



Press Release

Immediate Release

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Doncaster Mental Health Patients Bake Prize-Winning Christmas Cake

Patients from a mental health hospital in Doncaster have whisked, rolled and drizzled their way to victory in a Christmas baking competition.

Individuals supported at Cygnet Aspen Clinic, a 16-bed mental health hospital for women with personality disorders or mental health needs, claimed first prize in the Cygnet Christmas Cake Off 2025.

The competition saw service users and residents from across the country unleash their baking skills in a bid to produce the most impressive edible Christmas designs.

Entries were judged on originality of design, artistic ability and service user engagement.

Susan Berwick, Specialist Occupational Therapist at the Cygnet Health Care service, submitted Cygnet Aspen Clinic's entry.

She said: "The cake was made entirely by our service users with some supervision at points. Our cake was also made from gluten-free ingredients so everyone could have some. Our service users used their own initiative and judgement throughout the recipe and then decorated it. The whole service were eager to have a slice."

Cygnet Aspen Clinic's cake was a traditional fruit cake combined with alternative layers of chocolate sponge, lemon sponge and coffee cake. With a marzipan bottom layer and a buttercream coat throughout, the cake wowed the judges.

Judges praised the combination of the traditional Christmas colours alongside the variety of jolly characters, describing the winning cake as "truly embodying the spirit of Christmas."

After hearing they had won first prize of £250, Susan added: "I am absolutely thrilled that the cake won the competition. Our service users really did have a good time making the cakes and they all worked so hard so that it looked good. It was very therapeutic for them and myself actually. Here at Cygnet Aspen Clinic, we are very proud of how well the individuals managed this task and worked together as a team."

One of the individuals supported at the Cygnet Health Care service explained her pride in her baking success.

She said: "We all had fun making the cakes, none of us had made a fruit cake before so that was a new experience for us all. The best part was icing the cakes and making the decorations. The prize is an extra Christmas present for us all."