



Press Release

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For Immediate Release

Music Changes Lives of Men with Mental Health Needs

Service users with mental health needs have spoken of the positive difference a music programme has made to their ongoing recovery.

In the Music 2 Empower video by Cygnet Health Care, the leading health and social care company spoke with two former service users, DuVonne and William, who both featured in some of the early episodes to find out how music continues to play a massive part in their recovery.

Harnessing the power of music through therapy can help people across mental health care settings, where it is used to promote improvements in people's social relations and connectedness, as well as building confidence and self-esteem. Music 2 Empower is an initiative launched in October 2019 and aims to bring the positive effects of music therapy across Cygnet's 150 services.

DuVonne, a former service user at Cygnet Hospital Blackheath, a service for men with mental health needs in South East London, featured in one of the first Music 2 Empower episodes in March 2020. He began by playing keyboards in church and started to write his own music at the age of 14.

Despite his long love of music when he was first approached to do a music video for Music 2 Empower, DuVonne was a bit sceptical: *"I thought the whole concept of Music 2 Empower was a bit fantastical. I thought why? It took a long time I must admit for the penny to drop that music does actually empower people especially to strive for something and to go beyond what they see in front of them, which is just life on the ward."*

For DuVonne, music therapy, and the opportunity to record songs in the studio was a huge source of enjoyment and empowerment, and he credits the project with allowing people to find their voice and 'speak their truth'. He recalls that music sessions enable you to 'put things into perspective'; 'to understand what you don't necessarily understand about your own life and circumstances' and to 'see things are right there in front of you' by 'hearing them back' in your music.

Today DuVonne is an Expert by Experience for Cygnet Health Care - someone who has personal experience of using or caring for someone who uses health, mental health and/or social care. Music still plays a huge role in his life and he still sings, occasionally writes songs and is in talks about putting a choir together.

In the summer of 2021 William, aka Phenomenal K, recorded and shot a music video for his song 'All I Need'. At the time William was a service user at Cygnet Hospital Maidstone, a mental health facility for adults, and the song was inspired by his struggle with mental health problems and his work towards recovery.

William has since been discharged and is living at home in the community.

Music 2 Empower has helped reignite William's career as a musician since discharge. William said: *"I came up with the name Phenomenal because I thought I was great, and K matches with my last name. Music2Empower boosted my confidence and self-esteem and I appreciate the whole team who made this project happen for me.*

"I've started my own YouTube channel and I'm making a go to reach a thousand views and after that it will go upwards and forwards hopefully."

Raf Hamaizia, Cygnet's Expert by Experience Lead, has been key to the Music 2 Empower programme. Being able to catch up with DuVonne and William was particularly fulfilling, as Raf explains: *"This episode is special as often we hear from people who are currently in services but for the first time we are able to see the impact this important programme has had on people once they have moved on into the community.*

"A societal paradigm shift has happened over the years, in which receiving support is far from being seen as 'the end of the road' for people, but the start of a new journey based on hope, recovery and ambition.

"DuVonne and William are testimony to the fact that what we do today to support people in services, sticks with people and makes a massive impact tomorrow in the community."

To watch the latest episode of Music 2 Empower featuring DuVonne and Phenomenal K, click [here](#).

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Notes to Editors

For interviews, please contact Gemma Attew, External Communications Manager, at gemmaattew@cygnethealth.co.uk

About Cygnet Health Care

Cygnet Health Care has been providing a national network of high-quality, specialised mental health services for the NHS and local authorities for the past 30 years.

Cygnet Health Care's pioneering services support people with complex and acute mental health needs across the UK.

As one of the best quality providers in mental health services in the country, Cygnet Health Care's focus is always on the best outcomes for those who use or commission its services. 85% of Cygnet's facilities are rated as good or outstanding, which is above the national average. www.cygnethealth.co.uk