



Press Release

Immediate Release

3 March 2025

Mansfield Service User Praises Support to Cope With Self-Harming

A Mansfield service user from Cygnet Sherwood Lodge has shared how the care and support he received has given him confidence for the future and equipped him with the tools to manage his mental health moving forwards.

Chris Masterton, 47, has recently been discharged from Cygnet Sherwood Lodge where he had been receiving treatment since November 2023 after his mental health declined to the point he was self-harming, something he had struggled with throughout his adult life.

Cygnet Sherwood Lodge is part of the Cygnet Health Care division and supports up to 26 men with learning disabilities and complex needs.

"I was pleased to go to a place where I felt most supported and where I believed would get me back to the person I used to be," he said.

"I knew I could talk openly to staff about my feelings and I would be able to turn things around."

Chris said he first began suffering with his mental health when he was 18-years-old.

"I first began to self-harm in my late teens," he said. "I was admitted into different hospitals and put on different medications. I was struggling with my anger management and controlling my mood.

"I've got two different sides to me. There's 'Good' Chris and 'Bad' Chris. Sometimes one can take over."

Thanks to support from staff at Cygnet Sherwood Lodge, who have taught him therapeutic coping mechanisms, he has turned around how he manages his moods.

He explained: "Staff here have really helped me to develop the right coping tools to make sure the right Chris wins. Visualisation techniques, like picturing myself in a forest or on the beach, watching the birds go by and listening to relaxation music, it all sounds simple but for me it really works and calms me down.

“With a history of self-harming, it's really important that hospitals do the right risk assessments for you. For example, when I was first admitted to Sherwood Lodge staff would have to watch me have a shave and make sure I took my medicine correctly. It's all to keep you safe.”

Chris will soon be leaving Cygnet Sherwood Lodge to live in the community and has worked with his psychologist - Dr Rebecca Gibbs (Consultant Forensic Psychologist) – to create a training package, known as ‘Chris’ Wellness Recovery Action Plan’ for staff his next service so they know how best to manage his mental health.

It details how staff can best support him, with tips like clear communication, supporting him with his medication and limiting loud noises.

“I am really proud of the journey I've been on and how I'm strong enough, and well enough, now to be able to be clear on what I do and don't need,” Chris said.

“It helps me to feel more in control of myself and my emotions, and ultimately that means I feel safer.

“Having the confidence and ability to put my own wellness plan together means I'm not nervous about being discharged and taking that step back into the community. I've been here before but I definitely feel I have more skills and coping mechanisms now. So I'm not scared or worried.

“That's thanks to the staff here at Cygnet Sherwood Lodge for looking after me so well and getting me through my hard times. Staff here have really helped me to feel safe. They're friendly and really take the time to listen to you.

“When you have a history of self-harming, you do have a lot of reminders on your body of the tough times. My scars are motivation for me to make sure I stay well.

“There's a whole world out there for me and I want to enjoy my next placement and make my Mum proud. I don't want to let anyone down.”

Ends