

# JULES' STORY...



## HOW CYCLING HELPED ME TO MANAGE PTSD & DEPRESSION

Hello Liferiders,

I wanted to come and introduce myself and tell you a little about myself and why I'm here.

In 2012 I was diagnosed with PTSD and one of the symptoms of this was agoraphobia and depression, at the time I was unable to go out alone and spent 24/7 in my flat at times not even being able to get out of bed, I thought my life was over and was unable to find proper help from the doctors etc and experienced a lot of stigma about my illness.

For four years I struggled and got frustrated about my life and felt it was going no where. One day I decided to buy a bike I put an advert on freecycle for someone to help me by cycling with me so I could get out the house, this is where I met my best friend. I gradually with his support went out on my bike and even only a few miles was a big achievement considering what I was like. The more I went out the more confidence I had and over time started to go out by myself.



Last June I cycled a fatbike, with my partner, 709 miles from John O' Groats to Kidderminster (we were supposed to get to Lands End but sadly we ran out of time) it was a huge achievement for me.

I do still struggle with PTSD and sometimes I am unable to cycle and prefer the security of my home, and lately I have not cycled for months until now.

I am beginning to get my love for cycling back again and will now be writing a blog about my cycling experiences, I am planning a two year walk around the UK and Ireland starting next year, so cycling will help me with my fitness training for the next ten months until I leave so I want to share these cycling experiences to help others who are dealing with mental health issues, it will be an honest account of my fitness level and my mindset which somedays is not good.

Cycling saved my life and now it is time for me to share this and help others realise the benefits of cycling. Here are a few pictures of my bikes and travels.

