



Press Release

Immediate Release

17 December 2024

Blackburn Mental Health Patients Describe 'Safe and Supportive' Care

Service users at Cygnet Fountains described the 'safe' and 'supportive' care they receive at the service as part of a mandatory CQC review into the use of the Mental Health Act.

Cygnet Fountains is a 34-bed high support inpatient rehabilitation (level 2) service for men in Blackburn who have severe and enduring mental illness and who may have been detained under the Mental Health Act.

By law, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) is required to monitor the use of the Mental Health Act 1983 to provide a safeguard for individual patients whose rights are restricted under the Act. Mental Health Act Reviewers do this on behalf of CQC, by interviewing detained patients and discussing their experience.

As part of the inspection, the regulator also spoke with relatives, carers, staff and managers at the service, alongside reviewing records and documents.

All patients who were spoken with said they felt safe, with one saying it was the best service they'd been at for more than ten years and that staff were helping them to reach their full potential.

The report read: "They thought it was a good ward and described staff as supportive. One patient said they had received better support on this ward than on any other ward they had been on in over 10 years as an inpatient. One patient said the atmosphere was more relaxed than on other wards they had been on.

"The patients told us that staff had involved them in developing their care plans and spent time taking to them about their care and treatment. They saw their responsible clinician regularly and had access to psychological therapies and occupational therapy input as well as medical treatments.

"One patient described how staff had given them structure and routine and had supported them to develop their own potential and help others with mental health problems."

Inspectors noted that the service offered least restrictive care and helped to maximise the independence of service users. They said service users were able to be involved in their care, along with their carers and loved ones.

Describing the 'respect and dignity' seen at the service, inspectors noted: "Staff supported patients in practising their faith, and food as required by their faith was available.

"We observed staff interacting with patients in a polite and supportive manner. Staff offices were located around the ward amongst patients' rooms which added to the sense of staff and patients working together in a shared therapeutic space."

The report described how patients had access to a wide range of on-ward and off-ward activities with a strong focus on rehabilitation. Staff worked with patients to strengthen their daily living skills such as budgeting, shopping and cooking.

Hospital Manager Serena Birtwistle said: "I am very pleased with the inspection report, in particular with the feedback from patients themselves, who all said they felt safe, supported and well cared for. Every day we strive to achieve a standard of care which enables and empowers our patients to reach their full potential.

"We know that being detained under the Mental Health Act can be a distressing experience but with compassionate care at the forefront of our work, we tackle the challenges of mental health and help the men we support to enhance their personal skills to rebuild their lives.

"I am proud that these high standards we set for ourselves and the personalised care we deliver are reflected in the report."

Ends