



Press Release

Immediate Release

18 June 2024

### **Cygnet Hospital Stevenage Gains Triangle of Care Accreditation**

Cygnet Hospital Stevenage has joined seven other Cygnet Health Care services in receiving the prestigious Triangle of Care accreditation for the work it does to involve carers in the support of their loved ones.

In 2023, Cygnet became the first independent provider of health and social care services to be accredited by the Carers Trust Triangle of Care programme.

Cygnet Hospital Stevenage is now one of eight Cygnet services to be recognised for its continued efforts and commitment to improving the way the services work with carers and families.

The hospital, which offers a range of secure and PICU and acute mental health services for men and women, has achieved the one-star accreditation, meaning staff have successfully demonstrated their commitment to making a difference to the lives of carers.

Hospital Manager Alice Zimba explained: "In order to achieve this, we had to successfully demonstrate how we are embedding the Triangle of Care standards within our services, our commitment to ongoing improvements in carer involvement, and how we are making a difference to the lives of carers.

"As part of the accreditation process in May, members of our team also had to give a presentation of our service's Triangle of Care activities to the accreditation panel.

"The Triangle of Care accreditation is one of many initiatives Cygnet has been working on to support families and carers as they deal with the range of emotions and questions they experience when a loved one is in need of mental health care.

"Part of being an accredited service means that we will need to continue to build upon and demonstrate our ongoing commitment to embedding the Triangle of Carer standards; to help carers to express their views and make sure their voice, opinions and experiences are properly heard."

The Triangle of Care is an alliance between carers, service users and health professionals. It aims to promote safety and recovery and to sustain wellbeing in mental health by including and supporting carers.

There are an estimated seven million unpaid carers in the UK, 13% of whom support people with mental health conditions. These carers can provide vital insight into the treatment and condition of those they care for. Carers Trust's Triangle of Care partnership plans to harness that knowledge in an alliance between unpaid carers, those receiving care, services and mental health professionals.

The Triangle of Care was initially developed to improve mental health acute services by adopting these six principles:

1. Carers and the essential role they play are identified at first contact or as soon as possible thereafter.
2. Staff are 'carer aware' and trained in carer engagement strategies.
3. Policy and practice protocols regarding confidentiality and sharing information, are in place.
4. Defined post(s) responsible for carers are in place.
5. A carer introduction to the service and staff is available, with a relevant range of information across the care pathway.
6. A range of carer support services are available.

Alice added: "It is a fantastic achievement and I am proud of Team Stevenage for achieving this recognition and for always keeping carers at the heart of decisions alongside service users.

"Supporting our carers and ensuring they are fully embedded in our care process only strengthens the quality of service that we provide. They really are integral and I am so pleased that our carer inclusion has been recognised."

In their submission response accrediting Cygnet Hospital Stevenage, the review panel stated: "The Cygnet Stevenage team have presented a good submission and are clearly engaged in including carers in their work, the panel thought the staff pledges were a wonderful way of showing this in practice.

"The panel highlighted some areas of good practice from Cygnet Stevenage's submission, include mandatory training for new starters, availability of carer champions to speak with family/friends and carers, carer confidentiality understood and recognised and how the team rose to the challenge of implementing Triangle of Care.

"We saw some evidence of carer feedback, including a compliments log, which clearly showed teams are caring and supportive and excellent feedback from the Family Therapy work.

"We are grateful to a carer, John, for talking about his experience as a parent, and we heard about how Cygnet interact with his daughter. We felt that his story showed how staff communicate with carers about those their care."

Triangle of Care Programme Lead at Carers Trust, Sharon Spurling, commended the work and effort being done at Cygnet hospitals to improve the lives of carers.

“Undertaking the Triangle of Care requires commitment from all levels of an organisation to honestly report how the standards are met and to acknowledge where improvements are needed. The Cygnet hospitals have shown that their work supports wider system change for how carers are recognised and supported as equal and expert partners in care”.

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