



Press Release

Immediate Release

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Cygnet Celebrates Dual Shortlisting at HSJ Awards

Cygnet is celebrating a double honour after being shortlisted for two national awards recognising its innovation, expansion and impact in transforming mental health care across the UK.

The organisation has been named a finalist in the **Best Provider of Mental Health Services** category at the HSJ Independent Provider Awards 2026, and in the **Patient Engagement and Experience Initiative of the Year** category at the HSJ Partnership Awards 2026 for its groundbreaking Social Hubs project.

Cygnet's shortlisting in the Independent Provider Awards follows a landmark period of investment and expansion. In 2024, the organisation embarked on a £132 million two-year growth programme, one of the largest single investments in UK mental health infrastructure in recent years.

The programme has delivered:

- ✓ Seven new state-of-the-art hospitals
- ✓ 230 additional specialist beds
- ✓ More than 1,000 new jobs
- ✓ Refurbishment of 181 existing beds
- ✓ Support for an additional 1,500 patients every year

The expansion has eased pressure on overstretched NHS emergency and inpatient services, reduced out-of-area placements, and enabled more people to access high-quality, specialist care closer to home.

Despite the rapid pace of growth, Cygnet has maintained sector-leading quality. In the last year, 81% of its services were rated Good or Outstanding, well above the national average, and all new hospitals achieved 95% occupancy within five months.

Patient-centred design has been central to the expansion, with every new hospital co-produced alongside service users, clinicians, and experts by experience. Many of

the new spaces have been praised as “calm, inspiring and recovery-focused” and “more like five star hotels”. All four hospitals opened in 2024 were shortlisted for Healthcare Design Awards 2025.

Cygnets second HSJ shortlisting recognises its pioneering Social Hubs initiative, a project that is reshaping inpatient mental health environments and redefining therapeutic engagement.

Co-produced with service users and staff, the Social Hubs transform underused areas into vibrant, non-clinical social spaces designed to combat isolation, foster engagement, and support recovery. Featuring comic artwork, arcade machines, sensory lighting, bean bags, board games, and calm relaxation zones, the hubs offer patients a relaxing setting away from the ward environments.

The impact has been positive with:

- ✓ 25–35% reduction in incidents across multiple services
- ✓ 71% reduction in violence and aggression at Cygnets Hospital Beckton in one month
- ✓ 45% increase in staff engagement and 35% reduction in burnout at Cygnets Hospital Woking
- ✓ Improved patient satisfaction, engagement and cross-ward social connection
- ✓ Stronger staff–patient relationships

Service users have described the hubs as “a place to breathe,” “like being at home,” and “even better than expected.” Staff say the hubs help them build more authentic relationships, and many report a more positive and rewarding work environment.

The initiative has gained national attention, with the Design in Mental Health Network, NHS England, the Royal College of Psychiatrists and the Care Quality Commission all recognising the project and its co-production model as best practice.

In September 2025, Cygnets opened its biggest social hub to date at Cygnets Hospital Bury. This was partly funded by the Greater Manchester Adult Secure provider collaborative, an endorsement of how Cygnets are blazing a trail in the sector.

Reflecting on the two shortlisting achievements, Dr Tony Romero, Cygnets CEO, said: “Both award nominations reflect Cygnets organisation-wide commitment to innovation, co-production, and delivering care environments that truly support recovery.

“Our multi-million growth programme over the past two years is more than an investment in buildings; it is an unwavering commitment to healing and recovery. It is a future-focused strategy that is already delivering a new standard of mental

healthcare for the UK, proving that with bold ambition and dedicated partnership, we can build a better, healthier future for all.

“These shortlistings recognise the dedication of our staff, the voices of the people who use our services, and our strong partnerships with the NHS and local communities. Whether we are building new hospitals or transforming social spaces, our focus remains the same, which is to provide compassionate, high-quality mental health care that empowers people and supports recovery.

“Together, our expansion, investments and innovative initiatives demonstrate Cygnet's belief that modern mental health care is built not only on clinical excellence, but also on humanity, dignity, and environments that inspire hope.”

Winners will be announced at the awards ceremony on 19th March 2026 at Evolution London. The event celebrates excellence in healthcare, promotes best practice, and recognises the people and projects improving outcomes for patients nationwide.