



Press Release

Immediate Release

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Hope and Recovery Take Root at Cygnet Sherwood Lodge

Patients leaving a mental health hospital in Mansfield after completing their recovery journey are marking the next chapter of their lives by planting a tree before they move on.

The Orchard Project at Cygnet Sherwood Lodge sees individuals plant a fruit tree in the hospital's grounds as they prepare for discharge, creating a lasting legacy for future patients while symbolising their own recovery journey.

Located on Rufford Colliery Lane, Cygnet Sherwood Lodge is a 26-bed hospital for men with learning disabilities and mental health needs.

The Orchard Project started two years ago at the Cygnet Health Care service as a way to celebrate successful recovery and rehabilitation.

The innovative project symbolises new beginnings and sees individuals who are preparing to move on from Cygnet Sherwood Lodge plant a tree in the service's growing orchard.

Paul Blaker, Lead of the Orchard Project and Bank Support Worker, shares the importance and meaning behind the environmentally friendly initiative.

He said: "Our Orchard Project bestows a potent message of beauty, love and hope for the future. It is not only co-produced but also co-sustained. When a departing service user plants a tree, it leaves a legacy of responsibility as their fellow service users will take ownership and care for the tree in their absence.

"Trees are ever-changing, nurturing and representations of growth, but also require nourishment themselves. The project is a powerful visual metaphor for the recovery and rehabilitation journey of those we support."

Numerous departing service users have taken part in the project so far, each selecting a fruit tree to plant as they prepare for their next chapter.

"The Orchard Project is altruistic. Those who have planted a tree will never sit in its shade or eat its fruit, but they will have benefited from trees planted by others before," explained Paul.

"This is an act of wild service and nature connectivity as well as a ceremony of transition and a gift to people who are sharing the same recovery pathway. When new patients join our service, it is encouraging for them to see the Orchard and visualise themselves adding a tree in the future when they are ready to move on."

Two years on, Cygnet Sherwood Lodge is home to a flourishing and thriving Orchard, featuring apple, pear, plum and cherry trees.

Paul said: "Our project not only supports an ethos of sharing and community, but it also encourages caring for each other and the environment.

"The trees gift us beauty and a reflective space whilst also being a gift to the local wildlife and helping to off-set any carbon debt our service may produce. This is a perfect example of Cygnet Health Care's values of sustainability and co-production."