



Press Release

Immediate Release

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Cygnet Transforms Clinical Space into 'Homely' Social Hub for Nottingham Patients

Clinical space at a Nottinghamshire service for men with learning disabilities has been transformed into a 'social hub' equipped with games, sensory lighting and neon signs as part of a collaboration between staff and patients.

Service users at Cygnet Hospital Clifton, a 25 bed specialist low secure service for men with a personality disorder, who also present with complex mental health needs, now have access to a homely environment – named 'Social Hub'.

The social hub was set up away from the wards after an unused space was given a stunning makeover in an effort to provide service users with a safe space where they could relax and socialise together.

The Social Hubs have been designed and installed across more than a dozen Cygnet Health Care services so far and all have been co-produced between staff and patients, with more to come.

Working from a wish list of items provided by service users, a team of staff and Experts by Experience (those with lived experience of inpatient settings) worked together to spend a day at the Cygnet Health Care service on Clifton Lane, transforming an otherwise empty room into a brand new space featuring games consoles, comfortable seating areas, arcade machines and sensory lighting.

The idea is that the social hubs offer a non-clinical, homely space for service users to relax and engage in fun activities and peer support sessions, giving them a safe space away from the wards.

Service users were placed at the heart of the project from the very beginning and were escorted to a local shopping centre so they could be directly involved in choosing the items that were bought for the hub, giving them a further sense of ownership of the project.

Former Cygnet mental health patient Thomas Beasley oversaw the renovation. He said: "It has been a pleasure to deliver another social hub here at Cygnet Hospital Clifton.

"All of the activities in the room were chosen by the patients on site which gives them a real sense of ownership over this incredible facility.

"The social hub will provide an environment away from the clinical setting for the service users to relax and unwind without feeling they are bound by the same restrictions on the ward.

"The social hub will have a really positive impact on the wellbeing of both staff and service users alike."

Javaid Razzaq is a Support Worker at Cygnet Health Care who has been involved with the social hub project since its inception, at Cygnet Hospital Bierley.

He explained: "The Social Hub has had a great impact in all Cygnet services and service users absolutely love these new spaces. It gives our hospitals a homely feel and they help to grant the ultimate off ward experience for our service users which is hugely important for their ongoing recovery.

"The relaxed atmosphere of the social hub will foster better therapeutic relationships, allowing staff to interact with patients in a more informal and enjoyable setting.

"It has demonstrated that when service users and staff work together, they can transform built environments and create spaces that significantly enhance mental health care. The ultimate beneficiaries are the service users, who gain a place that feels invested in and reflects their needs and preferences.

"The importance of the built environment in mental health recovery cannot be overstated.

"Our social hub will promote engagement, support recovery, and foster a sense of community, making a tangible difference in the lives of those who use it."

Raf Hamaizia, Cygnet Health Care Expert by Experience Lead, added: "As someone who has been a service user and now works in mental health services, I have witnessed first-hand the profound impact that the built environment can have on mental health recovery.

"The sterile, often drab environments of psychiatric hospitals have long been a point of contention, with service users frequently describing them to me as "noisy, depressing, boring and too clinical"—feelings that can exacerbate their conditions, which is counterproductive to the very purpose of settings that are supposed to promote recovery.

"The idea behind social hubs is to transform these spaces into least restrictive, non-clinical, homely environments where service users can relax, engage in fun activities, and receive peer support.

“Shared social spaces play a crucial role in mental health hospitals by providing a sanctuary for patients to connect, heal, and rebuild their sense of community,” added Raf.

“By fostering a sense of belonging and support, social hubs become vital therapeutic tools, facilitating recovery journeys and empowering individuals to reclaim their lives beyond their diagnosis.”

The Cygnet Social Hub project was recently shortlisted for a national award in the Environment of Care category at this year’s Patient Experience Network National Awards. Winners will be announced in October.

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