



Althea Park House

Amy's* story of hope and recovery



Before I was admitted to Althea Park House, I'd spent years being aimlessly moved from one inpatient setting to another. The treatment I'd received had never been appropriate nor effective, and, as a result, it felt like I was going round in circles. At that point, I genuinely believed I would be stuck inside a 'revolving door' system forever, trapped with an illness that had consumed me for as long as I could remember.

The patience, enthusiasm, hope and genuine care I was greeted with right from the start of my admission, by the Althea Park House team was unlike any I had received before. At my assessment, the on-site senior practitioner was compassionate, thorough, and listened empathetically to each of my fears, needs, wants and wishes. I felt assured from the moment I met her that she would take the time to understand me as a whole identity, rather than a collection of diagnosis or an illness in need of 'fixing'.

During my time living at Althea Park House, the staff team helped me to achieve things I wouldn't have dreamt of before. After years of missed education, I was able to access a GCSE and an arts diploma at a local college - the on-site Therapies Lead even arranged a meeting with my college tutor to ensure I remained on the course when things were difficult. With the encouragement of the staff team, who organised trips to art galleries and supported me to explore poetry and painting, I rediscovered a passion for creativity which had previously been buried by my illness.

Because Althea Park is a Victorian town house and not a purpose-built hospital, I felt truly comfortable living there. The cosy, warm atmosphere provided me with stability and safety. Being allowed to decorate my room gave me the chance to explore my identity as well as helping me to feel more at home. The environment at Althea Park House is one brimming with a sense of community, security and kindness.

At every stage of my admission, the on-site multidisciplinary team and support workers treated me with the utmost respect and sensitivity. Each member of staff went out of their way to understand my needs, and in my bleakest moments there would always be someone to hold my hand. Despite the challenges that mental illness brings, Althea Park House remained optimistic - when I felt hopeless, they held hope for me and never lost sight of my future.

By the end of my time at Althea Park, I had been empowered to make clear, rational decisions about my immediate recovery and the years that lay ahead of me. For the first time in my life, I felt I could envision a positive future, and my sessions with the therapy team allowed me to recognise my thought processes and patterns. I had developed a real understanding of my illness and who I am, rather than just believing what my illness had told me I was, for so many years.

I am now living independently in the community, working in a job that I love and I have been discharged from mental health services; all of these things would never have been possible if not for my admission to Althea Park House.

*Patient's image has been changed to protect their identity. Priory Group UK 1 Limited, 80 Hammersmith Road, London, W14 8UD. Company Registration Number: 09057543