



Priory Hospital Altrincham

Recovering from alcohol and drug addiction – Gareth’s* story

An insight into the Addiction Treatment Programme at Priory Hospital Altrincham – a former patient shares their story.

From the age of 15, I started to smoke cannabis and drink with friends. I came from a supportive and loving family, never went without and was afforded good opportunities.



I drifted into my late teens, gradually increasing my drinking and drug use, moving onto pills and powder MDMA as well as constantly using cannabis. Even at the age of 19, I knew I was starting to develop a drink and drug problem. I was totally ignorant to the fact that I was already a hopeless addict. I left home and got a job in another city.

For a short period my drug use plateaued and I stuck mainly to alcohol, drinking constantly when not in work and ‘partying’ with so-called ‘friends’. There was a huge difference between me and other people, where they could stop drinking or using, I could not.

I became totally out of control and started to become a liability to everyone. For many years, I would drink and totally blackout, spending every penny I earned on drink and drugs. I battered my body and pickled my insides. I chased away anyone who ever loved me, left tattered friendships in my wake and destroyed relationships. Eventually my own family, tired after years of attempting to help me, gave up trying.

In misery, I continued to abuse drugs and alcohol on my own after totally isolating myself. I could drink and use drugs without anyone to stop me. I made frequent visits to A&E for injuries I would cause to myself when in the madness – constant falls, bones broken and ripped skin. I was also sectioned by the police on two occasions after I was found in such a state that I was a danger to myself. The last time I was admitted to hospital after being sectioned, I was totally broken. I had given up on life and felt that it was only a matter of time before the drink and drugs would catch up with me and I would die a lonely, painful death.

Undertaking Priory's Addiction Treatment Programme

Despite the destruction I had caused, I was thrown a life line. I was given the opportunity to go to Priory Hospital Altrincham and undertake the Addiction Treatment Programme. I was in a shocking state, nearly incapable of standing and communicating. I spent a week being medically detoxed, leaving me – probably for the only time in a decade – in a position where I was not under the influence of any substance.

I then began my inpatient therapy with the addiction treatment team. At first, I was very defensive and angry at everyone around me. The treatment team showed me that I was very ill, but that there was an answer with the 12-Step Programme. As I went through my whole life story, I could see for the first time how bad my addictions had become and how close I was to death. Through the fantastic programme and guidance from the team, I gradually started to come round to the idea that recovery might be possible.

Over the following weeks, as my head got clearer, the treatment team gave me the tools I needed to really start to come round and want to fight the illness. Through meetings with peers and the therapists, I started to see how very unwell people had come through treatment and were leading happy, 'normal' lives!

The idea of getting sober was no longer a pipe dream that I never thought would happen, it had started to become a reality. I listened to the therapists, did the work that was suggested and read the material they gave me. I started to feel alive again.

I have been out and sober for several months now. I no longer feel alone and miserable – I feel happy! I am able to live a normal life without the madness. My family now speak to me and I can be a good partner, son and brother to the people that love me. I have a long journey ahead of me but one thing is for certain, the Priory Addiction Treatment Programme saved my life.

*Name has been changed to protect patient's identity



99%

of patients rated Altrincham's services as being either 'good', 'very good' or 'excellent'

99%

of patients from the Altrincham Addiction Treatment Programme stated they were treated with respect and dignity during their stay

96%

of patients from the Altrincham Addiction Treatment Programme stated that they would recommend us to a friend

91%

of patients expressed overall happiness with the treatment that they had received at Altrincham



Enquiries and further information

For more information, please contact Priory Hospital Altrincham:

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