



Press Release

Immediate Release

20 June 2023

**Basildon Woman Shares Experiences
During Learning Disabilities Week**

"I want people to know that I am happy and that I am living a normal life."

A 22-year-old woman from Basildon wants to bust some myths this Learning Disabilities week and assure people that despite her learning disability, she is living a fulfilled life.

Deanna White is a current service user at Cygnet Social Care service, Ducks Halt, on Walton Road, Essex, which is a specialist residential service supporting up to five adults who are living with a learning disability and complex needs.

She has a diagnosis of mild learning disability and ADHD and has been a resident at Ducks Halt since 2020.

"I absolutely love it here at Ducks Halt," Deanna said. "The staff are amazing and they really help and support me.

"They organise so many fun activities for us to do including days out like going to the zoo or going bowling. I'm really happy this is my home."

This week is Learning Disabilities Week and this year, the aim is to show the world the incredible things that people with a learning disability achieve, smashing misconceptions about what people can do and shining a light on the stigma many still face every day.

The purpose of the week is to educate people and raise awareness about learning disabilities, and also it is about making sure the world hears what life is like if you have a learning disability.

Deanna said: "I do feel that people misjudge me a little bit.

"Despite my learning disability my life is good and I do a lot of fun stuff. I enjoy cooking and arts and crafts and going outside to parks and listening to music.

"I feel that some people think I don't have a proper life like 'normal' people. I like being happy and doing stuff I want to do, just like everybody else.

"I do enjoy my life, people shouldn't bring themselves down. You can achieve anything."

Deanna said her hopes for the future is to have a job and live independently.

"I'm trying my best", she said. "The most important thing for me is being happy."

Natalie Neeson is the Cygnet Social Care Service Manager at Ducks Halt. She said: "I am incredibly proud to run a service which supports people like Deanna to live a fulfilled life. People often underestimate the capabilities of people with learning disabilities and through the support we offer here, we can help to showcase their amazing achievements and tremendous talents."

"People with a learning disability should have all the fun and opportunities that everybody else has and that is what we strive to ensure here at Ducks Halt."

Cygnet Social Care is part of the Cygnet Group which also provides healthcare services for young people and adults in England, Scotland and Wales. An expert and highly dedicated social care team of 2945 employees empower 694 individuals across 67 residential, supported living and day services to consistently make a positive difference to their lives.

To watch a video clip of Deanna, please click here:

<https://vimeo.com/837278842/5beddc1502?share=copy>

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Notes to Editors:

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