



Press Release

Immediate Release

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Cygnet Carer Ambassador Recognised in New Year's Honours

Cygnet Group Carer Ambassador Matthew McKenzie has been awarded a British Empire Medal (BEM) in the New Year's Honours in recognition for his work with carers.

Matthew, who previously cared for his mother and now supports his two brothers with autism, was nominated for the prestigious honour by Carers UK.

He is Cygnet Health Care's Expert by Experience Carer Ambassador and makes a difference to the organisation by ensuring carers voices are heard and that they continue to play an integral role in shaping the support provided to their loved one. He helps to shape Cygnet Groups's carer plan and takes part in a range of opportunities for discussion and feedback across carers' councils, workshops and one-to-one conversations in all service areas.

Matthew, of Catford, Lewisham also runs several carer forums that cover large parts of London. He is the chair of the National Triangle of Care community group and campaigns heavily for carer rights with the support of national carer charities. Matthew often uses social media to raise awareness of mental health and carers and is also an NHS Citizen to continue promoting awareness of carers including cancer carers and ethnic minority carers. He has written four books to continue raising awareness of mental health carers.

He said: "I am so honoured and delighted to receive the British Empire Medal for services to carers.

"It means so much to be recognised for the hard work and duty I have put in to support unpaid carers.

"I would like to thank Carers UK for nominating me and also the support Cygnet has given me to reach carers nationally."

Talking about the difference he wants to make through his role at Cygnet, Matthew added: "I always felt that carers should get involved to create change within organisations. I am involved in several mental health NHS trusts, but felt I could make a difference at Cygnet.

“As a carer ambassador I can use my profile to connect with carers who often feel lost within the system. Even though I heavily promote carer causes, I believe staff, patient and carers should work together to increase communication and understanding. There will be challenges, but I also believe we should avoid shutting people out.

“Cygnet has done a lot to raise the profile of carers and I am excited to see what will develop from their latest carer initiatives. I am sure Cygnet is up to the challenge to identify and support carers.”

David Wilmott, Cygnet Group Director of Nursing, sent his well wishes to Matthew on this recognition. He said: “All of us at Cygnet Group are delighted that Matthew’s dedication, commitment and support to carers has been recognised.

“The work he does to promote awareness of carers makes a huge difference and we are incredibly grateful for the work he does directly with us to advocate for carers and to help ensure they have a voice across our organisation. We are all very proud of him and send him our biggest congratulations.”

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Notes to Editors:

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