



Press Release

Immediate Release

24 August 2026

From Anxiety to Advocacy: Hexham Woman Breaks Stoma Stigma in Local Community

A woman with learning disabilities who previously faced barriers due to a medical procedure is now confidently sharing her story to encourage greater inclusion and understanding across her community in Hexham.

Angela, who has lived at [Oaklands](#), a specialist residential service run by Cygnet Social Care, for the past four years, is making an impact in her local community by raising awareness and acceptance of urostomies and stomas.

A urostomy is an operation that creates a way for urine to leave the body through an opening in the stomach, called a stoma, into a bag worn on the outside of the body.

With the help of staff, Angela has created information cards about urostomies, which she is giving out to local businesses in the area with an aim to promote greater understanding.

Speaking about her motivation to do this, Angela said: "Sometimes my bag leaks and it's embarrassing so I want people to learn about these things because we're all human. It's important for people in the community to understand this and to offer non-judgemental support.

"It feels nice to do this and I like to go out as the people are kind to me. Staff help me so much and I want to help other people."

By talking openly about what a urostomy is, Angela is not only championing understanding and acceptance in her local community but also building her self-confidence.

For many years, Angela avoided visits to swimming pools and spas due to anxiety around her stoma.

But for the past four years, staff at the Hexham-based care service have supported Angela to boost her confidence around living with a stoma.

Thanks to the support of dedicated staff members and positive interactions in the local community, opportunities that once felt out of reach are now part of everyday life, with Angela enjoying regular spa days and trips to the swimming pool.

Ashleigh Yilmaz, Service Manager at Oaklands, highlighted the impressive change the team have seen in Angela since she started her awareness campaign.

"She has a lot more confidence and we are extremely proud to see the huge difference she has made in the community. To see people's differences being openly accepted is lovely," explained Ashleigh.

"It is important to us that our residents not only feel safe and comfortable at Oaklands but also feel the same in the community they live in.

"Here at Cygnet Social Care, we step in where we can to support our residents to build their knowledge and confidence around topics that aren't talked about much."

Angela's story is being shared as part of Cygnet Social Care's 'Cygnet in the Community' campaign, which aims to showcase how residents within social care settings are undertaking inspiring and powerful work in their communities.