

## MEDIA RELEASE

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**Musical mentor: Mark Morriss (centre) with Refuge band members Phil Seaman (left) and Pete Hirst.**

## Band to ‘tour’ mental health wards

Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust is teaming up with acclaimed Leicester band Refuge who are spearheading a series of ‘music gigs’ for staff and patients on its mental health wards.

Arts Council England has awarded a £15,000 grant for the ‘Moving InWards’ project which will see them unleashing the therapeutic effects of live music by making it part of life on the wards.

Mark Morriss, of The Bluetones - plus a host of specialist arts in health practitioners are mentoring Pete and fellow band members Phil Seaman and Sam Munton. Pete will also be working with Mark Morriss and Gaz Birtles of The South (formerly The Beautiful South) to write and produce a single and EP from the project over the next 12 months.

Staff and patients on 10 adult mental health units across LPT sites are being invited to 'book' the two-hour workshop and performance sessions.

The sessions, instruments and choice of music are all agreed with patients' needs in mind, and the audience members are free to drop in and out of the sessions.

Refuge lead singer Pete Hirst, who has been awarded the Arts Council grant and a further £1,200 from Carlton Hayes Charity, who have also contributed to the project, said: "I was an inpatient on the wards in my early 20s and this opportunity to go back and aid recovery programmes through music is wonderful. Music is my passion and I believe it definitely enhanced my recovery."

Two wards at the Bradgate have already signed up their first 'gigs' and the band are working closely with LPT's arts in mental health co-ordinators Lydia Towsey and Tim Sayers.

Lydia Towsey, said: "The process of supporting Pete to design, develop and secure the grant has been extremely satisfying. As a Trust, we are really looking forward to collaborating with Refuge who have that powerful combination of great musical talent and a genuine desire to create positive attitudes towards mental health issues. We look forward to engaging patients with this groundbreaking project's workshops and performances and helping the initiative grow."

The project will launch with a high-profile fundraiser at The Donkey Pub, Welford Road, Leicester, on 20 September at 8pm. Mark Morriss is headlining and Refuge supporting along with the locally based young talent Olivia Rose Deane. All proceeds are going towards the Moving InWards project.

Mentor Mark Morriss said: "Having been invited to mentor the band and help develop their songwriting and performance skills, I was immediately struck by their collective enthusiasm and dedication to their craft. Their launch gig on 20 September should prove an ideal opportunity for them to demonstrate this, before taking the project to it's next level; working on the wards and sharing their music and ideas there. It feels like something very special is just around the corner for Refuge."

Said Pete: "The opportunity to work alongside Mark and Gaz is fantastic. Moving InWards will be workshopping and then touring across 10 LPT mental health wards. It will build on 'Sounds Inclusive' a broader programme of work with the same intention, currently being piloted across the Trust, by LPT's Arts in Health Coordinators. A key aim of 'Moving InWards' will be to develop a best practice model for ongoing use and for potential roll-out by other NHS Trusts around the UK. "

Tickets for the launch event are available on the door for the special price of £5 concessions and £8 full price or to secure a ticket in advance go to

<http://www.wegotickets.com/event/286255>

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**NOTES TO EDITORS** Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT) provides a range of health and wellbeing services mainly for people living Leicester, Leicestershire and. Trust serves a population of one million, has a budget in excess of £267 million and employs approximately 5,400 staff. For more information visit [www.leicspart.nhs.uk](http://www.leicspart.nhs.uk)

**REFUGE** is an acoustic band, interested in community growth through music and composed of Phil Seaman, Sam Munton and lead singer, Pete Hirst. They have produced several albums: 'Etched in Blue', 'Allowed a Voice' and 'Time Together' and been featured on BBC Introducing and ITV News. The band has a history of supporting a number of mental health charities and projects, including 'the yellow book' from 'rethink your mind' and 'Open Minds' - which were created by Pete Hirst and gained the interest of a range of key artists and innovators, including: Professor Lord Patel of Bradford OBE.

**MARK MORRISS** is the former lead singer of The Bluetones, producing six studio albums, three UK Top Tens, including number 1 album 'Expecting to Fly'; thirteen Top Forty singles and a 1996 Brit nomination. He has toured extensively - across the UK, Europe and Japan, recorded two solo albums and music for various side projects, including Title & Chapter music for six audio books of David Walliams' children's stories. He was an 'Album Of The Year' judge for the Ivor Novello Awards. For more information, see [www.markmorrissmusic.co.uk](http://www.markmorrissmusic.co.uk).

**GAZ BIRTLES** has more than 30 years experience, from music development officer, Northampton County Council, to saxophone player for The Beautiful South and others, touring internationally. Now, Manager of 'The South', and main promoter at The Donkey, Leicester ([www.thedonkeybar.com](http://www.thedonkeybar.com))

**OLIVIA ROSE DEANE** is a 21 year old singer/songwriter, musician and actress from Warwickshire. Born near Stratford Upon Avon, she has been involved with the arts from an early age. A keen member of LUT (Leicester University Theatre) as a performer, director and costumier,