



Press Release

Immediate Release

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New 'Social Hub' Installed at Cygnet Hospital Ealing

AN EALING hospital which supports women with an eating disorder or personality disorder is the latest to benefit from a 'social hub', giving patients the chance to relax together in a non-clinical environment to aid their recovery.

The designated 'social hub' at Cygnet Hospital Ealing, on Corfton Road, will provide a relaxing and enjoyable space for patients to unwind in together.

Equipment in the social hub, all requested by the patients themselves, includes TV and gaming consoles, a fully equipped nail bar, massage chair, aromatherapy, sensory lights and arcade machines.

The Cygnet Health Care-run service is a 23-bed hospital offering personalised treatment for service users with an eating disorder or personality disorder over two separate wards.

Working from the wish list of items provided by the service users, a team of staff and Experts by Experience (those with lived experience of inpatient settings) worked together to spend a day at the service, transforming the space into an area which reflects the needs and preferences of the service users.

Raf Hamaizia, Cygnet's Expert by Experience Lead, said: "This will be another therapeutic, least restrictive space which will enable patients to socialise, unwind and engage with staff and peers alike.

"Social hubs are more than a nice space but an opportunity for us to rethink how we can facilitate interactions between patients and staff, and how we can shift to a more modern way of providing support to some of the most vulnerable, marginalised and often discriminated people in society.

"The aim is to change what enhanced observations historically look like, enhance patient engagement whilst they are hospitalised, and also provide more meaningful activities for people during evenings and weekends.

"Social hubs are humanising as it's a place where either staff or service users can win

or lose on games, both can benefit from the sensory integrated built environment and conversations can take place outside of what can be clinical and sometimes restrictive ward environments.

"Generally in mental health services, service users often have friends on other wards but there is little opportunity to be able to interact with them outside of the occasional activity.

"Engagement shouldn't be a 9am – 5pm exercise, as service users unfortunately do not have the same luxury of going home after a shift.

"We must recognise that peers also support each other and that friendships, socialising and empathy based on shared lived experience are key components to recovery."

The grand opening of the social hub took place on Thursday 20 February.

Hospital manager Olajumoke Adegoke said feedback from the service users has been really positive. She added: "The social hub is a fantastic addition to our hospital and I know it will result in a huge transformation in how patients engage with both one another, and with staff. The reactions of the women we support when they saw this new facility was brilliant, they are over the moon to have this new room available to them.

"It will be a space where service users and staff can connect, engage, and truly feel a sense of community. This new addition will not only improve wellbeing, but will foster stronger relationships and a more positive environment for everyone.

"Our team works hard to create a welcoming, cheerful, non-institutional environment, and to support individuals in their recovery and personal transformation. This social hub will go a long way towards ensuring we achieve this every day for those in our care."

Describing the opening event, Raf added: "Both service users and staff alike were straight into it, they loved the massage chairs and sensory vibes.

"We played computer games and watched plenty of music videos too.

"There were some really powerful conversations around how this is going to enable more interactions between wards and enhance meaningful activities, particularly on evenings and weekends."