



Priory Hospital Dorking

Miriam's story

Miriam* had spent half a decade in mental health hospitals before coming to Dorking. She began hearing voices at the age of 13 and started to self-harm by cutting, swallowing and overdosing. She also felt ashamed of what she was doing which only made her more depressed and anxious.

Miriam was admitted to A&E on a number of occasions due to her self-harming, before she was eventually admitted to a secure mental health hospital in her native Northern Ireland.

The treatment she was able to access in Northern Ireland was not sufficient for Miriam's needs, so she moved to England for specialised treatment.

Miriam came to Dorking in 2016. Her 3 year stay focused on helping her to build independence and self-belief – belief that she could not only cope, but also live a fulfilling life, with her illness.

When Miriam was admitted, she could have never imagined being independent or moving back into the community.



Her multidisciplinary team worked together to develop, continuously monitor, and adapt her treatment plan, which included:

- + Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT)
- + Dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT)
- + 1:1 psychology, which she said helped her to have a more positive outlook on life

Miriam was able to move into the self-contained flat, Rosa Parks, where she spent her last year at Dorking. Rosa Parks has been specifically set up as a step-down service that allows people like Miriam to regain their independence and self-esteem.

Here, Miriam was encouraged and empowered to:

- + Self-manage her condition, knowing that support from her treating team was always nearby
- + Re-engage with activities she hadn't done in a long time, such as cooking, cleaning, reading, shopping and watching films

Miriam is particularly complimentary of the time she spent at Rosa Parks, saying, **“Rosa Parks has made me feel normal again.”**

Nowadays, Miriam is living independently and doing really well. She seldom hears voices anymore and the skills she learnt at Dorking have helped her to cope with her condition, even when she is having a ‘bad day’.

“If it wasn’t for the therapies I’ve received and the support of staff and other patients, I would have never come so far”, Miriam said.

Miriam has now been able to move back to Northern Ireland and is enjoying spending time with her family.

“I’ve missed so much of their lives; I can’t wait to show them how far I’ve come.”

Miriam is now employed and working in the care sector – she feels the skills she has learnt in her own treatment will help to guide her within her own career caring for others.

“I’ve got a life again; I never thought I could get better. Thanks to everyone at Dorking for helping me to get this far.”

One piece of advice that Miriam would give to others starting their own recovery journey, is:

“be strong and you’ll get there in the end.”

The hospital director at Dorking, explained how much positive outcomes like Miriam’s mean to the whole team:

“Our team are genuinely passionate about the care they provide and the patients they help. The fact that we are able to provide such personalised treatment means that we are able to tailor our programmes to suit individuals’ distinct needs, interests and desired outcomes.

“I’m thrilled that Miriam has now been able to return to her home community and is doing so well, living and working independently.”



Dorking provides inpatient rehabilitation and recovery services for females with mental health needs, personality disorders or a mild learning disability.



Find out more

To contact Priory’s central team, please call **0330 137 3910** or to speak to someone at the hospital directly, please call **01306 644 100**.

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For the most up to date information on our services, please visit our website.