Press Release

Immediate Release

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Cygnet shortlisted for Nursing Apprenticeship Provider of the Year

Cygnet has been shortlisted for Nursing Apprenticeship Provider of the Year at the Student Nursing Times Awards, recognising the organisation's commitment to developing the next generation of nursing professionals.

Launched in 2017, Cygnet's apprenticeship programme was developed in response to ongoing workforce challenges across the health and social care sector, particularly in nursing. The initiative forms part of the organisation's long-term workforce strategy, creating structured career pathways for both new recruits and existing colleagues.

The programme combines on-the-job learning within Cygnet's services with formal study delivered through partnerships with higher education institutions and training providers, including University College Birmingham.

Cygnet currently works with 27 learning suppliers and offers 31 apprenticeship pathways. There are 297 colleagues enrolled on apprenticeship programmes, with 180 new starters joining in 2025. Over the past five years, 515 apprenticeships have been completed.

The apprenticeship offer is open to individuals of all ages and backgrounds and includes progression routes for existing staff. A number of former apprentices have progressed into senior clinical and leadership roles.

Charlotte, a Mental Health Support Worker at Cygnet Hospital Kewstoke who is currently completing her Nursing Associate apprenticeship, said: "The apprenticeship programme is an amazing opportunity. Getting real life experience in an actual work environment and learning from experts in their field is invaluable.

"The apprenticeship programme makes you feel valued and invested in, and it has developed my practical skills and understanding of inpatient care."

Nigel Benton, Director of Apprenticeships at University College Birmingham, said: "Cygnet Health Care is an exemplary apprenticeship employer. University College Birmingham feels privileged to work with them on their apprenticeship programme. Cygnet ensure that the apprentice is at the heart of all that they do, putting their progress and wellbeing above many other considerations.

“It is refreshing to work with an employer like this who really “gets” the apprenticeship ethos, using this route as a launch pad for so many exciting and rewarding careers within their organisation. Apprentices prosper with Cygnet.”

Reflecting on the shortlisting, Faye Malkin, Cygnet Group Training Manager (Apprenticeships), said: “Being shortlisted for Nursing Apprenticeship Provider of the Year is recognition of the sustained work that has gone into developing a high-quality, accessible apprenticeship programme.

“Our focus is on creating clear progression routes, providing consistent mentorship and aligning training to the needs of our services. Apprenticeships are a central part of our workforce strategy and play an important role in supporting recruitment, retention and succession planning across the organisation.
“By investing in our people today, we are securing a workforce that is compassionate, skilled, and committed to delivering outstanding care across all of Cygnet’s services.”

The programme has contributed to improvements in workforce stability. Over the past three years, agency usage has reduced from 12.1% (2023) to 7.8% (2024) and 5.3% (2025). Staff turnover has also reduced from 27.4% (2023) to 21.2% (2024) and 19.8% (2025).

The winners will be announced at the Student Nursing Times Awards 2026 on Friday 24 April 2026 at the JW Marriott Grosvenor House London.