



Leicestershire Partnership
NHS Trust

MEDIA RELEASE/Photo opportunity

3 July 2017

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You are invited to send a reporter and/or photographer to a pre-launch viewing event at Soft Touch Arts on Friday 7 July from 5.30-7.30pm.

City showcase for prisoners' artwork

Artwork created by prisoners at Leicester and soon-to-close Glen Parva prisons will be showcased at a public exhibition in the heart of Leicester during July.



Stunning paintings, intricate drawings, powerful digital art and 3D models will feature in the *Hear Me Out* exhibition at Soft Touch Arts in New Walk, Leicester from Saturday 8 July until Saturday 29 July*.

The work celebrates partnership work by Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust's prison healthcare and arts-in-health teams and award-winning Soft Touch Arts, which used art sessions to boost prisoners' wellbeing.

Weekly workshops were held for prisoners, particularly those with mental ill health combined with alcohol and substance misuse, giving them the opportunity to express themselves, learn creative skills and uncover new talents.

Some 50 prisoners took part in a programme of workshops between September 2016 and June 2017.

One of the Glen Parva artists told guests at a showcase of the work last year: "This gave me a way to express myself and I'd say to anyone with creative force inside them that I have first-hand experience of how well it worked."

The work created at Leicester Prison was showcased in a one-day exhibition in the prison chapel in March.

One of the participants commented: "The art workshops were something to look forward to. They gave me self belief and confidence to do something good with my time."



Some of the work was entered into the national Koestler Awards for prison art - hosted by prison arts charity the Koestler Trust.

Carole Robson, service manager for prison healthcare for LPT, said: “The artwork the individuals have created within the prison environment has been a wonderful way of self expression during a particularly challenging time. It is truly wonderful that a number of agencies worked together to ensure this work could take place and be displayed.”



Soft Touch Arts lead arts worker Kieran Walsh, who led the workshops, said: “

“I am constantly impressed by the standard of work that these young men are capable of producing. The projects give them a focus during their time in prison and often gives them new skills that they are keen to try out on their release. We always look forward to working with them every week.”

The workshops were funded by Carlton Hayes Mental Health Charity, The Gordon Trust, Blaby District Council and the Comic Relief Local Communities Fund through Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Community Foundation.

Caption (left) Glen Parva artist; (top) Work by artists at Leicester Prison

* Exhibition opening times are Tues - Sat noon - 5pm.

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For further information contact: Sheila Ashton, communications manager, Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust, Tel: 0116 295 0042, E: sheila.ashton@leicspart.nhs.uk

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT) provides community health, mental health and learning disabilities services for the one million people living in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. We have a budget in excess of £275 million and employ approximately 5,500 staff. For more information visit: www.leicspart.nhs.uk

2. Raising Health is our registered charity (number 1057361) which raises funds to support LPT's excellent care initiatives, equipment and innovations which go above and beyond core NHS provision, to enhance the experience of our patients, service users and staff. www.raisinghealth.org.uk

3. **Soft Touch Arts** is an award-winning charity which has been running creative projects for children and young people in Leicester and Leicestershire since 1986. In 2015 they opened their arts centre on New Walk in Leicester, featuring a purpose built gallery to showcase young people's artwork.