



## Press Release

7 November 2022

### For Immediate Release

#### **Mental Health Worker Set To Represent His Country**

A mental health support worker from Surrey has spoken of his pride at being selected to represent his country at the upcoming Masters Rugby League International Festival.

Stephen Lowrie, 46, has been selected to play for England in the Master's Rugby League International Festival in York next weekend. England will meet nations including Australia, Canada, France, Ireland and Wales in the tournament.

Stephen, a mental health support worker at Cygnet Hospital Woking, has played rugby league for nearly 30 years and switched to playing Masters Rugby League twelve years ago. He discovered last month that he had been selected for England at the upcoming festival and said it had been a "whirlwind" ever since.

He said: *"I went through all the emotions. Shocked, amazed, pride. Then ultimately I was just left feeling really happy. It sank in when I received my kit. Bringing my England top home was a surreal moment but it finally hit home the achievement of being selected. It was something special.*

*"Pulling on the national top for my country in a sport I love and singing the national anthem will be a moment to cherish and one I'm sure I won't forget."*

Masters Rugby League is a moderated version of rugby league for a wide age range of older, semi-retired and non-competitive players and officials. The players wear different coloured shorts depending on their ages and the physicality of the sport.

Describing his love for the sport, Stephen said: *"I tried to keep playing rugby league but as I was getting older, trying to chase 18 year olds around the pitch, I realised I couldn't play the game to my full potential anymore.*

*"Discovering Masters Rugby League has given me a new lease of life. It has allowed me to continue playing the game I love.*

*"Of course there are rivalries in the sport but all the fans come together and create an incredible atmosphere. With Masters Rugby League, we all have life experiences and journeys behind us and it creates a special bond. The saying goes, 'we don't stop playing because we are old, we grow old because we stop playing.'"*

In his day job at Cygnet Hospital Woking, Stephen helps to support women who are struggling with their mental health on the Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit. He said all of the patients who he has told about his selected are very excited for him.

*“The patients and the staff have all been brilliant and keep congratulating me,” he added. “They are going to try and watch the matches on YouTube. It definitely gives me extra motivation knowing the support I have from everyone I work with.”*

Carla Roadnight, hospital manager at Cygnet Hospital Woking, said everybody was very proud of Stephen and would be rooting for him at the tournament.

She added: *“We are all so happy for him that he has the honour and privilege of representing his country.*

*“We all wish him the very best of luck and we cannot wait to hear from him about how he gets on. We hope he enjoys every moment.”*

The International Masters Festival will take place in York on Sunday 13 November.

Ends

**Notes to Editors:**

For more information, please contact Gemma Attew, External Communications Manager, on [gemmaattew@cygnethealth.co.uk](mailto:gemmaattew@cygnethealth.co.uk) or 07718 244811.

**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.

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