, you name it, a multiple of barriers to go through. On top of that blindness came. So for me, theoretically there is a transition from an abled person to a disabled person. For me I escaped that transition. The date I was registered as a blind person, I think the top thing was I accepted it. I accepted that I am blind and I have to live with it... Well I think life, you take it the way it is and you improve on it, you accept it and you improve it and develop it and go further... Sighted Tesfay is gone. Now is a blind Tesfay. I have to live with that. On that basis I have to see what can I achieve? To be independent, that was the whole idea, and I think, I believe I have achieved it... I think my being in this position breaks all stereotypes about refugees and black people or disabled people in general. I think that breaks the barriers that break all these negative stereotypes. Therefore I think my contribution is a big thing and it inspires everybody. And a lot of colleagues, they acknowledge it as well. Sometimes you know they take me as a person who inspires them, a role model. That is my contribution here.'

Refugee Communities History Project, courtesy of the [Evelyn Oldfield Unit](#) and [Museum of London](#)

---