



Press Release

Immediate Release

15 April 2025

Blackburn Mental Health Patient Dreaming of New Career

A former patient who spent ten years in mental health services is now dreaming of a career in the care industry after the support he received from a Blackburn hospital.

Shaun's mental health journey started ten years ago when he self-admitted himself to a mental health hospital after mum died of cancer.

"I didn't take it very well," he explained. "I was working my way up to a high secure unit where in my heart I would live out the rest of my life.

"My hopes and ambitions for the future were crushed after losing my mum."

After nine years of progressing through services, Shaun was admitted to the High Support Inpatient Rehabilitation Service at Cygnet Fountains, on Pleasington Close, a year ago following another family tragedy.

"I lost my sister, she was only young," he said. "I was admitted to Cygnet Fountains a day after her funeral.

"If I hadn't had come to the service, my mental health would have relapsed. It's changed my life coming to the Fountains.

"When I first arrived, I was 20 stone. There, I went to the gym every day and I've lost nearly six stone in a year. It's boosted my confidence and made me feel better about myself.

"Looking back at my ten years in service, this has been the most productive year so far."

At Cygnet Fountains, Shaun developed an initiative called "The Peer Buddy Mentorship". This programme allows established service users to assist new admissions to the hospital.

Shaun explained: "When a service user is first admitted and gets shown around, the programme means another service user gets allocated and goes with them.

"They can see someone at the end of their journey and it gives them hope to think 'that could be me'.

"Admission into a mental health service can be quite daunting, having someone there to answer questions is invaluable. I felt overwhelmed when I first arrived, and if I can help someone to not feel that way, I'm all for it."

Sarah Leigh, Occupational Therapist at the Cygnet Health Care service, explained: "When Shaun was admitted, he was high functioning, independent, he managed his own finances and accessing the community.

"But he had lost himself a little bit. After admission he was going through a really difficult time, he'd hit a roadblock. We helped him to break the barriers down.

"We gave him his sparkle back, he knows who he is and where he's going in life."

Another Occupational Therapist, Sarah Riding, added: "Shaun is so much more confident and self-aware now. He backs his choices whereas he used to self-doubt himself.

"He's happier, settled and has coping mechanisms to overcome any barriers which may occur in the future."

Having been discharged from Cygnet Fountains, Shaun is living in his own supported living flat, studying at college, has begun driving lessons and is working towards his goal of building a career in care.

Sarah Leigh added: "Looking back at Shaun's journey at The Fountains. I feel immensely proud of everything he's done and overcome.

"There's a lot more to come from Shaun and I think he's going to continue to improve services and help service users.

"He's going to contribute to society and I can't wait to see what's next for him."

Ends