



# Gill's<sup>\*</sup> Journey

**Cygnets Aspen Clinic,  
Doncaster**

**Highly Specialised Personality  
Disorder Service**

## Gill's history

Gill describes her journey as a very long one. After a difficult childhood marked by trauma and grief, she struggled to trust those around her, regulate her emotions, and build a structured routine.

Her early years were fraught with emotional turmoil. The loss and trauma she experienced made it hard for her to form trusting relationships and find stability in her daily life. Emotional regulation was a constant battle, and establishing a routine seemed impossible.

Gill spent a long time within inpatient services throughout her childhood years.

## When Gill came to us

When Gill first arrived at Cygnets Aspen Clinic, our specialist service for women with a diagnosis of personality disorder and associated complex needs, she described herself as "a shell."

Gill arrived sectioned under the Mental Health Act, due to a period of escalating self-destructive behaviours.

She felt lost with no clear direction in life, abandoned by those around her, she continued to self-harm regularly.

Upon arrival, Gill was given a tour of the service. She was pleasantly surprised by the warm reception from everyone, including the staff.

This immediate sense of community was something she hadn't encountered before, and it sparked a glimmer of hope.

Settling in wasn't easy. Gill's past experiences in services left her wary and distrustful. The first few months were marked by incidents and emotional struggles. However, the unwavering support, encouragement, and care from the staff gradually began to make a difference.



To make a referral or for more information about **Cygnets Aspen Clinic** please call **0808 164 4450** / email [chcl.referrals@nhs.net](mailto:chcl.referrals@nhs.net) or contact your regional Business Relationship Manager

## Gill's care

After working closely with the multi-disciplinary team (MDT) and engaging in focused psychology sessions, Gill made significant strides in regulating her mood and planning her future. These improvements allowed her to gradually reclaim her independence.

Gill's progress led to her being granted leave, starting with escorted outings, then shadowed, and now unescorted. She described this newfound independence as "incredible" and "one of the best things" for her.

This freedom allowed her to pursue activities she genuinely enjoyed. The ability to take leave on her own holds special meaning for Gill, signifying the trust placed in her and the comfort of being able to spend time alone.

As part of her ongoing development, Gill has taken on the role of patient representative at Cygnet Aspen Clinic. In this capacity, she actively participates in governance meetings, voicing the needs, wants, and experiences of her fellow patients.

A therapeutic earnings position in the hospital was facilitated by the occupational therapy team which in time progressed to a volunteer position at a nearby charity shop. This really boosted Gill's self-confidence and allowed her to take positive risks with independent leave.

Over time, Gill said that she "started to melt her ice wall" and open up. The constant support and genuine care from the staff helped her slowly build trust and feel safe in her new environment.

She began to engage more with the team and her peers, laying the foundation for her recovery journey.

## Gill today

Setting sights for when she is discharged, Gill would like to become an Expert by Experience, as she has been told she would be great for the role, and feels it is something she would enjoy.

She has also been offered a job by a regular visitor to the service, which she is excited to take part in.

**Cygnet Aspen Clinic has helped me along further than I could have ever imagined in my entire life. I feel better than I ever have in terms of my mental health.**

- Gill

"It wasn't an easy journey, but here I am now, living proof that anyone can make it. It just takes a lot of effort on everyone's part."

She recently nominated the hospital manager and a support worker who particularly looked after her for a staff award.

She chose to do this because she felt Cygnet Aspen Clinic has gone above and beyond in helping her.

Gill said: "Staff mean an awful lot to me because they're caring, kind, supportive and compassionate. They listen and don't dismiss you and that is massive because, for a very long time, I was dismissed and made to feel like my opinion counted for nothing.

I think it's incredibly important for teams to have the opportunity to win awards like this as it gives them the recognition they deserve, as well as acknowledging the hard work they put in every day. The awards help give them the recognition they deserve, which means the world to me, and hopefully them as well."

**Don't give up. There are people that need you. Thank you.**

- Gill



[www.cygnetgroup.com](http://www.cygnetgroup.com)

\*Name has been changed to protect her identity.

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