

MEDIA RELEASE

ES_05_17

15 February 2017



Performance poet and Psychiatric Nurse, Rob Gee, on stage with a group of Bright Sparks service users

Mental health service users perform sold out comedy show

Last Friday evening (10th February 2017), mental health service users performed their hit comedy showcase 'Jekyll and Hyde in The Asylum' to a full house at the Attenborough Arts Centre in Leicester.

The performance, an anarchic satirical view at the state of contemporary politics, was the result of a series of comedy workshops facilitated by performance poet and psychiatric nurse Rob Gee, with support from former Leicester Mercury Comedian of the Year Matt Hollins. The project being delivered by BrightSparks: Arts in Mental Health Group with the support of Tim Sayers, one of the Arts in Mental Health Co-ordinators at Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust.

Bright Sparks Arts In Mental Health Group is an independent small voluntary group who have been successful in securing over £150,000 funding from The Big Lottery to deliver Comedy in mental health across Leicester and the East Midlands.

Based loosely on the story of Jekyll and Hyde, the performance was a series of improvised, script free sketches.

Reflecting on the performance, Tim Sayers, says it was a 'wonderful vehicle for engaging mental health service users in meaningful activity, promoting confidence and a sense of identity - allowing them to explore different areas of their lives in a positive way through the power of comedy.'

Enjoying the show's success, Rob Gee gleefully summarises the show to be about 'Dr Jekyll, a junior doctor who is doing his best to deal with residents of a psychiatric home (or "political asylum") in which all the residents are prominent politicians, including Donald Trump, Angela Merkel and Teresa May.'

The project is delivered in partnership with Leicester Comedy Festival, The Attenborough Arts Centre and is managed by Sallie Varnum. The show has been funded to be part of the Leicester Comedy Festival for the next five years.

Note to editors

Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT) provides a range of health and wellbeing services mainly for people living Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. The Trust serves a population of one million, has a budget in excess of £282 million and employs approximately 5,400 staff. For more information visit www.leicspart.nhs.uk

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