



Press Release

Immediate Release

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### **Cygnet Hospital Maidstone Races Ahead for Wellbeing**

A mental health hospital in Maidstone has hit the ground running to promote physical activity and mental wellbeing.

Located on Gidds Pond Way, Cygnet Hospital Maidstone is a 64-bed mental health hospital for adults.

Staff and individuals supported at the Cygnet Health Care service took on a 3-kilometre run to focus on health, movement and social interactions.

Neil Barker, Head of Occupational Therapy at Cygnet Hospital Maidstone, shared the success of the activity, dubbed the Cygnet Run.

He said: "This is our fifth run so far and something we do yearly. It creates a joyful feeling and everyone has a fantastic time. We encourage both our staff and service users to get involved with physical activity to boost their wellbeing and social participation.

"It means everyone is drawn together in their common goal. There is also a real benefit of being outdoors and connecting with nature too."

The physical challenge sees individuals run or walk around the gardens at the Cygnet Health Care service and take advantage of the surrounding environment.

The gardens were redesigned in 2024 and feature a circular route to guide visitors to different locations, each with their own unique purpose and look. It also features a picnic area, an allotment and a variety of plants such as pear trees, red roses and wildflowers.

The Cygnet Run took place during Cygnet Group's Wellbeing Month, which encourages both staff and individuals supported across the organisation to prioritise wellbeing through a series of events, awareness days and activities throughout May.

"Our event was really good for a sense of personal accomplishment. Supporting our service users to engage in events like this helps to raise their motivation and mood," explained Neil.

"By doing this, we hope our service users discover the wellbeing benefit of spending time in the hospital gardens and being with nature. It's also an opportunity to spark an interest in running or future engagement in sessions like this."