



Press Release

Immediate Release

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Huddersfield Nurse Shares Story as Part of Mental Health Nurses Day

A nurse from Huddersfield has explained the benefits of a career supporting others during their darkest days as part of Mental Health Nurses Day.

Amy Wilby is a Cygnet Health Care Senior Staff Nurse at Gledholt Mews and Coach House, on Greenhead Road, an enhanced residential service for adults with mental health needs or a personality disorder. It is part of the Cygnet Health Care Division.

She has shared her career journey to mark Mental Health Nurses Day (Weds 21 February), which was created by a group of mental health nurses from across the UK to help people celebrate the work of this group of healthcare professionals.

On how she became a mental health nurse, she explained: *"I have always voiced that I wanted to be a nurse and after working in the retail and catering sector for a number of years I took on a job at a local school as a lunch time supervisor, supporting a child with a learning disability.*

"My own children were growing up so it was now my time to start my own journey and train to be a nurse. I chose learning disability nursing due to my experience within the school setting and I knew that I would spend more time with individuals."

Amy returned to college and completed an access to higher education course and then applied for university. She trained as a Learning Disability Nurse at the University of York, qualifying in 2008. Since qualifying, she has worked in a number of different mental health services including forensic wards, low secure and rehabilitation.

Explaining further her motivation for wanting to work in mental health, she said: *"There continues to be stigma around mental illness and services that are provided. If someone is diagnosed with a mental illness then they should be offered the same opportunities as others.*

"We all at some point in our own lives will experience mental illness whether this is ourselves or a friend or family member. You never know what life will throw at you and your life can change in a moment, through no fault of your own. We should not judge or discriminate others and every one of us should be treated with respect and as equals, mental health diagnosis or not.

"People need a voice, they need people to advocate for them. It is so easy to judge someone if they are 'acting outside the norm'. If I can make a difference to one person by supporting them or directing them to get the correct support then I have achieved something."

She said the best part of her role is supporting the individuals to achieve things they didn't think were possible.

She added: *"To be part of someone's journey I feel is a privilege and during my career I have had the opportunity to be part of a lot of journeys."*

"One in particular that stands out is supporting a resident's family to inform their brother that their mum had sadly passed away. These moments even though they are not the happy moments stay with you. I felt privileged that the family respected and trusted me to be part of this moment with their brother."

Amy said she "loves everything about her job" and in particular, the variety it offers.

She added: *"I have yet to have that feeling when I wake on a morning that I don't want to go to work. Each day is different and you never know what is waiting for you when you get to work. Yes there are days when you have your head in your hands and wonder what you are going to be faced with next. Then there are days when you laugh so much you are unable to stop laughing."*

"Some of the best moments of my job is when I see someone smile because they have achieved something no matter how big or small it may be. Someone having the respect for me so that they are able to speak with me about how they are feeling, anxieties, and concerns they have or what has gone well for them. Seeing someone achieve what they thought they would not achieve makes all the hard work worthwhile."

Encouraging others to consider a career in mental health nursing, Amy added: *"One in four people will experience some form of mental health in their lifetime – there is a shortage of mental health nurses nationally. There is a high demand for trained nurses so opportunities are there you just need to take them."*

"Training to be a mental health nurse gives you the skills to support individuals through the various stages of recovery. There are opportunities to work in a number of different settings supporting children, adults and the elderly."

"My advice would be if you're interested to go see for yourself what it has to offer. There are endless opportunities out there as mental health nurse. It is diverse and there are various roles under the 'umbrella of mental health nurse' community, prison, forensic, rehabilitation the list is endless. If you want to and feel that you can make a difference then what is stopping you? Go on and give it a try."

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Notes to Editors:

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