

## **Press Release – CARE Project**

The **Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)** has awarded researchers at the University of Manchester, the Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust, and the University of London, Birkbeck a three-year grant of approximately £1Million to explore the concept of *Care Aesthetics*.

***Care Aesthetics: Research Exploration (CARE)*** asks what happens when we consider care a craft or artful practice. Considering the contemporary *crisis in care*, the project will explore how sensory and embodied practices of care can improve care services and change the quality of socially engaged arts practices. As part of its design, in year 2 of the study, CARE will run case studies in three settings: i) NHS in-patient dementia assessment wards; ii) with care workers in the community; and iii) with artists working in care homes. In addition, the study team will also conduct a major study into creative responses to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Madeleine Bunting in her 2020 book '*Labours of Love: The Crisis of Care*' called care 'that close but poor relation of artistic creativity'. CARE seeks to elevate care to its proper position as a creative practice that can contribute effectively to health and social care services. The project will highlight the immense skills of care staff and aims to support the caring practices of artists working in health and social care settings.

Principle Investigator, James Thompson said, 'We are delighted with this award and excited to be exploring care in new ways, drawing on the best from the arts, health and social care research – and developing new aesthetically rich and dynamic care practices which are vital for our current times'.

CARE will launch a **Care Aesthetic Lab** in year one to bring practitioners from health and social care together with artists to explore new methods and practices of care, and to foster public engagement with the project.

The CARE team are:

Professor James Thompson (PI) – Drama, School of Arts Languages and Cultures, University of Manchester

Professor John Keady (CoI) – Professor of Older People's Mental Health, Division of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work, University of Manchester

Dr Jackie Kindell (CoI) – Visiting Lecturer, University of Manchester and Head of Allied Health Professionals and Social Workers, Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust.

Dr Kerry Harman (CoI) – Senior Lecturer, Department of Psychosocial Studies, University of London, Birkbeck.

Jenny Harris – Lead Artist, Manchester.

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