



Press Release
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Carers Week 2025: Beata's story on the importance of carers

A woman with a passion for care and improving the wellbeing of carers has reflected on the importance of carers in health and social care.

Beata Bikowska is a Safeguarding, Wellbeing and Carers Lead at Cygnet Hospital Godden Green.

Located in Kent Weald, Cygnet Hospital Godden Green is a 33-bed hospital providing specialist acute and PICU services for women, run by Cygnet Health Care.

Beata joined Cygnet Group in 2023 after realising how the leading health and social care provider's values of prioritising carer involvement, emotional wellbeing and safeguarding aligned closely with her own similar values.

She said: "I knew I was stepping into an organisation with a strong sense of purpose, a commitment not only to clinical excellence but also to human connection, compassion, and collaboration. My position as a Safeguarding, Wellbeing and Carers Lead allows me to work at the intersection of patient care, staff support, and carer engagement, areas that are often seen as separate but are deeply interconnected.

"Mental health recovery does not happen in isolation. It is a shared journey that depends on a network of support, empathy and trust. At the heart of that network are not only mental health professionals and support staff, but also carers - the parents, siblings, partners, and friends who walk alongside someone through the most difficult periods of their lives."

In her role, Beata has also tried to raise awareness of what a carer actually is, beyond the clinical-sounding label.

She said: "To me, carers are often the people holding things together when systems fall short. They are the ones advocating for loved ones in the darkest moments, keeping track of medications, noticing the small changes others miss, and offering comfort when no one else is around.

"They do this not because they are paid to, but because they care. But behind that description are people with real names, real emotions, and real burdens.

"Some are parents who've watched their child disappear under the weight of depression. Some are partners navigating relationships altered by psychosis, addiction or trauma. Some are siblings who've had to grow up too fast. And some are friends who refuse to walk away even when it would be easier to.

"Each story is different, but they share a common thread: dedication, often at great personal cost. Carers are not "extras" in the story of recovery. They are essential partners."

For Cygnet's Carers Week, which starts on 9 June, Beata also reflected on the importance of carers' wellbeing at Cygnet Group.

The Kent-based worker said: "I think for carers, wellbeing means not being forgotten. It means knowing who to contact. Being updated when things change. Being asked for your view. Having a space to cry, rage, laugh, or just breathe without judgement. It means recognising that many carers have their own experiences of mental ill health, trauma, or loss. They need support too, not because they are weak, but because they have been strong for too long without help.

"At Cygnet, we are working hard to ensure carers are not just acknowledged but actively included and involved in our services. This work is rooted in our Carer Support and Involvement Programme, which has evolved in direct response to carer feedback."

Cygnet Health Care has a variety of ways that carers can get involved but also receive support, such as regular carer forums, meaningful involvement in care planning as well as a constant recognition and celebration of carers. The role of Carer Leads also provide carers with constant access to dedicated people who act as their point of contact.

Beata highlighted the importance of her role and connecting with carers: "Mental health recovery is not just about diagnosis, medication, or even therapy. It's about connection. About the relationships that hold us through darkness and walk beside us toward light.

"Carers are a critical part of that journey. We owe them not just our thanks, but our collaboration. To every carer reading this: you matter. Your voice matters. Your wellbeing matters. And Cygnet sees you."

Beata also reflected on different ways to work better with carers and provided her thoughts.

She said, "My ten top tips are:

1. Introduce yourself clearly and ask who they are, not just who they're with.
2. Be open and honest, don't sugar-coat or avoid difficult conversations.

3. Ask for their insight — they often know more than they think.
4. Check in regularly, not just when there's a crisis.
5. Respect boundaries, both theirs and the service users.
6. Provide tailored information, not just generic leaflets.
7. Acknowledge their feelings, especially guilt, fear, or grief.
8. Involve them in planning, not just in emergencies.
9. Encourage self-care and offer signposting to support services.
10. Say thank you, often and sincerely."

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