For immediate release

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Lend us your ears!

**Manchester arts organisation, Made by Mortals, launches ‘Ears Against Loneliness’ video and social campaign to encourage listening and combat loneliness.**

**Loneliness is fast becoming an epidemic in the UK** with recent statistics suggesting a third of people feel lonely often or very often. With loneliness increasingly linked to health problems, both physical and mental, many of us are asking what we can do to help. This is what inspired the launch of **Ears Against Loneliness: a social movement and participatory arts project, led by Made by Mortals (**[**www.madebymortals.org**](http://www.madebymortals.org)**), that aims to challenge people to act against loneliness by donating active listening time.** To spread the word and show commitment to listening to others, Ears Against Loneliness is asking people to post an ‘ear selfie’; a simple picture of their ear with a note about what they might do to reach out and actively listen, and the hashtag **#EarsAgainstLoneliness.**

[**The campaign’s new video**](https://www.facebook.com/earsagainstloneliness/videos/vl.2053308088313199/2134157363295523/?type=1) **features members of The Johnny Barlow Theatre Company (a drama group for adults with mental health and learning difficulties) and students from Pennine Care Health & Wellbeing College.** In it we hear more about the campaign, the effects of loneliness and tips on how to listen actively.

Alongside the social media aspect of this campaign, Made by Mortals are working with these two groups to create **a piece of participatory forum theatre** exploring the skills, challenges and triumphs of putting your ears against loneliness. The piece will premiere at Friend’s Meeting House, Manchester, 3.25pm on 14th November as part of Social Care Future, a fringe event of the The National Children and Adult Services conference, before touring to Tameside, Oldham and Stockport.

“We know that listening to people (particularly vulnerable members of society) can be a daunting prospect” says Made by Mortals Director Paul Hine, “and we’re not asking people to do anything they’re uncomfortable with. However, we know that when a person feels listened to they know they exist and they know they matter. Small things can make a big difference. It might be as simple as greeting someone you often see on your morning commute, having a chat with a neighbour or calling a relative who lives alone.”

**This project builds on work developed through former NHS-funded social movements programme in Stockport, Oldham and Tameside**. Paul Hine, Made by Mortals co-director worked alongside project managers Steve Goslyn and Carey Bamber, and Nick Ponsillo, Director of The Philip Barker Centre for Creative Learning at The University of Chester. All were interested in social movements and creative ways of communities addressing and combatting loneliness. When Paul Hine and composer Andy Smith founded Made by Mortals this year, Ears Against Loneliness became one of the first projects under the new arts organisation’s banner.

**Ears Against Loneliness is new social movement. Can you lend us your ears?**

END.

**Notes for the editor**

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

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

**Link to images, video and further information here:** <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/tuf2hpu64uijkyf/AACQPoUJWz-i9GMtGGTQ57dLa?dl=0>

Image captions:

Image 1: Members of The Johnny Barlow Theatre Company (a drama group for adults with mental health and learning difficulties) and students from Pennine Care Health & Wellbeing College lending their ears.

Image 2: Paul Hine, Made by Mortals Director, speaks to the group about the aims of #EarsAgainstLoneliness

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/>

# For more information, press only:

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