



Press Release

Immediate Release

Cygnet Elms bag three nominations for the National Service User Awards

Three service users from a Birmingham care service which supports women with learning disabilities have been nominated for a national award which celebrates service user-led initiatives in mental health, learning disability and autism services across the UK.

The women, from Cygnet Elms, join three other nominees from Cygnet Health Care services at the National Service User Awards. Individuals involved in the shortlisted projects are invited to a black tie gala awards ceremony on 20 September, where the winners will be announced.

Flo Grant, an autistic service user at the Streetly Road service, is a finalist in the Lived Experience Leader Award category, which is for individuals with lived experience of mental health needs, learning disabilities or autism, who have driven projects forward and shown the qualities of a leader. It is for those who have inspired others and made a difference at service level to national level.

Flo worked with the Cygnet Health Care Assistant Psychologist to co-produce a training package that has been delivered to all staff at Cygnet Elms. The training package is centred on people learning how to care for and support people with autism. This training is also looking to be more wide spread across different Cygnet Health Care services in the near future.

Speaking about her nomination, Flo said: "I am very honoured to be nominated as a finalist. I feel that the training I have done is very important and I'm glad it's being recognised. I'm grateful for everyone that has supported me."

Jade Myatt, the Assistant Psychologist at Cygnet Elms said: "It's been such an honour to help Flo create the Autism Training package, I can't take much of the credit at all, it is entirely Flo's work and Flo's own account of how they think Autistic people should be cared for and supported.

"I couldn't be more proud of the work we've created and I hope this just leads to more co-production in the future."

Flo is joined by two other Cygnet Elms service users in being recognised at the awards. Service user Vicki is a finalist for the Hope and Positivity Award category, which recognises the power of small actions in making a big difference. It recognises individuals that are consistently looking out for others and spreading hope and positivity.

Vicki has been applauded for her work in creating an environment where she could teach others how to use Makaton to communicate with each other. She did this in group settings but also offered 1:1 tutorials as well.

During Autism Awareness Week, Vicki used these sessions to teach people how to sign the colours of the rainbow, as well as other fun things such as songs and catchphrases.

Vicki said: "I am really proud to be a finalist, I'm more proud of the staff and service users who have made this dream a reality because without them I would not be able to teach and raise awareness of Makaton in this type of service."

Vicki is joined by Jessica who is also a finalist in the Hope and Positivity Award category. Jessica approached the Occupational Therapy team at Cygnet Elms with the desire to raise money for the Guide Dogs UK charity. Jessica managed to raise £115 by organising a staff car wash.

She said: "I'm really proud of myself. My Nan used to love guide dogs and she would be proud of me too. Thank you to everyone who donated."

Sarah Jenks, Hospital Manager, said she was really proud of the work that the service users have done throughout their stay at Elms.

She added: "It's great to see so many different projects and pieces of co-production that are helping to better not just our service but other services also. Each one of the service users should feel proud of themselves for the difference they have made with their work, they are all winners in our eyes."

Cygnet Elms is a high dependency complex care service for women with learning disabilities. Run by Cygnet Health Care, it supports individuals who are stepping down from a more secure setting as part of their care pathway. The team provides personalised care to help each person develop the necessary skills to leave the rehabilitation service and move towards living in the community.

The awards are also celebrating their 11th year and winners will be announced on Wednesday 20 September at the Treetops Pavilion, West Midlands Safari Park.

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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.