



Press Release

Immediate Release

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Cygnet Artist Named Finalist in Design in Mental Health Awards

AN ARTIST has been named a finalist in a national awards for her creative work in improving the environments across health and social care services.

Charmaine Twidale, 27, of Hartlepool, is the in-house co-production artist at leading health and social care company, Cygnet, and has secured a place in the finals of the Design in Mental Health Awards in the category, Art Installation of the Year.

It is for the mural she produced at Hope House, a service provided by Cygnet Social Care which supports adults living with a learning disability who have additional mental and physical health needs and behaviours that may challenge.

She explained: "The pandemic was isolating, lonely and it got to a point where I felt lost. Art became my therapy and my calm. It helped my anxiety and helped me to express myself as an artist and person. It became a big part of my life again and I became Hope House's personal artist.

"I painted murals around the building to help make it feel more homely and personal to the individuals we care for. I wanted my designs to be based on how we could make the space calm and relaxing but brighter."

For the large mural nominated for the award, Charmaine talked to residents about what lifts their mood and gives them hope. Together they decided on countryside with a springtime feel, incorporating a blossom tree to signify new beginnings and a horizon representing opportunity and possibility. Expertly painted woodland animals reflect nature that is native to the UK, helping to create a sense of familiarity and, importantly for the service users, homeliness. Rolling hills, blue sky and flowers carry the artwork across three walls and onto the ceiling to create a calming corner of English countryside that wraps around the room. It conjures up the feeling of walks, picnics and leisurely days in the hills.

A small, unobtrusive seat serves to welcome residents and staff to be part of the picture, sit amidst the daisies and be immersed into the artwork for a moment of contemplation. All of these elements serve to create a calming space.

The mural received an enormous amount of positive feedback from service. All of Charmaine's artwork is based on ideas from patients and residents, through talking,

experience, speaking to staff and relatives and learning about the interests of each individual.

She added: "Whatever the outcome of the awards, I feel extremely honoured to have been named a finalist and will continue to work creatively to ensure the settings across our health and social care services are befitting of the environments our service users deserve.

"At Cygnet we champion the therapeutic benefits and power of art to transform our environments for both staff and residents. To us, art is not just a 'picture' hung on the wall. It's about hope, co-production, sustainability awareness and creating improved facilities for some of society's most vulnerable and often marginalised individuals. We want to connect staff and service users through art and creativity to bring people together.

"I am beyond proud that my designs help to create settings that are calm, relaxing and brighter. Ultimately, through my work I want to lift people's mood and give them hope for a brighter future."

Dr Tony Romero, CEO of Cygnet Group, said he was thrilled for Charmaine.

He added: "Across our health and social care services at Cygnet, we place great importance on the quality of our environments. We have long championed the importance of creativity in improving mental wellbeing and Charmaine is thoroughly deserving of her place as a finalist in the awards. She has transformed some of our environments and been responsible for bringing the therapeutic benefits of art to so many of our service users.

"The partnership of co-production and creativity at Cygnet is inspiring and I am proud to see so many collaborations between service users and staff which Charmaine has overseen.

"She has given them a calming space and sense of identity and we all wish her the best of luck at the awards."