



Press Release

Immediate Release

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Leadership at Middlesbrough Brain Injury Hospital Rated 'Outstanding'

A hospital in Middlesbrough which supports women affected by brain injuries has had its leadership rated 'Outstanding' following an inspection by the Care Quality Commission.

Cygnet Newham House, on Hemlington Village Road, a 20-bed neuropsychiatric care and treatment facility providing rehabilitation for women affected by acquired brain injuries (ABI), was rated Outstanding in Well-Led and Good across all other domains – safe, effective, responsive and caring – achieving an overall 'Good' rating.

Praising how well-led the Cygnet Health Care service is, the CQC noted a positive and supportive workplace culture. The report read: "The service always cared about and promoted the wellbeing of their staff," adding that "staff felt respected, supported and valued" and were "positive and proud about working for the provider and within their team." Initiatives such as a 'moment of thanks' board enabled staff to recognise each other's contributions and celebrate acts of kindness, teamwork and support.

Leadership at the service was applauded, with the CQC stating: "The service was consistently managed and well-led. Leaders promoted high-quality, person-centred care" and demonstrated "integrity, openness and honesty."

The inspection included feedback from patients and carers, which highlighted a consistently positive experience of care. The report read: "Feedback from patients presented a positive picture of the service, with consistent themes of caring staff, supportive therapeutic input and good involvement in care planning." Patients told inspectors they had regular one-to-one time with nurses and that "staff were available and responsive when they needed support."

Patients spoke warmly about their day-to-day experiences on the ward. The report read: "Patients said there were enough activities which they enjoyed and staff gave them advice on healthy lifestyles. Patients liked the food provided by the service. One patient said staff were always willing to help and support patients." Patients also said they felt involved in decisions about their care planning and that staff supported their overall wellbeing.

Inspectors noted strong engagement with families and said: "Carers could attend monthly carers' meetings to discuss care and treatment and share their ideas and suggestions."

Carers who spoke with inspectors described staff as "caring, responsive and flexible," while also praising the expertise of specialist professionals such as physiotherapists and psychologists.

During the inspection, CQC staff observed positive relationships throughout the service. The CQC said: "Staff attitudes and behaviours showed that they were discreet, respectful and responsive, providing patients with help, emotional support and advice at the time they needed it." Patients echoed this, describing staff as "kind and supportive," and said staff treated them well and behaved appropriately at all times.

Inspectors praised the service's strong, "proactive and positive" safety culture and also highlighted that care planning was found to be highly personalised and recovery-focused. The CQC said they reflected patients' "views, goals and wishes" and involved both patients and, where appropriate, their loved ones in decisions about care and treatment.

The service was also recognised for its focus on independence, inclusion and quality of life. The report read: "The service was exceptional at promoting people's independence, so people knew their rights and had choice and control over their own care, treatment and wellbeing." Staff supported patients to live healthier lives and take part in a wide range of meaningful activities.

These included walking groups, sports, cooking healthy meals and attending the gym, as well as a variety of social and community-based experiences. The report read: "Staff gave patients access to activities, such as board games, quizzes, music events, horse therapy, visiting a local reptile shop, swimming and visits to train museums and seaside resorts. Patients could attend the service's breakfast club." To support life skills, patients were also encouraged to shop for food and prepare meals independently or with support.

The service was also praised for demonstrating a strong commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion as service users were actively involved in multicultural events, such as an African day during which staff and patients dressed in traditional African attire and cooked African meals.

Inspectors highlighted the wide range of adaptations in place to support accessibility and independence. The report read: "The activities of daily living kitchen within the service had lowered workbenches and a hob to support wheelchair users," alongside tilting kettles to enable patients to make hot drinks independently. The report also noted plans to further improve accessibility, including adapting bungalows and laundry facilities so patients could carry out everyday tasks more independently.

Patients were empowered to have a voice in how the service was run. The report read: "There were community meetings during which patients had the opportunity

to give feedback about activities, food, what was working well and what could be improved. Staff acted upon feedback from patients."

Joanna Yarker, Hospital Manager, said: "We are incredibly proud to have been rated Good across all domains by the CQC, and especially pleased with Outstanding in Well-Led. We strive to create a positive work culture and environment where staff can provide the best care possible and I am so pleased this has been recognised.

"This report is a testament to the dedication, compassion and professionalism of our entire team, who go above and beyond every day to support the women in our care.

"It is especially rewarding to see such positive feedback from patients and carers, and recognition of the meaningful therapies, activities and opportunities we provide to help individuals regain independence and confidence.

"We remain committed to continuously improving and delivering safe, high-quality, person-centred care in a supportive and empowering environment."