

Meet the Central Safeguarding Team

Phillip Winterbottom – Head of Safeguarding



After starting as a Healthcare Assistant in acute admissions in 2003 then qualifying as a Mental Health Nurse in 2007 from the University of Surrey, Phil worked as a nurse and manager for many years in various mental health and social care settings including acute, eating disorders, addictions and managing supported living services including forensic step-down. In the last few years Phil has held safeguarding roles from service level, to regional through to UK-wide.

Phil teaches Safeguarding Leadership and other areas to Masters Students as an Honorary Fellow of the university where he completed an MSc in Child Protection and Safeguarding Adults. He works closely with colleagues across the country, commissioners and NHS England in various networks, including the Safeguarding Adults National Network, the Safeguarding Children National Network for Named Practitioners and is also representing the independent sector on the Liberty Protection Safeguards National Clinical Reference Group alongside NHSE, the DHSC, CQC and Royal Colleges. Phil chairs the Independent Health Providers Safeguarding Forum.

Phil said:

“I’m delighted to be leading such a motivated and caring team, we are privileged to care for and support our service users and safeguarding is one of the golden threads of safety that should run through the whole organisation. Safeguarding, when it’s done well,

isn't just everyone's business, it is everyday business. We're here to help everyone make that happen."

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Laura Smith – Named Nurse for Safeguarding Adults, Children (including Looked After Children) and Transition



After qualifying as a Registered Mental Health Nurse, Laura worked predominantly for one of Cygnets Low Secure Services and was fortunate to spend time with other areas such as CAMHS and Personality Disorder services. Laura then worked as a Health Visitor in the community, before being employed in safeguarding positions for almost six years. Prior to joining Cygnets again in 2022, she held the roles of Named

Nurse for Safeguarding Children and Looked After Children, Named Nurse for Safeguarding Adults, Safeguarding Families Practitioner and Specialist Safeguarding Families Practitioner.

Describing why safeguarding is important to her, Laura says:

"I became aware early on in my career, of the large number of service users we care for, who were sadly subjected to abuse and neglect; and the short and long-term impact this had on their lives and at times, those around them. I recognised I could use my experience and interest in the evolving world of safeguarding, to help stop abuse and support services to safeguard those individuals, who are unable to protect and safeguard themselves."

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Jenny Harkness- Named Professional for Safeguarding Adults and Children



Jenny began her career in social care as a support worker with Children with Learning Disabilities and went on to Qualify as a Social Worker 22 years ago. Jenny has a wide range of experience working with Adults and Children, both in the community and in Hospital settings. She has worked with various Local Authorities across the UK, from the New Forest up to York and she

worked for a Charity supporting Adults who have Learning Disabilities.

Jenny has worked for Cygnet for three years and said "Throughout my career, Safeguarding has been my key area of interest. I feel privileged to hold my current position with an organisation that is transparent, committed to learning and determined to strive for the best outcomes for everyone we support."

Sue Spree – Central Safeguarding Team Administrator



Sue recently joined the team as the Central Safeguarding Team Administrator, she supports the team with a wide number of activities and is the first point of contact through the [safeguarding inbox](#). Sue has recently worked for Buckinghamshire council as an EA for the service directors of Highways & Technical and Neighbourhood services. Sue has also worked for a number of blue chip companies within facilities management, providing her with a good understanding of dealing with peoples different priorities, effective communication & developing working relationships.

Ways you can contact the Safeguarding Team

Please contact the Central Safeguarding Team via the teams email:
Centralsafeguardingteam@cygnethealth.co.uk.

Visit the Cygnet Safeguarding Intranet page:
<https://www.cygnethealth.co.uk/about/safeguarding/>

Please note, the Central Safeguarding Team working hours align with our safeguarding partners across the sector and are:

Monday to Friday 9:00am to 5:00pm.