



# MEDIA RELEASE

***Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty, Leadership - 25 years on from their inception, chief executives and artists collaborate to ask if the Nolan Principles are still a guiding light in public service today.***

*We've Got This: ethics, public service and art* is an innovative mixed-media art exhibition that connects council chief executives with artists from across the country.

The collaborative artworks are responses to the Nolan Principles - the [7 principles of public life](#) first set out by Lord Nolan in 1995 and included in the Ministerial code to this day.

The seven principles apply to everyone who works in the public sector, from a front line social worker, to a chief executive or councillor to the Prime Minister himself. The project reimagines these principles, putting them in a contemporary context.

14 artists and chief executives have collaborated on the artworks, which range from reconstructed metal road signs by artist Richard Knight to ceramic coffee cups by Emma Buckmaster to a punk song by band Cockwomble. Following interviews with their assigned chief executives, the artists took inspiration from the principles to create innovative artworks.

**Martin Swales, President Solace and Chief Executive, South Tyneside Council** said, "This exhibition is stunning. Chief executives and artists have been collaborating to start a new debate about ethics and principles in local government. In these difficult times where ethics can seem opaque at best, a creative approach makes us engage

and think in different ways. *We've Got This* – is about the heart of public service, it's about why we do what we do.”

**Merran McRae, Chief Executive of Wakefield Council** said, “We need a creative conversation about Nolan, public service and what that means for us in these challenging times. It's been fantastic to work with local artists on the project. As individuals and organisations, we need to be more creative, imagine the future, spot patterns, make the invisible visible.”

**Dawn Reeves, Curator** said: “Every artist and commissioner approached their brief in a different way and with different things they wanted to say about the ethics. But clear and common themes have emerged - a golden thread that could lead to the evolution of a new way. The collaborations reveal the fundamental humanity of public servants. The works show why they do what they do. The public service spirit illustrated has the power to build trust and confidence in public institutions – and we've never needed this more. Our colleagues and our communities need to be reminded that from a strong ethical core we gain resilience.”

*We've Got This* takes a fresh look at ethics: re-inventing the Nolan principles in public life through a cutting-edge cross disciplinary art exhibition. The project aims to make sense of the challenging contemporary context, as well as celebrating the good stuff at the heart of public service.

The exhibition will be presented at the 2019 Solace Summit in Birmingham 16 - 18 October, with plans for it to tour in 2020.

**Ends**

## **Notes for editors**

**We've Got This: ethics, public service and art** was commissioned by [Solace](#).

## **Media inquiries**

*For more info about this event or to fix an interview with Dawn Reeves, please contact:*  
[dawn@dawnreeves.com](mailto:dawn@dawnreeves.com)

## **Images**

*For further high res images from the project, please visit: [Media Pack](#).*

**Dawn Reeves** is a story activist, creative facilitator, public services expert and writer. A former director in a large public sector organisation, she now works with a range of clients looking for creative approaches to making change happen. Her energy and enthusiasm for this work comes from a deep curiosity about the world and a drive to collaborate. She has written for the Guardian, and was the writer-in-residence at the Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Contact her via [dawn@dawnreeves.com](mailto:dawn@dawnreeves.com)

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