



Press Release

Immediate Release

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Triple Success for Hexham Care Service at the Great British Care Awards

A care service in Hexham which supports adults with learning disabilities is celebrating an outstanding achievement after all three of its finalists received honours at the North East Region of the Great British Care Awards 2025.

Maintenance Manager Neil Young was crowned winner of the Putting People First Award, while Service Manager Ashleigh Yilmaz and Support Worker Mercy Igbaroola each received Highly Commended recognition in their categories.

The Great British Care Awards celebrate excellence across the social care sector, honouring individuals who demonstrate exceptional dedication, compassion and a commitment to person-centred care.

Neil's award recognises his unwavering commitment to creating a safe, supportive and empowering environment where residents' independence and individuality are always prioritised.

Judges said: "Neil's care and dedication shine in every interaction. Beyond maintaining Oaklands, he supports residents with warmth, respect and understanding. His compassion and teamwork make him an invaluable presence.

Reflecting on his win, Neil said: "I was very thankful and grateful I was nominated and it meant such a lot to be recognised."

Ashleigh Yilmaz, Manager of the Cygnet Social Care service, was Highly Commended in the Care Home Registered Manager Award category.

Ashleigh, who joined Oaklands in 2022 and has a rich background in nursing, trauma care and leadership, was praised for her strong management skills and commitment to continuous improvement.

Judges said: "Ashleigh shows strong leadership and deep dedication to person-centred care. She drives continuous improvement, champions high clinical standards and promotes inclusivity through cultural events and meaningful engagement."

She was joined by Support Worker Mercy Igbaroola, who was also Highly Commended in the Ancillary Worker and Dignity in Care Award category. Mercy was recognised for her exceptional ability to promote dignity, respect and compassion in every interaction, fostering inclusion and inspiring colleagues through her exemplary approach.

Judges said: "Mercy's passion for her service users is clear. Her joy in her work, her warmth and her consistent commitment make a significant and positive impact."

On her personal, and team's success, Ashleigh said: "It was a total honour to be nominated for such an incredible award, and to receive a highly commended recognition.

"It was a fantastic evening, in particular recognising the hard work and dedication that Neil shows each day at Oaklands. Receiving such a prestigious award is a credit both to Neil and to Oaklands.

"These recognitions reflect the dedication and passion that runs through the whole Oaklands team. Neil and Mercy both embody what great care is all about, putting people first, treating everyone with dignity, and making a real difference in the lives of those we support."

Cygnet Oaklands, based on Anick Road in Hexham, is part of the Cygnet Social Care division. The service provides specialist residential support with nursing for adults with learning disabilities and complex needs, helping each individual achieve greater independence and an improved quality of life.