



Press Release

For Immediate Release

Youngest Apprentice at leading company speaks out during National Apprenticeship Week

The youngest ever apprenticeship from a leading health and social care organisation has talked about how the training pathway helped her to find her dream job.

This week it is National Apprenticeship Week 2023, which aims to highlight the exceptional work being done by apprentices and employers across the UK.

Elle Day, 19, from Birmingham, is Cygnet Health Care's youngest apprentice, and she talks about how she missed out on being able to join the Royal Navy to then find her "dream" job through an apprenticeship.

Elle signed up to study Geology, Geography and Environmental Science at sixth form college after her ambition of joining the Navy fell through when she was rejected on medical grounds. However, when she then found herself struggling at college and started to look for other options, a chance encounter sent her in a new direction.

"I wasn't doing well at college either educationally or mentally," said Elle, 19. "Then a family member who works at Cygnet Health Care mentioned their apprenticeships scheme. I have been on an amazing journey since then."

When Elle was accepted onto the scheme in July 2020, she became Cygnet's youngest ever apprentice at the age of 16.

She firstly completed a Business Administration Level 2 Course and is now currently two-thirds of the way through her new apprenticeship pathway; a Level 4 Cyber Security Technologist – Cyber Risk Analyst. She is due to finish in October.

A leading provider of mental health services in the UK, Cygnet offers opportunities ranging from nursing, healthcare, management, HR, IT and finance to help people grow their skills and embrace new challenges.

Elle said: "I was offered a role in the Information and Governance department, in Cygnet's Coventry office, and the idea was that I would do four months in 3 different sections – data protection, data quality and information security. I enjoyed the first two but when I started on information security, I really fell in love with it. I was really intrigued and wanted to learn more."

She now works in Information Security as a Junior Information Security Risk Analyst.

She said: "I am hoping to continue my career in Cyber Security and further my knowledge by working with the team we have at Cygnet."

“I had never thought about a job in security. I did IT at school but it wasn’t very good so I never took it seriously as a career. Since I’ve been working at Cygnet, I haven’t looked back.”

Elle says she would recommend apprenticeships. “It’s an amazing opportunity, getting real life experience in an actual work environment.”

“The managers at Cygnet have been very helpful, and I’m part of a really supportive team. I’m getting the opportunity to work with people who are really experienced at what they do. You don’t get that kind of experience from a text book.”

Suzanne Smith, Apprenticeship Manager at Cygnet, said: “Elle is a perfect example of how much Apprenticeships benefit both the Apprentice and the business and she has shown that even at a young age, she has found her niche and will be going onwards and upwards in her career with us. She is a shining example that shows that she has been able to think outside of the usual career opportunities and taken strides into an area she had not formerly considered within Healthcare.”

The training is free to the apprentices because Cygnet Health Care funded the programme through levy, introduced by the government in 2017.

To date, more than 600 Cygnet Health Care staff have completed an apprenticeship pathway.

Ends

Notes to Editors:

For more information, please contact Gemma Attew, External Communications Manager, on gemmaattew@cygnethealth.co.uk or 07718 244811.

About Cygnet Health Care

Cygnet Health Care has been providing a national network of high-quality, specialised mental health services for the NHS and local authorities for the past 30 years.

Cygnet Health Care’s pioneering services support people with complex and acute mental health needs across the UK.

As one of the best quality providers in mental health services in the country, Cygnet Health Care’s focus is always on the best outcomes for those who use or commission its services. 85% of Cygnet’s facilities are rated as good or outstanding, which is above the national average.

www.cygnethealth.co.uk