Press Release

For Immediate Release

West Brom Mental Health Worker Share Appreciation during National Apprenticeship Week

A member of staff at a West Bromwich hospital has spoken of his pride after coming through an apprenticeship program which has enabled him to better support men with mental health difficulties.

This week it is National Apprenticeship Week, which aims to highlight the exceptional work being done by apprentices and employers across the UK.

Warren Bridges is a Registered Mental Health Nurse at Cygnet Heathers on Grout Street, West Bromwich, a 20 bed service providing neuropsychiatric and neurodegenerative rehabilitation for men with mental health difficulties and acquired brain injury.

He joined Cygnet Health Care as a support worker nine years ago and always had ambition to further his career.

He explained: "*I always wanted to get into nursing and I am very grateful that the Apprenticeship pathway opened up that gateway and has allowed me to flourish.*"

His apprenticeship journey started in 2018 with the Cygnet Health Care Nursing Pathway Apprentice Programme, which addresses an industry-wide shortage of nurses, as recruitment and retention of staff remains a key concern for the sector.

Cygnet, a leading provider of services for individuals with mental health needs, learning disabilities and autism, is leading the sector on the employment of nurse associates and the development of nurse apprenticeships to help overcome these challenges.

"*It was a steep learning curve, but I'm really glad I did it,*" said Warren. "*Balancing being a support worker with the apprenticeship was challenging but very rewarding.*"

Warren qualified as a Nurse Associate in 2020 and completed his follow up nursing degree apprenticeship last year.

"*The apprenticeship has helped me to increase my knowledge base and I use what I have learnt in my role all the time,*" he added. "*The skills I have gained help me to support the nursing team and our service users with up-to-date, evidence-based practice.*"

Cygnet Health Care offers opportunities ranging from nursing, healthcare, management, HR, IT and finance to help people grow their skills and embrace new challenges.

"*For what Cygnet have invested in me, I feel like I am able to give that back to our service users,*" said Warren "*It has enriched my ability to help. They have been fantastic throughout the whole process.*"

The training is free to the apprentices because Cygnet Health Care funded the programme through levy, introduced by the government in 2017.

To date, more than 600 Cygnet Health Care staff have completed an apprenticeship pathway.

Suzanne Smith, Apprenticeship Manager at Cygnet, said: *"We want our existing staff to feel invested in, and able to recognise that we support career progression, empowering them to forge their own path and take every opportunity to create a clearly defined career pathway.*

"The passion and drive to succeed exhibited by our apprentices like Warren has been awe inspiring. He has flowered and grown. I couldn't be prouder seeing him take their place in our services, using his expertise and skills to support our service users."

"Offering clear pathways that enable people to enter the profession, pursue their career goals and in turn retain their talent is the ultimate goal for us."

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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