



Press Release

Immediate Release

10 April 2026

### **Birmingham Care Resident Shares Personal Autism Journey for World Autism Acceptance Month**

To mark World Autism Acceptance Month, a service user at Cygnet Cedars has shared his personal experiences of living with autism, offering an honest and insightful account of diagnosis, daily challenges, and the importance of understanding.

Eddie spoke openly about his early life and how his experiences changed over time. He said: "Up until 1984, life was good. After that, things started going downhill as I began to worry more about things. When I was younger, I didn't worry about small things like fidgeting, even if I sometimes felt like something was "wrong" with me."

He explained that he was diagnosed in 1996 following an assessment, after concerns were raised by both his parents and teachers. He said: "I was diagnosed in 1996 after going to an assessment centre. Both my parents and teachers knew that something wasn't right, which led to me being assessed."

Reflecting on receiving his diagnosis, Eddie described a mixture of emotions. He said: "I felt a bit nervous but also relieved. It helped me understand the little things I was doing or feeling, and I could finally just be "me". It made me feel like there was a reason for the challenges I had faced and helped me understand myself better."

He spoke positively about his experience at the Cygnet Health Care service, Cygnet Cedars, highlighting the supportive environment and therapeutic input available. He said: "It's nice because the patients aren't scary, and there are lots of activities going on. I can send letters to my friends. The staff are understanding and will explain things multiple times when I get anxious. I have regular sessions with the Occupational Therapist because I struggle with sensory overload, and the sensory room here is very big and nice. I also see the psychologist every week to talk about my anxieties and how to help myself when I get angry."

Eddie explained that his diagnosis did not fundamentally change how he sees himself or how others treat him. He said: "I don't feel very different about myself since receiving the diagnosis. I am still "me". The diagnosis just helped explain some of the ways I was feeling. People haven't really changed how they treat me, and my relationships have stayed the same."

He described the day-to-day impact of autism, particularly the challenges it can present. He said: "Living with autism can be very difficult for me. Some things that other people find easy can feel overwhelming or stressful. I often struggle with routines and worries, I worry about every little thing. Even while answering these questions, I kept checking the time so I wouldn't miss going to the shop. I also believe I may have OCD, although it hasn't been formally diagnosed, and the obsessive thoughts and need to repeat things can make life very challenging."

Eddie also highlighted the lack of understanding and ongoing misconceptions surrounding autism. He said: "I don't think people have much understanding of autism. Some people think we have speech difficulties, no communication skills, or don't say much, but autism is different for everyone. I am the opposite, I like talking and writing letters."

He added: "People also sometimes believe we are not smart or can't use our brains properly, but that isn't true. For example, I am good with dates. If someone tells me their date of birth, I can often work out what day it falls on."

Discussing both the challenges and strengths of autism, Eddie shared his personal perspective. He said: "Some of the challenges I experience include sensitivity to sounds and textures. I find it difficult to interpret verbal and non-verbal communication. I can have repetitive behaviours and complicated or overwhelming thoughts. I struggle with planning and organisation, and I need to have a watch on me at all times. I can have outbursts and sometimes find it hard to regulate my emotions. I also struggle to concentrate on tasks, which can be different from other people with autism."

He also spoke about the positive aspects of his experience. He said: "In terms of strengths, I have strong interests in things like music, dates, cars, trains and churches. I have a very high attention to detail and notice things that others might miss. If something feels wrong or bothers me, I tend to say it honestly. I am a very loyal and honest person, with good friends who I care about a lot, even if we sometimes have small arguments. I also have a very good memory and can remember things from when I was a child."

Cygnets Cedars, on Broadway Avenue, Bordesley Green, is a 23-bed high dependency complex care service for men with learning disabilities, part of the Cygnets Health Care division.