Press Release

Immediate Release

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Lewisham Social Worker Wins National Award for Dedication to Patients

A Lewisham social worker has been recognised for her outstanding contribution to supporting people with mental health needs, after winning Social Worker of the Year at a national awards ceremony.

Abena Owusu, a Social Worker at Cygnet Lodge Lewisham, received the award at the Cygnet Group annual Social Work Conference and Awards, held on Monday 8th September.

Cygnet Lodge Lewisham is a 19-bed service which offers both a high support inpatient rehabilitation (level 2) service and community rehabilitation (level 1) service for men with mental health needs.

Abena was nominated by her colleagues. One said: "Abena is respectful and delivers care with a non-judgemental approach. She is always willing to offer her assistance and has an excellent rapport with colleagues. She sets high standards for the organisation and helps the unit to succeed. She motivates service users and recognises their strength and weakness, by doing so, she is able to advocate on their behalf.

"One of the most notable aspect of Abeena is her honesty and positive attitude. It is not just her passion sets her apart but her dedication to seeing things going through and display her leadership skills."

Another colleague added: "Abena is a fantastic Social Worker who is kind, passionate and caring. Abena carries the weight of the Social Work department all by herself and carries this responsibility humbly, with grace, all whilst ensuring staff are at ease.

"She supports not only the patients but also the staff. Abena is integral and will stand for what she believes in and ensures the patients voice is heard. She speaks to staff and patients with respect, she doesn't realise how amazing she is."

Speaking after her win, Abena said: "Stepping into my role three years ago as a newly qualified social worker came with a lot of anxiety and imposter syndrome, so

winning this award truly serves as a testament to how far I have come on my professional journey.

“The opportunity to work for Cygnet has provided a great platform to develop, and having the chance to work alongside so many well-seasoned professionals at Cygnet Lewisham Lodge has immensely aided my growth. This win means a great deal to me not just as personal recognition, but as a reflection of the hard work, the challenges I've navigated, and the incredible support system I’ve had around me every step of the way.

“Working in a rehab setting means supporting patients who have often been institutionalised for prolonged periods, many of whom have lost hope of navigating life outside the system. What I enjoy most is the advocacy required to change that trajectory, such as persistently championing their rights with external agencies, empowering them to take the lead on placement and accommodation decisions, and guiding them toward the milestones of unescorted leave.

“Seeing them reclaim their autonomy and direct their own futures reassures me of the professional path I have chosen. Getting to do this at Cygnet Lewisham Lodge alongside such a compassionate and dedicated group of people makes the work deeply fulfilling.”

Cygnet Group is a leading independent provider of health and social care services for adults and young people with mental health needs, learning disabilities, autism and eating disorders.

The Cygnet Social Work Conference and Awards celebrate the contributions of social workers and social work assistants across the organisation.