



## **Press Release**

### **Immediate Release**

**21 March 2025**

### **Former Mental Health Patient Returns to Same Hospital as Support Worker**

A mental health patient is giving back in a way he never thought possible by working as a support worker at the same hospital which treated him.

Kevin Gardner was first diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia in 2007, though he had suffered with his mental health throughout his teen years, including with PTSD and depression.

He was admitted to different mental health hospitals in his adult life, ranging from high, medium and low secure units, before he was admitted as a patient to Cygnet Health Care Sedgley House on Woodcross Street, Wolverhampton, a 20 bed high support inpatient rehabilitation (level 2) service for men.

In 2021, Kev was successfully discharged as a patient from the Cygnet Health Care service and during his time there, he showed a great work ethic and enthusiasm for helping other service users.

As a result, Kev was offered a paid job as part of the Cygnet Sedgley House team, as a support worker, and is now helping other men with their mental health problems.

He said this job has "changed my life".

Everton Kanyayi, Head of Care at Cygnet Sedgley House, said he first met Kev on the day he was admitted.

"He was totally different from what he is today," he said. "He was in the early days of his journey.

"The sort of things that made the team look at him and believe he had the qualities of a good support worker is that he would often chip in and offer to do the jobs traditionally done by the nursing team.

"It sparked the idea that he would make a good support worker in the future."

Kev explained how his time as a patient gives him the best skills to be able to help current service users.

"When the idea was mentioned to me, I was quite excited and thought it was definitely something I would love to do," he said. "The team gave me confidence that I can do it. If I can, others can too."

"I know what it's like on a day to day basis. Some days can be quite hard and can be a struggle."

"I've got that rapport with service users that some staff might not have."

"I received a lot of care and I felt that I'd like to give that back, and offer help and support to other service users."

"Being a support worker has definitely changed my life."

As a mental health support worker, Kev provides day-to-day care assistance to the service users including developing treatment plans, administering medication, monitoring their physical health, giving practical and emotional support to the service user's and their families, and helping the men to access resources in the community.

Everton added: "We can use Kev as an example to the other guys that it's actually possible to continue achieving things. During this period of crisis, some of them may not believe that they'll be able to come out and go back to work."

"Going from a service user to a support worker, it's inspiring and a magnificent journey."

"I'm so happy to have worked with Kev through this journey because it's rare to have somebody starting as a patient and becoming a support worker."

"We are really proud that we were part of his journey and recovery."

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