Press Release

Immediate Release

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Birmingham nurses shortlisted for national award for pioneering cancer awareness work

Two Birmingham nurses from Cygnet Health Care have been shortlisted for a national award in recognition of their work improving cancer awareness and early detection support for people with learning disabilities.

Holly Hunt and Nimo Nuur, who both work at Cygnet Cedars, on Broadway Avenue, have been shortlisted in the Learning Disability Nurse Award category at the National Learning Disability and Autism Awards.

The pair have played a leading role in projects designed to tackle health inequalities experienced by people with learning disabilities, including the development of accessible cancer awareness and screening resources to help service users better understand their bodies, recognise changes and feel confident raising concerns.

Located on Broadway Avenue in Birmingham, Cygnet Cedars is a 23-bed high dependency complex care service for men with learning disabilities. It is part of the Cygnet Health Care division.

The Learning Disability Nurse Award recognises specialist nurses who make an exceptional contribution to the emotional, physical and psychological wellbeing of the people they support. The category celebrates professionals helping to break down barriers to healthcare access and improve outcomes for people with learning disabilities.

Alongside their work on Cygnet's Cancer Awareness and Prevention Campaign, Holly and Nimo have also been involved in initiatives supporting patients and families, including the Triangle of Care programme, which is an accreditation given to services who actively, and effectively, involves carers in their loved one's treatment.

Holly, a Mental Health Nurse at Cygnet Cedars, said the cancer awareness work became deeply personal following her auntie's stage four breast cancer diagnosis.

She said: "The cancer project is incredibly personal to me and it's something I'm extremely passionate about. My auntie, who has learning disabilities, had her symptoms missed and by the time she was diagnosed with breast cancer she

needed major surgery, including a mastectomy, followed by further treatment and radiotherapy. Thankfully she is doing really well now, but it was a frightening experience for all of us and it made me realise just how easily signs and symptoms can be overlooked for people with learning disabilities.

"We know many individuals with learning disabilities can find it difficult to communicate when they are in pain or when something doesn't feel right, which is why creating easy-read screening tools felt so important. We wanted to give our service users the knowledge and confidence to understand their own bodies and feel empowered to speak up if they noticed any changes.

"We've already seen the difference it can make. Two of our service users raised concerns after using the tools and were able to access GP support and treatment quickly. Thankfully neither concern was cancer-related, but it showed how important these conversations and resources are in preventing serious health issues from being missed.

"I feel incredibly proud that we've been able to start something that could genuinely improve health outcomes for people with learning disabilities, not just at Cedars but hopefully more widely in the future as well."

Speaking about being shortlisted for the award, Holly added: "It's such an honour to be recognised nationally alongside Nimo and the wider team. Nursing is about advocating for people, making sure they feel heard and ensuring nobody slips through the cracks when it comes to their health and wellbeing.

"At Cygnet Cedars we genuinely care about improving lives and challenging inequalities in healthcare. Being part of a service that encourages us to go that extra mile and turn ideas into meaningful change is something I'm incredibly proud of."

The National Learning Disability and Autism Awards celebrate excellence across the sector and recognise individuals and organisations making a positive impact in the lives of people with learning disabilities and autism.