



**London
South Bank
University**

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Citation for Honorary Doctorate Degree conferred on Ruth Oshikanlu MBE

Pro Chancellor. Our honorary graduand today is Ruth Oshikanlu MBE. Ruth studied Public Health with us at LSBU in 2006, and has gone on to carve out a successful and varied career as a nurse entrepreneur. As a midwife, health visitor, coach, mentor and author, she has done much to improve the lives of women and young people in London and beyond, and to raise the profile of the nursing profession.

Born in Nigeria, Ruth arrived in the UK aged just 17 with no clear plan for the future. She did a diploma in computing and electronics, but office life was not for her. When a careers adviser suggested she try nursing, she leapt at the chance – partly, she admits, because it was the one course she could do and be paid for, but mainly because it offered a sense of purpose, and an opportunity to make a difference.

Having completed her nurse training, she went on to qualify as a midwife, also gaining qualifications in working with women with HIV and tropical diseases. Finding that shift work and single motherhood did not mix, she came to LSBU to study Public Health and started work as a health visitor. But she always wanted more flexibility and freedom than the health service could provide and, following a period of extensive soul searching, decided to set out on her own as a nurse entrepreneur.

Since then, Ruth has gone on to build an impressive portfolio career, from coaching other nurses and midwives through her project Goal Mind to creating the highly successful parenting programme Tune In To Your Baby. She runs regular parenting clinics, and her work to reduce health inequalities includes supporting patients with sickle cell disease and HIV, pregnant teenagers and teenage parents, and young people struggling with substance misuse.

Since 2018, she has led a community initiative aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of young people in Lewisham, and supporting them to make positive life decisions. This autumn, she will travel to the US, Australia and Scotland to explore approaches to youth violence, with the support of the Winston Churchill Foundation.

At the start of this year, Ruth was awarded an MBE for her services to community nursing, children and families. She is also holds the title Queen's Nurse, awarded to those who have demonstrated a commitment to the very highest standards of patient-centred care. Now, Pro Chancellor, it is my pleasure to present her to you for the award of honorary doctorate.