

# Lewis' Journey\*

## Cygnnet Hospital Clifton, Nottingham

### Low Secure Service for Men with Personality Disorder

#### Lewis' History

Lewis was originally sentenced on an Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) order. Whilst in prison, Lewis was transferred to the hospital wing following self-harming behaviours and suicide attempts where he spent three years. He was subsequently transferred following suspected psychosis. Lewis described feeling as if he was "untreatable". He was diagnosed with Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder (EUPD) and offered the opportunity to transfer to Cygnnet Hospital Bury in Lancashire, a Medium Secure Service for men with a personality disorder. Lewis wanted to understand himself and his personality disorder.

Whilst at Cygnnet Hospital Bury, Lewis reported that "things were tough" and initially struggled with his thoughts of self-harming. Sadly after his transfer to Cygnnet Hospital Bury Lewis' brother passed away, this was something Lewis described as a turning point – It was at this moment that Lewis believes he decided to "turn my life around", including to never utilise PRN, illicit drugs, engage in self-harming behaviours or commit crime again.

Lewis started to rely less on antipsychotics with the support of the team at Cygnnet Hospital Bury, highlighting that the withdrawal was difficult. He engaged in weekly psychology sessions, during which he learnt skills such as mindfulness, and occupational therapy activities, which focused him on his goal of turning his life around.

#### Lewis' Admission

After a period of time with Cygnnet Hospital Bury, Lewis was recommended to transfer to a Low Secure Service for men with a personality disorder. Lewis recalled being interviewed by the Consultant Psychiatrist at Cygnnet Hospital Clifton, who "opened my eyes to what I wanted in life".

Lewis recalls being transferred to Cygnnet Hospital Clifton. He described it as "hard at first", referencing being admitted to an initial assessment ward with limited access to Section 17 leave (S17), and having said goodbye to trusted staff and friends at Cygnnet Hospital Bury. Though the work was initially tough, Lewis described the support and nursing staff at Cygnnet Hospital Clifton were extremely helpful and kind, and he began to open up and communicate. Lewis recalled beginning work with psychology and the occupational therapy team, and highlighted their support, including the hard work from Support Workers and Nurses, as being instrumental in him never having utilised PRN medication whilst at Cygnnet Hospital Clifton.



## Lewis' Care

After an initial period of assessment, Lewis began to increase his access to S17 leave, and began volunteering at a local charity shop for MENCAP with the support of the hospital. During his work with psychology, he began to gain an understanding of his Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder, including his personal warning signs, triggers, and ability to utilise coping strategies.

Lewis discussed his understanding "everyone in life has a personality", but that circumstances and life experiences may lead to individuals coping with situations differently. For example, Lewis highlighted he struggles to process criticism. Through honest work and exploration, Lewis reports his responsible clinician, psychologist, nursing and support staff helped him to identify what coping strategies helped him to stay safe and progress towards managing himself in the community.

Lewis identified learning "not everyone is bad" during his stay at Cygnet Hospital Clifton. Having witnessed domestic abuse and experienced abuse himself as a young child, including witnessing alcoholism in his parents, Lewis reports Cygnet Hospital Clifton gave him the strength and courage to confront his past, and utilise organisations such as the police for assistance when in need. Lewis also highlighted his time at Cygnet Hospital Clifton was challenging, with all disciplines installing boundaries, which have been instrumental in developing his ability to live within the community.



## Lewis Today

In addition to his volunteering job with MENCAP, Lewis has recently been employed as an Expert by Experience with Choice Support, with the aim of helping those who have experienced and struggled with similar behaviours to himself. He hopes to utilise qualifications (including practical courses), he studied for whilst in prison and hospital.

Lewis thanks all the staff at Cygnet Hospital Clifton and his family for their support and we would like to wish him well for the future.



[www.cygnethealth.co.uk](http://www.cygnethealth.co.uk)

\*Name has been changed to protect his identity.

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To make a referral or for more information about **Cygnet Hospital Clifton** please call **0808 164 4450**/email [chcl.referrals@nhs.net](mailto:chcl.referrals@nhs.net) or contact your regional NHS Partnership Manager