



Press Release

Immediate Release

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### **Bury Mental Health Service Breaks Barriers During Deaf Awareness Week**

A Greater Manchester mental health service celebrated National Deaf Awareness Week to promote breaking barriers and creating equality for Deaf people.

National Deaf Awareness Week took place this month and with 18 million adults in the UK being deaf or have hearing loss, the week hopes to break barriers and highlight inequalities for Deaf people.

Cygnet Bury Dunes, on Buller Street, is a 65-bed service, part of Cygnet Hospital Bury, and provides a range of inpatient mental health services for men and women, including specialist deaf services and emergency admission services.

The service has a variety of Deaf staff, ranging from support workers to qualified nurses to therapists. A majority of these individuals use British Sign Language (BSL), an official language for many Deaf people in the UK that uses facial expressions, hand signals and body language to communicate.

Over the course of the week, the Cygnet Health Care team held a number of activities and events to promote and raise awareness for Deaf individuals.

Arbab Hussain, a BSL / Deaf Awareness Tutor at Cygnet Bury Dunes, said: "Education is the key to creating an atmosphere that is Deaf friendly, to allow Deaf people to live comfortably, and where hearing people can adapt to meet Deaf people's needs.

"At our service, we planned a range of activities planned to highlight Deaf Awareness Week with a theme of Deaf Identity and Culture. As part of the theme, staff members helped to create a visual catalogue of over 100 inspiring Deaf people from the past and present.

"These pictures and inspiring achievements were displayed as a Wall of Achievement to show positive role models. It was to demonstrate that Deaf people can achieve anything they set their minds to.

"This permanent display will reinforce to Deaf and hearing staff and patients alike, that not only have Deaf people achieved great things through the years, despite the many barriers they have faced, but that our own Deaf staff carry on that role."

On Wednesday 7 May, the Cygnet Bury Dunes team launched a new BSL Social Club which will be held monthly. A Daily Silent Hour was also trialled on the Bridge

Hampton Ward (low secure) with activities to promote signing like Sign Bingo and Charades.

Hearing colleagues were also educated on the dos and don'ts of communicating with Deaf colleagues. The 'do' list included: face your colleagues, point to things for reference, prompt colleagues to get their attention and use clear facial expressions.

Arbab said: "At Cygnet Health Care, it is important that everyone feels included and comfortable to communicate in their preferred way. This is why celebrating National Deaf Awareness Week is so important.

"This celebration allows our Deaf staff and service users as well as the struggles they may face to be represented. It also helps to educate hearing staff and service users on avoiding creating more barriers for Deaf people."