



Press Release

For Immediate Release

Kewstoke Mental Health Workers Share Appreciation during National Apprenticeship Week

TWO staff from a Kewstoke hospital have spoken of their appreciation for an apprenticeship programme which is furthering their career and enabling them to better support men and women with mental health difficulties.

This week it is National Apprenticeship Week 2023, which aims to highlight the exceptional work being done by apprentices and employers across the UK.

Billy Chadwick and Charlotte McGlynn both work at Cygnet Hospital Kewstoke, on Beach Road, which provides emergency admissions services for men and women, and a pathway for women from low secure to rehabilitation including a specialist service for personality disorder.

Billy has worked at Kewstoke for nearly three years and is currently a senior support worker. He will soon begin his Cygnet Health Care-funded Nursing apprenticeship. The pathway consists of three stages: Assistant Practitioner, Nursing Associate and Registered Nurse.

He said: *"I find working in mental health very rewarding, and I feel gratified that I have helped with their mental health journey leading to discharge. I, along with the team, work hard by being committed in leaving a lasting impression on our service users.*

"I want to be in a position where I am able to ensure people who are arguably going through the worst time of their lives, have a positive experience here at Kewstoke and recognise that with the support we provide, they can recover and go on to lead fulfilling lives.

"This apprenticeship programme will give me that knowledge and that skill set to really make a positive difference and I am incredibly grateful that I have this opportunity."

Supporting the career development of support workers, the Cygnet Health Care Nursing Pathway Apprentice Programme 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.

Billy added: *"The national shortage of nurses, in particular mental health nurses, is well documented, which is why it is so important Cygnet is able to offer an apprenticeship programme for staff who want to pursue a nursing career.*

"It's not just about addressing shortage however. It's about consistency of care. Like me, apprentices are already embedded in our services, they know the values and how the hospital operates."

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

Charlotte is also a beneficiary of the Cygnnet Health Care apprenticeship programme and is currently in her second year of the Nursing Associate apprenticeship with University College Birmingham. She hopes to be fully qualified by 2024/5 and her future aspiration is to provide high quality care as a Nurse with hopes to progress into management in the future.

Charlotte, who is currently a mental health support worker, has worked at Cygnnet Hospital Kewstoke since 2015. She said: *"The apprenticeship programme is an amazing opportunity. Getting real life experience in an actual work environment and learning from experts in their field is invaluable."*

"The managers at Kewstoke have been very helpful, and I'm part of a really supportive team. I'm getting the opportunity to work with and learn from people who are really experienced at what they do."

"The apprenticeship programme is an incredible initiative, not least because it makes you feel valued and invested in, but also empowers you to be a better version of yourself. I will be indebted to Cygnnet for the rest of my career as without them, nursing would not have been possible for me."

"The programme has definitely developed my practical skills and has given me a greater understanding of inpatient care. Mental health as a sector has not always had a good physical health knowledge base and by introducing the role of Nurse Associate we are now able to monitor, care and support physical health for our patients where we may have had to hand this over to an outside professional."

To date, Cygnnet has offered **125** staff the opportunity to become Nurse Associates or Nurses.

Suzanne Smith, Apprenticeship Manager at Cygnnet, said: *"Billy and Charlotte are the perfect example of how much Apprenticeships benefit both the Apprentice and the business."*

"We wanted to offer a complete Nursing Pathway Apprenticeship route in our organisation to enable a journey from support worker, nursing associate, student nurse to registered mental health nurse. Not only does this help us with recruitment at a time of national shortage, it also helps with retaining high quality staff and gives an amazing opportunity to thrive and progress."

"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 Billy and Charlotte has been awe inspiring. They have flowered and grown. I couldn't be prouder seeing them take their place in our services, using their expertise and skills to support our service users."

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

"Not placing any financial burden on the individuals demonstrates the commitment us as an organisation dedicate to this programme and to the staff as individuals. We hope to reap the rewards of that through high quality, trained staff but also loyal ones that the organisation can retain for many years to come," added Suzanne. *"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