



Press Release

Immediate Release

21 January 2026

Cygnet Colleague Celebrates 26 Years of Career Progression

A Cygnet colleague is celebrating more than 26 years with the organisation, praising the long-term career development opportunities available within the health and social care sector.

Joining Cygnet at 16 to work in a hospital kitchen, Kelly went on to build a career she never dreamed of, spanning frontline care, administration and senior leadership support roles.

Kelly began her working life at Cygnet Hospital Beckton with the idea of becoming a chef. Less than two years later, her career developed into something she hadn't considered before.

Kelly said: "When I was able to see what Cygnet had to offer first-hand, I quickly realised I wanted to become a Support Worker. Despite joining to work in the kitchen, I was offered the support I needed to do the job I wanted. Cygnet helped me to get my NVQ and undertake all of the necessary in-house training.

"Going into health and social care was never planned, but I love it. Everyone is so friendly. That's the first thing I noticed when I joined the company.

"It also taught me that everyone is different. No two patients are the same, even if they have the same diagnosis. Their journeys are always different. I really enjoyed supporting our service users and finding out their stories. I liked being able to listen to people and help them recover in our service."

During her 24 years at Cygnet Hospital Beckton, a mental health hospital for women in London, Kelly trialed a variety of senior roles before taking on the position of Ward Administrator.

She said: "A lot of people I worked with, including managers, really encouraged me to take up the Ward Administrator role. I am grateful for that. Admin is something I've always been good at and enjoyed doing as part of my Support Worker role. I was able to transfer the skills that I'd learnt at Cygnet and build up my knowledge for this new position."

With high ambitions, the Londoner soon became Personal Assistant to Cygnet Group's Divisional Medical Director for the South.

Kelly, now 42, works remotely and is able to manage her own workload and time. Her role sees her support senior leaders, prepare reports for governance meetings and assist with the delivery of Cygnet's services.

Reflecting on her unexpected career development, she said: "As I get older, my role as a Personal Assistant has offered me a quieter pace of life whilst still being able to do what I love and stay where I want. It's given me the flexibility I need.

"Helping people and building relationships with staff and service users is what has kept me at Cygnet for so long. I also feel like I've received a lot of support throughout my career, even from the top senior levels, which is not something you often see. Cygnet is just a really nice family and that's why I've stayed for 26 years.

"My advice to anyone starting out in the health and social care sector is to take every opportunity you get. There are a range of apprenticeships and different career development pathways you may not have even considered. Keep building the skills you already have and you never know where you will end up."