



Press Release

Immediate Release

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Cygnet Appletree Ward Manager Honoured for Exceptional Leadership and Compassion in Mental Health Care

A Durham mental health hospital is celebrating the success of its ward manager who has been recognised nationally for her exceptional leadership, compassion, and commitment to patient care.

Taku Ushe, Ward Manager at Cygnet Appletree, was awarded the Staff Recognition Award at the National Association of Psychiatric Intensive Care and Low Secure Units (NAPICU) Annual Conference 2025, after receiving an incredible six separate nominations from her own team.

The NAPICU judging panel described her as a leader who has fostered “a culture of compassion, safety, and respect, where patients feel valued and supported in their recovery journey.”

They praised her ability to combine innovation with patient-centred care, aligning perfectly with this year's conference theme: “Patient-Centred Care in the Era of Innovation and Technology.”

Taku's dedication was celebrated at the conference, held in Northampton from 17–19 September, where she was presented with a trophy and a £100 Amazon voucher.

Reflecting on the award, Taku said: “This recognition means a tremendous amount to me both personally and professionally. It feels wonderful to know that the work I do every day, supporting patients and colleagues in what can be challenging circumstances, has been acknowledged by the amazing team I work alongside.

“The award represents not just my individual efforts, but also the collaborative spirit of our entire team at Cygnet Appletree. Working in psychiatric intensive care requires dedication, compassion, and resilience, and I'm honoured that my contribution to this vital field has been recognised by NAPICU.

“Most importantly, this award reminds me why I'm passionate about this work, making a real difference in the lives of the patients we serve and supporting my colleagues to provide the best possible care.”

Taku is the manager of Pippin Ward, a 10-bed female psychiatric intensive care unit (PICU) at Cygnet Appletree on Frederick Street, Meadowfield, Durham. The ward

provides emergency and crisis admissions, offering expert, short-term, individualised care for women detained under the Mental Health Act.

The service aims to stabilise individuals during periods of acute mental health crisis, supporting them to regain control and ultimately return home.

The judges added: "What stood out was her exceptional leadership, innovation, and unwavering commitment to mental health care. As the Ward Manager for Pippin at Cygnet Appletree, Taku exemplifies the highest standards of psychiatric care and team leadership."

The National Association of Psychiatric Intensive Care and Low Secure Units (NAPICU) is a not-for-profit, multi-disciplinary organisation dedicated to advancing psychiatric intensive care.

Its annual conference brings together clinicians, psychiatrists, CAMHS professionals, pharmacists, and mental health workers of all specialties to share expertise, explore innovative approaches, and drive improvements in patient care and safety.