**For immediate release**

**15.11.18**

**The power of listening: ‘Ears Against Loneliness’ launches community campaign to combat isolation.**

**Manchester, UK**

***Yesterday in Manchester, arts organisation Made by Mortals, premiered their new piece of community theatre ‘Ears Against Loneliness’. Professional and participatory artists performed together to shed light on the loneliness epidemic currently sweeping the UK. Alongside this, the #EarsAgainstLoneliness social media campaign is asking the public to “tweet your ear” and has also begun to have an impact.***

Loneliness is fast becoming an epidemic in the UKwith recent statistics suggesting a third of people feel lonely often or very often. It was a hot topic, then, at this year’s Social Care Future – a fringe event of the National Children and Adult Services (NCAS) conference, taking place in Manchester 14th-16th November.

Rounding off the first day of events were arts organisation Made by Mortals, whose bold new project, Ears Against Loneliness, is asking people to donate not their money, but their ears. Their piece of forum theatre was performed by professional actors and musicians alongside students from Pennine Care Health & Wellbeing College and members of The Johnny Barlow Theatre Company (a drama group for adults with mental health and learning difficulties), who shared their own personal experiences of the transformative nature of being listened to.

*“We know that listening to people (particularly vulnerable members of society) can be a daunting prospect” says Made by Mortals Director Paul Hine, “everyone is so busy and often engrossed in their own lives. We wanted to prompt people to think about how they could be better listeners. The event today really began that conversation.”*

Alongside the performances, which are also due to tour to Oldham, Tameside and Stockport, a social media campaign in underway. [**A**](https://www.facebook.com/earsagainstloneliness/videos/vl.2053308088313199/2134157363295523/?type=1) **video featuring the community artists** highlights the aims of #EarsAgainstLoneliness and has already received over 80,000 views on Facebook alone. Members of the public have been sharing ‘selfies’ of their ears as a sign of their commitment to listen more to those around them.

The event and concept were warmly received by the audience, who promptly took to social media to spread the word. It seems more and more people are sharing their Ears Against Loneliness.

*END.*

**Notes for the editor**

The event took place at Friend’s Meeting House, Manchester, 3.25pm on 14th November.

Ears Against Loneliness is supported by Health as a Social Movement and The Philip Barker Centre for Creativity at The University of Chester.

**Ears Against Loneliness video can be viewed here:**

<https://www.facebook.com/earsagainstloneliness/videos/2134157363295523/> also available for download in the dropbox link below

**Dropbox for Images:**

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/4m7magt3bhp3mgp/AADTq9qBrdnaZ8PD-MWXPVnOa?dl=0>

Paul Hine and Andy Smith (co-directors of Made by Mortals) are available for interviews, please contact Aileen Quinn to arrange (details below)

# Web links for further information:

**Made by Mortals** (please link content to this site)

<https://www.madebymortals.org/>

**The Johnny Barlow Theatre Company**

<http://gbtheatre.co.uk/johnnybarlowtheatre.html>

**Pennine Care Health & Wellbeing College**

<https://hwcollege.penninecare.nhs.uk/>

**Social Care Future**

<https://socialcarefuture.blog/>

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