



Press Release

Immediate Release

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### **West Yorkshire Mental Health Hospital Teams Up With Local Community**

A mental health service in West Yorkshire has teamed up with a local allotment to encourage connection-building with the community and learning new skills.

Located on Rastrick Common in Brighouse, Cygnet Lodge Brighouse is a 21-bed high support inpatient rehabilitation (level 2) service for men, run by Cygnet Health Care.

For the past year, staff and service users supported at Cygnet Lodge Brighouse have been attending a local allotment on a regular basis to maintain their plot and grow their own fruit and vegetables.

Tara Nickells, an Occupational Therapist at the Cygnet Health Care service, explained the many benefits of working with the local community at the allotment.

She said: "Tending to the allotment has not only offered a calming therapeutic outdoor space away from the hospital environment, but it has also helped the men we support foster valuable connections within the local community.

"The allotment has had so many benefits on the people we support as it has increased physical activity, which is very important. There are so many different tasks to do so it gives them a range of options, whether they want to get stuck into the more physically demanding tasks or just enjoy the calm quiet space and be with nature.

"Our allotment project has been a great success and it has really given individuals a sense of purpose and satisfaction. They really enjoy tending to the allotment and building community connections while learning new skills from others."

One of the men supported at Cygnet Lodge Brighouse, George Davidson, also highlighted the positive impact the allotment has had on him.

He said: "I really like going to the allotment as it allows me to socialise with others. My favourite thing to do there is to help other people. It has been really nice meeting the local community and I like to make them feel happy by offering them food and drinks."

Cygnet Lodge Brighouse recently hosted an event to give back to the local community and thank the allotment members for sharing their plot and offering ongoing support.

Allotment members enjoyed drinks and homemade cakes prepared by service users at the Brighthouse-based Cygnet Health Care service whilst chatting in the sunshine.

Tara said: "It was a lovely day and there was a cheerful and welcoming atmosphere for everyone involved. Allotment members gave our team a tour of their own plots, showcasing a variety of fruits and vegetables to sample.

"Here at Cygnet Health Care, we are always looking for opportunities to increase our links with the local community. It is great to be able to give something back, build connections and show our appreciation to those who offer support to us."

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