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Striking new community mural completed at Waldron Health Centre

- **Health partners, leading arts group Artmongers and local residents collaborate on huge public art installation in south London**

- **Mural titled *'The Thing About Caring'* draws on themes of connection and belonging, and features colourful, bead-like elements that flow across the building's façade**



A striking new community mural has been completed at The Waldron Health Centre in New Cross, South London, with the building's existing timber cladding entirely covered with a flowing field of painted bead-like elements. The project has been led by key health partners at The Waldron working with leading arts organisations, and follows engagement with local residents about how to strengthen the building's identity within the community.

The Waldron Health Centre was built in 2008 under the NHS LIFT Programme by health investor Fulcrum together with Community Health Partnerships (a key part of the NHS family), and leading construction company Willmott Dixon. The Waldron has grown to become a vital part of the local community, offering a range of integrated health and social care services under one roof, but key health partners are continually looking at ways to improve the building – as a result, Fulcrum, Community Health Partnerships and South East London Integrated Care Board developed plans for a public art installation including:

- **An art project shaped by local residents** - leading placemaking group the 360 Degree Society were brought on board to develop the scope of the project, source the artist and engage with the community (including local residents, community workers, police officers and healthcare staff) to seek their views on The Waldron to understand how a public art project could take shape;

- **Improving the building's connection with the local community** – the workshops with local people revealed the Waldron's importance as a place for healthcare, community activities and social connection. Conversations also explored the building's appearance and its relationship with the surrounding neighbourhood, helping to shape an artwork that introduces colour, warmth and movement to the exterior, while strengthening its connection with the local community. The project also builds on earlier work by Crying Sons who engaged with individuals involved in the local graffiti subculture, and recommended exploring community murals at The Waldron as a way to reduce graffiti 'tagging' in future;

- **A striking mural design is created** – leading arts group Artmongers, led by Patricio Forrester, were brought on board to create a new community mural for The Waldron. Drawing on themes of connection and belonging that emerged

through the community engagement, as well as observations and interactions during the workshops – including jewellery worn by one participant – Patricio developed a design using colourful, bead-like elements that flow across the building's façade, a layered artwork that invites viewers to *"join the dots and make of it what they will";*

- **Partnership working to bring the project to life** – over the last few weeks, the Artmongers team have been joined by a number of local volunteers to complete the painting of the mural across The Waldron, with the finished artwork – titled *'The Thing About Caring'* - a testament to community collaboration. The project has been developed by Fulcrum, CHP, South East London Integrated Care Board, Artmongers, and the 360 Degree Society. Funding was provided by Fulcrum and Willmott Dixon, with materials donated by supply chain partner AkzoNobel.

Patricio Forrester from Artmongers said: *"It's unusual to have a mural in a healthcare setting that invites different interpretations. Our workshop out on the street helped shape the idea of an artwork that rewards the passer-by – a gentle invitation to join the dots, make connections and see the building, and perhaps the world around them, a little differently."*

Fulcrum General Manager Arlind Zenel said: *"The Waldron is already a thriving part of the local community but this stunning new mural breathes new life into a much-loved building, and shows what an important role public art can play in supporting the health and wellbeing of local people. As a project inspired by local residents, supported by a range of health partners, and delivered by leading arts organisations, this new piece of public art is also a testament to partnership working and community collaboration."*

Anastasia Chrysafi, National Healthcare Lead from Willmott Dixon said: *"When we built the Waldron in 2008, the aim was to bring GP and community services under one roof for people in New Cross. Eighteen years on, it's doing that job really well, and this mural shows what keeps a health centre at the heart of its community: local people having a real say in how it looks and feels. This is a great example of the lasting social value that can be achieved through long term partnerships, and how neighbourhood health is about much more than the building itself. We're proud to have played a part in bringing this fantastic community led project to life and extremely grateful to our supply chain partners for donating the materials to help make it happen."*

Louise Brooks from 360 Degree Society said: *"What started as a conversation about tackling graffiti became an opportunity to think differently about how the Waldron connects with its surrounding community. Through the engagement, we heard how much people value the relationships, activities and support that make the health centre more than somewhere to attend an appointment. Working with Artmongers, we've been able to bring some of that character to the outside of the building, creating something that reflects the people and place around it."*

Harry Dodd, Strategic Estates Productivity Lead – London, Community Health Partnerships, said: *"CHP buildings are about much more than the services delivered within them. They are at the heart of the communities they serve. The Waldron is a fantastic example of that, by listening to local people and working closely with our partners, this project has created something that strengthens the centre's identity and sense of connection with the neighbourhood. The finished mural is a fantastic celebration of community, creativity and partnership working."*

Tim Borrie, Strategic and Operational Estates Director, South East London Integrated Care System said: *"The Waldron Health Centre is an important part of the local community, and we want our buildings to be places that people feel welcomed into and proud of. This mural has completely transformed the appearance of the health centre, bringing colour, warmth and a real sense of identity. Most importantly, it has been shaped by local people and delivered through partnership, which makes the finished result particularly special."*

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