



Press Release

Immediate Release

8 April 2024

Cygnet Hospital Sheffield's Spectrum Colour Walk

Staff and young people from Cygnet Hospital Sheffield recently took part in a Spectrum Colour Walk to celebrate Autism Acceptance Week and to raise money for the National Autistic Society.

Organised by Dan, a young person at the hospital and Chloe Eagle, Head of Phoenix School, the 5km walk took place in Norfolk Heritage Park, Sheffield.

Cygnet Hospital Sheffield, on East Bank Road, is a 55-bed hospital which offers a low secure service for women and Child and Adolescent Mental Health services for male and female adolescents over three wards.

Dan is a service user on Pegasus Ward, a 13 bed general adolescent acute service, providing support for young people, both male and female.

He said: "I was diagnosed with autism in 2022 but before then it was a long process to get my diagnosis through long wait times and lack of schools understanding of the condition, leading them to believe I wasn't autistic.

"All this and the fact that I'd lived for 14 years masking my emotions meant I never got the support I needed, and I ended up deteriorating in my mental health and just couldn't cope any more.

"I was admitted to a mental health inpatient unit where I was diagnosed with autism and since then I've received way more support but it's not come without its challenges as I've still faced discrimination and stigma, which is why I think it is important to raise awareness."

Phoenix School is the education provider for all young people admitted to Cygnet Hospital Sheffield. Chloe, Head of School, added: "We are walking for autistic children to have a happy and fulfilled time at school. We are walking to ensure autistic people are given proper opportunities to work. We are walking for shorter diagnosis wait times. We are walking for autism acceptance."

Participants were joined on the walk by former Cygnet Health Care patient Thomas Beasley, 18, who was hospitalised at 16 after being diagnosed with Complex PTSD, ADHD and Autism.

He has now begun working for the Lived Experience Network as an Expert by Experience – someone who has personal experience of using or caring for someone who uses health, mental health and/or social care. He will be supporting young people hospitalised due to their mental health at Cygnet Health Care services.

Tom said: “In true CAMHS fashion we did this with lots of colour. We also found time to all embrace our inner child and have some fun using the swings and slides. Everyone had lots of fun whilst supporting a charity that is close to the hearts of all involved.

Being an Expert by Experience helped me in my final stage of my recovery, it's shed light on my treatment and it's given me a lot of acceptance and understanding. It has put it into perspective how far I've come. Now I can use that as a starting block to help others.

“I want to actively listen to what the young people need and relay that accurately to those that have the power and the means to do something about it.”

Donations to the team's fundraising page can be made at <https://waaw.autism.org.uk/fundraising/chloeeagle>

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Notes to Editors:

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