



Press Release

Immediate Release

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Barnsley Mental Health Patient Wins National Award

A patient from a hospital in Barnsley has won a national award for encouraging those struggling with their mental health to find hope through music.

Chris is a service user at Cygnet Oaks on Upper Sheffield Road, Barnsley, a 35-bed hospital which supports men struggling with their mental health.

He has won the Community and Collaboration Award at this year's National Lived Experience Awards.

The National Lived Experience Awards are designed to celebrate service user led initiatives in mental health, learning disability and autism services nationwide. This year the awards ceremony, in its 12th year, was held in the Premier Suite at Doncaster Racecourse.

Chris won the award for his work with The Swans, a band that had originally formed whilst he was a patient at Cygnet Hospital Derby.

The project helped support services users to interact, find a new hobby and feel part of a community.

Talking about the importance of music, Chris said: "I have been in services a long time and learning the guitar is one of the best things I have done. It has given me a sense of belief and a sense of achievement.

"When things get tough or hard, or I am feeling angry, I pick up my guitar up and practice some of the songs I am learning. It also gives me a chance to show my creative side and help write some music."

After winning the award Chris said: "It was a surprise to be nominated because with the way I've been for a long time I've not really had much sense of positivity about myself.

"To be shortlisted with so many nominations was just an achievement by itself.

"When I heard that I had won it was such an emotional moment that I'd achieved something I thought I never would. Especially with something to do with music which I'm passionate about. It was really emotional and I thank everyone for picking me as a winner.

"It is such a big achievement for myself and it just shows that all my hard work and dedication hasn't gone unnoticed."