



## **Press Release**

**1 July 2026**

### **For Immediate Release**

#### **Stevenage Mental Health Hospital Scoops National Award**

The manager of a hospital in Stevenage spoke of her pride after her team scooped a national award for 'excellence' in recognition of their work to tackle racism.

Alice Zimba is the Hospital Manager at Cygnet Hospital Stevenage, an 82-bed hospital on Graveley Road which offers a range of secure and PICU and acute mental health services for men and women.

The team scooped one of the top prizes at the Cygnet Group achievement awards, a day of celebration for caring, dedicated and hard-working health and social care workers.

They won the Delivering Service Improvement; The Gamechanger Award award, which honours those who have made a measurable improvement to quality of care through innovation.

Cygnet Hospital Stevenage tackled racism through a wide-ranging programme focused on education, collaboration and clear accountability. Staff and service users worked together to create anti-racism posters and campaign messaging, while discussions around racism were introduced into ward community meetings.

The hospital also partnered with local hate crime police officers, who regularly visited the site to speak with patients and staff about the impact of racism and explain that racist abuse is a hate crime that would not be tolerated. The initiative led to staff feeling more supported and empowered to report incidents, improved understanding among patients around acceptable behaviour, and contributed to a reduction in racist incidents and a more respectful environment across the hospital.

The nomination read: "Cygnet Hospital Stevenage transformed its response to racism from a reactive, policy-based approach into an actively anti-racist, values-led programme that delivers measurable and sustainable change.

"Through collaboration with patients, staff and local hate crime police officers, the hospital established clear behavioural boundaries while maintaining a therapeutic and educational approach.

"The project increased staff confidence in reporting incidents, strengthened trust in organisational support and helped create safer, calmer and more respectful wards.

The work has since been shared nationally as a replicable model for tackling racism within mental health settings."

Alice said: "Winning this award was both humbling and incredibly meaningful. It reflects the dedication, passion and teamwork of everyone at Team Stevenage. I'm proud to work alongside such talented colleagues who consistently go above and beyond for our patients and each other.

"I felt genuinely honoured and grateful. It was a lovely reminder that hard work, collaboration and staying focused on making a positive difference is always recognised and appreciated.

Personally, it gave me a real sense of pride and reinforced why I love what I do, Professionally, it motivates me to keep striving for excellence and never lose sight of the impact we can have on the lives of the people we support and work alongside.

"I enjoy empowering teams to grow, creating positive cultures where staff and patients can thrive, and seeing people achieve outcomes they never thought possible is the best part of my job."

Professor Tony Romero, Group CEO, said: "The awards are about recognising and honouring the dedication, compassion and sheer hard work shown by staff who, no matter their role, play a vital part in the provision of patient and resident care.

"There is so much for us to be proud of as an organisation, and the winners and shortlisted candidates are representatives of the thousands of colleagues across the country who have made a difference in the lives of others.

"The day was about recognising them, celebrating the difference they make and inspiring one another to keep delivering the very best for those in our care.

"Staff at Cygnet Hospital Stevenage consistently go above and beyond for the individuals in our care. They demonstrate passion for their work, commitment to excellence, and an unwavering dedication to our service users."

Ends

**Notes to Editors:**

For more information, please contact Gemma Attew, External Communications Manager, on [gemmaattew@cygnethealth.co.uk](mailto:gemmaattew@cygnethealth.co.uk) or 07718 244811.

**About Cygnet Group**

Cygnet Group is a leading provider of health and social care services for young people and adults with mental health needs, acquired brain injuries, eating disorders, autism and learning disabilities within the UK.

[www.cygnethealth.co.uk](http://www.cygnethealth.co.uk)