



Press Release

Immediate Release

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Woking mental health services praised by carers for kindness and support

Two Woking mental health services have received national recognition after carers praised staff for being “kind, friendly, patient, available and willing to help”.

Cygnet Hospital Woking and Cygnet Lodge Woking, both based in Knaphill, have achieved the Triangle of Care one-star accreditation for their commitment to involving and supporting the families and carers of people receiving care.

The Triangle of Care is a nationally recognised quality improvement framework overseen by Carers Trust. It promotes collaboration between healthcare professionals, service users and carers, recognising the vital knowledge and experience families can contribute to a person’s care and recovery.

Cygnet Hospital Woking is a 62-bed service providing a range of mental health services for men and women. Its sister service, Cygnet Lodge Woking, provides acute and high-support inpatient rehabilitation services for men.

The services submitted evidence from eight wards and services as part of a comprehensive review conducted by Carers Trust. Assessors considered self-assessments, policies and local evidence alongside the experiences shared directly by carers and representatives from Action for Carers Surrey.

Positive feedback from families featured prominently in the assessment.

The report read: “Both carers at panel described staff as friendly, patient, approachable and willing to answer questions. One said that it was possible to speak to staff when needed and that staff who knew their family member were happy to provide information.”

Summarising the feedback received, assessors added: “Carers praised staff for being kind, friendly, patient, available and willing to help.”

The assessment also highlighted how carers’ knowledge is being used to provide safer, more personalised support. In one example, information shared by a family member about a service user’s sensory needs helped staff understand possible triggers and adapt the support they provided during an incident.

Assessors said: “This illustrates the practical contribution carers’ knowledge can make to safer and more individualised care.”

The report praised the shared approach developed across the two services, including the establishment of Carer Leads and Champions on wards, protected time for colleagues to focus on carer involvement.

It read: "We saw good evidence that Carer Leads and Champions are established across the wards and supported by leaders at both sites. This is a real area of strength."

Assessors were particularly encouraged by the aim of making carer involvement the responsibility of every member of staff, rather than relying solely on designated Carer Leads.

They said: "The cultural ambition expressed at the panel, that every member of staff should recognise carers as partners, is a positive indication that a 'think family' approach is well embedded."

The services were also commended for improving the way carers are identified and contacted, asking families how and when they would prefer to communicate and inviting them to ward rounds when the person receiving care has given consent.

Staff described contacting carers before or after meetings to gather their views, answer questions and provide updates. Assessors also heard how one carer found it particularly helpful to speak to another family facing similar experiences at a carers' event.

The report praised the openness of staff throughout the assessment, particularly their willingness to discuss areas where practice could be strengthened.

It read: "A particular strength is the commitment shown by frontline staff and managers throughout the review process. Presentations and discussions demonstrated a reflective approach and a willingness to acknowledge challenges as well as strengths. We welcomed the openness and authenticity of the discussions."

The partnership between the services and Action for Carers Surrey was described as another "particular strength". The organisation provides carers with access to independent advice and support away from the hospital environment.

Its representative told the assessment panel that Cygnet health care staff were approachable, honest about challenges and increasingly willing to involve external support.

Brian Ngaru, Clinical Team Leader at Cygnet Lodge Woking, said: "We are incredibly proud that both services have achieved accreditation. It reflects the importance we place on family involvement and the invaluable contribution made by the carers who have shared their experiences so openly with us.

"Carers know their loved ones better than anyone and can offer insights that help us provide safer, more individualised care. We want every carer to feel welcomed, listened to and recognised as an important partner in their loved one's care and recovery.

"It was especially rewarding to hear carers describe our staff as kind, friendly, patient and approachable. We also value their honest feedback about where we can improve, and we will use it to continue making progress and deliver care which is of the highest standard.

"This accreditation is an important milestone, but it is also the beginning of the next stage of our journey. We will continue listening to carers, working alongside partners and building on the positive foundation recognised by the panel."

Mary Patel, Triangle of Care Programme Lead at Carers Trust, said:

"This Triangle of Care Star Award represents a hugely positive step forward in strengthening partnerships with carers – so family and friends who look after someone are involved in care planning, and have their important role recognised. Congratulations to all the staff and carers at Cygnet Hospital Woking and Cygnet Lodge Woking for this achievement, and we encourage everyone involved - from frontline staff to senior leads - to continue building on this foundation of good practice."