



Press Release

Immediate Release

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Bristol Patient Scores Wellbeing Boost through Football Scheme

A patient at Cygnet Brunel is experiencing the mental and physical health benefits of community sport through participation in Rebound with Rovers, an award-winning mental health football programme delivered by Bristol Rovers Community Trust.

Rebound with Rovers is a free weekly football initiative designed to support men and women who want to improve their mental fitness in a welcoming and inclusive environment. Delivered in partnership with Anderson Financial Management and the Gloucestershire FA, the programme offers two adult football sessions every Wednesday, catering for different abilities and fitness levels.

Each session begins with a group 'check-in', where participants are encouraged to rate their mood out of 10, followed by an hour-long football session led by a fully qualified football coach and mental health first aider. The session ends with a confidential 'check-out', giving players the opportunity to reflect on their wellbeing and discuss progress or concerns in a supportive setting.

Cygnet Brunel, on Crow Lane, Henbury, is a 32-bed Cygnet Health Care neuropsychiatric hospital for men with acquired brain injuries.

One Cygnet Brunel patient, Leon, has been attending the faster-paced afternoon session since January and has benefited greatly from the experience. Before his brain injury, Leon played semi-professional football and remains passionate about returning to the sport.

Recognising Leon's motivation and ability, Occupational Therapy staff at Cygnet Health Care supported his referral to Rebound with Rovers to provide a greater physical and social challenge within the community.

Leon has since made strong social connections with other players, prioritises the session each week, and recently won the group's weekly trophy in recognition of his commitment and performance.

Zoe Harris, Occupational Therapy Assistant at Cygnet Brunel said: "Rebound with Rovers has made a really positive difference for Leon. He looks forward to the session every week and it has become a meaningful part of his routine."

“We've seen clear benefits in his confidence, motivation and social interaction, and it's been fantastic to see how much he enjoys being part of a supportive team environment that aligns so closely with his interests and goals.”

Leon said: “I like it because I like football and previously played semi-professionally for a Turkish team, Yeni Bogazici in Essex. Rebound with Rovers is a nice environment as they support everyone and

“I would like to continue this until I am discharged. This is an aspiration of mine to play football again at the same level as I was before.”

Leon has apraxia of speech following his brain injury, a condition that affects the brain's ability to plan and sequence speech movements.

When he first arrived at Cygnet Brunel, his communication was limited to short responses and familiar names. With targeted therapy and growing confidence, Leon's speech has improved significantly, enabling him to interact confidently with peers, staff and the wider community.

Zoe added: “His involvement in Rebound with Rovers highlights the importance of meaningful community engagement as part of rehabilitation and recovery.

“Seeing the positive impact it has had on Leon, we really hope to support more patients to access the initiative in the future.”

For more information about Rebound with Rovers, visit the [Bristol Rovers Community Trust website](#).