



Press Release

6 October 2022

For Immediate Release

West Midlands Police Collaborate with Mental Health Patients on “Easy Read” Documents

West Midlands Police worked with service users from a mental health hospital to ensure they recognised and understood the needs of people with learning disabilities.

Earlier this year, representatives from West Midlands Police visited Cygnet Cedars, on Broadway Avenue, Birmingham to speak with service users about how the police could best communicate with someone with a learning disability. Cygnet Cedars, run by Cygnet Health Care, is a 24-bed high dependency complex care service for men with learning disabilities, associated complex needs and who may have behaviours that challenge.

Together, they created a document using inclusive language that would help those with learning disabilities understand their rights and entitlements if they are arrested.

Amy Moss, Speech and Language Therapist at Cygnet Health Care, explained: *“During the training, the police mentioned that they have a ‘Rights and Entitlements’ easy read document. Cygnet Cedars service users did not find this easy read document accessible or user friendly.*

“The police requested that the service users work with the Speech Therapist to create their own more accessible version of the ‘Rights and Entitlements’ easy read”.

Three dedicated service users came together every Friday morning to create the easy read document. This week, West Midlands Police were invited back to the service to discuss how the document was made.

Amy continued: *“The service users worked hard to decide what words and pictures they thought would be most accessible to those with learning disabilities. The police were really impressed with the work the service users had done.*

“It has made me proud to watch the service users’ work as a team to problem solve and make creative decisions to co-producing the easy read. The service users were motivated to work on this document to help ease the anxiety of being arrested for individuals with a learning disability”.

PC Luke Cooper, from the Bordesley Green neighbourhood policing team, said: *“The patients had some great ideas and wanted to ask us questions regarding policing and mental health. The patients shared their experiences with us and how they thought we could improve. It was a humbling experience for me and I found it really thought-provoking.*

“It is brilliant to speak with the patients and gain knowledge from their learnt experience. This will only help us provide a better service.”

Ends

Notes to Editors:

For more information, please contact Gemma Attew, External Communications Manager, on 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.

www.cygnethealth.co.uk