



Press Release

Immediate Release

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Cygnet Health Care service in Darlington recognised as Outstanding by Headway

A specialist neuropsychiatric service in Darlington supporting men affected by acquired brain injuries and neurodegenerative conditions has been awarded an Outstanding rating by Headway, the Brain Injury Association.

Cygnet St William's, part of Cygnet Health Care, received the highest possible rating following a comprehensive assessment as part of Headway's Approved Provider Scheme.

The scheme uses specialist standards designed to reflect the complex and highly individual needs of people living with acquired brain injuries (ABI), evaluating services including hospitals, neuro-rehabilitation units, residential homes and respite facilities.

Cygnet St William's, on Cornwall Avenue, was rated Outstanding across all assessment domains including Workforce Development and Governance, Leadership, Management and Quality, Culture, Systems and Processes, Service Delivery and Environment.

Inspectors praised the service's "person-centred approach", compassionate and trauma-informed care, and the way patients are actively involved in decisions about their treatment and recovery.

The report stated: "Cygnet St William's uses a person-centred approach, taking account of each individual's needs, goals, and preferences."

Assessors also highlighted the positive and respectful culture within the service, noting the strong relationships between staff and patients and observing teams working "in a friendly, professional and respectful manner."

Patients are supported to access a wide range of therapeutic, educational and vocational opportunities, both on-site and within the local community. This includes volunteering with local charities, attending college courses, accessing work experience placements and taking part in meaningful activities tailored to individual interests and recovery goals.

Examples highlighted in the report included patients volunteering at charity shops, assisting with community litter-picking initiatives and supporting local gardens. One

patient was named British Heart Foundation Employee of the Month on two occasions.

Assessors were also impressed that service users are supported to access courses at Darlington College and attend local support groups run by Headway.

The report praised the work of the occupational therapy team in supporting patients with CV writing, interview skills, education and employment opportunities, as well as helping individuals regain independence in everyday living skills.

During the assessment visit, inspectors observed therapeutic group sessions including music therapy and a reading and discussion group called 'Lads and Literature', designed to help patients explore emotions, trauma and personal experiences in a safe and supportive environment.

The service was also commended for its strong family and carer involvement, with a dedicated Carers Lead providing education, support and guidance for relatives throughout a patient's admission.

Chelsea Phelan, Clinical Manager at Cygnet Health Care, said everybody at the service is incredibly proud to have been recognised by Headway with an Outstanding rating across every domain of the assessment.

She said: "This achievement reflects the compassion and professionalism of our entire interdisciplinary team, who work tirelessly to provide truly person-centred care and support for individuals in our care.

"Achieving Outstanding in all areas for our Headway accreditation is an incredible accomplishment, and it simply wouldn't have been possible without the hard work, dedication, and commitment of staff. They consistently go above and beyond, and their passion for delivering the very best care truly shows.

"What makes this achievement even more special is the way staff continually strive to improve and always put our patients at the heart of everything they do. Their determination to make a difference every day is exactly what has brought us to this point.

"The report highlights the culture we strive to create at St William's, one where people are treated with dignity, respect and kindness, and where recovery is shaped around each individual's goals, interests and aspirations."