



Press Release

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For Immediate Release

Health Workers Cycle Basingstoke Canal in Charity Challenge

Cygnet staff have cycled the entire length of the Basingstoke Canal to raise money for Sport in Mind, the national charity which aims to improve mental health through sport.

Ryan Childs, Gym and Wellbeing Instructor at Cygnet's Woking sites, and David Price-Cox, Compliance Assistant, took part in the sponsored bike ride which saw them cycle the entire length of the Basingstoke Canal, approximately 64 miles, on 19 September.

The challenge coincided with National Fitness Day, an annual event which aims to celebrate the fun of physical activity and encourage people of all ages and abilities to get active.

The ride took nearly eight hours and saw Ryan and David cycle across narrow paths, tree roots and rocky terrain. They hope to raise £1,000 for charity.

Ryan said: "It was tiring and we were both exhausted by the end, but worth it to help raise funds for Sport in Mind.

"I think I can speak for David and I to say we both had fun, but would be happy not to see another bike for a while!

"Being active and feeling physically healthy has a direct impact on our mental health and wellbeing. The charity Sport In Mind completely believes this and is working in the community and in some of our hospitals to provide support to people to get active.

"They transform the lives and mental health of children and adults through sport and physical activity."

Cygnet Hospital Woking first teamed up with the UK's leading mental health sports charity in July 2023, to offer yoga sessions to service users in a bid to promote wellbeing.

Sport in Mind is an award winning mental health charity that aims to improve the lives of people experiencing mental health problems through sport and physical activity.

The charity delivers physical activity projects in partnership with the NHS in order to aid recovery, promote mental wellbeing, improve physical health, combat social isolation and empower people to move their lives forward in a positive direction.

Neil Harris, CEO of Sport in Mind, said: "Physical activity is a strong but simple tool to help with the management and recovery from mental health problems, alongside a whole range of other benefits. It is a pleasure to be able to work in partnership with Cygnet to provide patients free access to physical activity in a safe, supportive environment to help improve their mental health.

"Furthermore, Sport in Mind provides community sport and physical activity sessions locally so that patients are able to continue to engage in physical activity after discharged.

"Working with Cygnet on this ground-breaking programme in Woking has been highly beneficial for the patients we have seen and we are excited to be working together to support more patients in Kent going forward."

Explaining further the motivation behind the charity bike ride, Ryan added: "Exercise is a great way of improving both physical and mental wellbeing, and evidence from multiple studies have shown how effective it is in combating not only depression and anxiety, but also helping with autism, ADHD and those with sensory needs.

"From burning off excess adrenaline, releasing endorphins to just allowing time to focus on yourself, exercise continues to be used to help boost mental wellbeing, whether it is a gentle stroll....or a 64 mile bike ride!

"After the Active Life and Fitness Network's monthly meeting, we decided on putting on sporting events across Cygnet and to each do a sponsored challenge to raise money for a charity.

"Sport in Mind was the natural choice, due to having worked so closely with them and how the charity is trying to improve mental health through sport.

"For many people struggling with mental health it is hard to find ways of coping and Sport in Mind is often their first step in recovery and improving their quality of life. The work they do is invaluable to so many."

You can donate to Cygnet's JustGiving page [here](#).

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