



Press Release

Immediate Release

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Bournemouth Team Shines with Five Finalists at Stars of Learning Disabilities & Autism Awards

Five members of staff from Cygnet Social Care's Nightingale service in Bournemouth have been shortlisted for national awards celebrating excellence in care and support for people with learning disabilities and autism.

The Stars of Learning Disabilities and Autism Awards are an annual event recognising the dedication, compassion and innovation of care professionals across the UK.

The Nightingale team has been recognised across multiple categories, demonstrating strong leadership, exceptional frontline expertise and an unwavering commitment to person-centred care. The service, on Stourcliffe Avenue, is a specialist residential service for adults with autism and learning disabilities

Simon Coles, Registered Manager, has been shortlisted in the Amazing Manager category, recognising his strong leadership, compassion, and an unwavering focus on the people he supports.

Simon said: "I'm incredibly honoured to be shortlisted for The Amazing Manager Award (South) at the Stars of Learning Disabilities & Autism Awards. Being recognised in this way is incredibly humbling, because for me, leadership is not about titles, it is about responsibility, accountability, and ensuring that every decision centres on the individuals we support.

"Every day, I strive to lead with compassion, integrity and a deep commitment to person-centred care. The values we live by at Cygnet Social Care - Care, Respect, Empower, Trust, and Integrity - are far more than words on a page. They shape every interaction, every care plan, and every conversation we have as a team.

"I am proud and privileged to work alongside such an inspiring group of colleagues at Nightingale. Their dedication to making a difference motivates me every single day. This nomination is not just for me, it reflects the collective passion, expertise, and kindness of the entire team."

Kerry Morrel-Tourle, Deputy Home Manager, has been shortlisted in the Lifetime Luminary Award category, which recognises those who have dedicated their career to improving the lives of people with learning disabilities and autism.

Kerry said: "Being shortlisted for the Lifetime Luminary Award is truly humbling. When I first started working in this field, I never imagined where the journey would take me. For me, this recognition isn't just about the length of my career, it's about the people whose lives I've been privileged to be part of, the families I've worked alongside, and the colleagues who have shared my passion and belief in person-centred care.

"Every day has been about making a difference, whether that's helping someone gain confidence in their independence, advocating for their voice to be heard, or supporting a colleague to grow in their role. Knowing that this commitment is valued means so much. I feel incredibly proud, not just of my own journey, but of the progress the sector has made in recognising the rights, value and potential of the people we support."

For Lianne Wood, Team Leader, she has been shortlisted in the Leading Light Frontline Leader Award. Lianne said it "means so much to me".

She added: "Leadership, to me, is about creating an environment where every member of the team feels valued, supported and inspired to do their best work. It's about being present on the floor, understanding people's needs in real time, and stepping in wherever support is needed, whether for a resident or for a colleague.

"I believe frontline leadership is about doing the small things consistently, choosing kindness, being patient, and always remembering that every interaction has the power to make someone's day better. To have that approach recognised on a national scale is truly humbling, and I am incredibly proud of the team who stand beside me every day."

Georgia Grou, Activities Co-ordinator, has been shortlisted in the Joy Maker category for bringing joy, positivity and emotional wellbeing to the people she supports through meaningful activity.

Georgia said: "I feel so proud that people have noticed the joy I bring through activities. For me, activities are not just something to fill time, they are powerful moments of connection, happiness, and personal expression. Whether it's a music session, a sensory activity, or a celebration of someone's personal interests, I want every moment to feel meaningful to the people we support.

"I truly believe that joy is its own kind of care. It lifts people up, helps build relationships, and reminds us all of the value of shared laughter and celebration. Knowing that my efforts are having a positive impact – and that others can see that – is incredibly special. This nomination means the world to me."

In the Superstar Support Worker Award, Blessing Ededho, Support Worker, has been shortlisted for providing outstanding, person-centred care and empowering individuals to live fulfilling lives.

Blessing said: "Being nominated for the Superstar Support Worker Award is such an honour. For me, supporting individuals is not just a job, it is a privilege. Every day, I

want the people I support to feel respected, valued and empowered, and to know that they are at the centre of every decision we make.

“This recognition reflects the passion I have for supporting people to flourish, build independence and feel confident in themselves. I am grateful to work alongside an incredible team who share the same values and who bring out the best in each other every single day. To be recognised in this way motivates me to keep going above and beyond.”

Reflecting on the nominations for his team, Simon added: “Each of these nominations reflects passion, dedication and a genuine drive to make a meaningful difference. I am extraordinarily proud of every one of them. Their commitment to excellence in care shines through every day, and the impact they have on the lives of the people we support cannot be overstated.

“As their Registered Manager, it is my privilege to witness their hard work, their compassion and the respect they show both to those we support and to one another. To see that recognised nationally is incredibly rewarding. They are shining examples of the very best of social care.”

The awards will take place on Friday 5 December 2025 at the Manchester Mercure Piccadilly Hotel, hosted by Traitors star and Mencap Ambassador Alexander Dragonetti.