

Hi.

I'm 29 years old and I've been in recovery for the best part of 3 years now. How I first got on gear was like many others. My girlfriend of a year and a half cheated and left me for someone who was ment to be a friend of mine about 2 weeks before my stepdad died. So needless to say my head was screwed. I wasn't eating or sleeping, I couldn't get my mood to pick up. I felt trapped in my own head and emotions. I just wanted it all to stop and go away but most of all I just wanted to sleep. A good friend of mine who I've known since I was 13 came to stop with me for a bit which seemed was a good move because god knows I needed the company and someone who knows me through and through to talk to. In the end he offered me a few lines saying 'if anything it'll help you get off to sleep' and he was right. The next day he gave me a talking to saying how it's highly addictive and to go real easy on it otherwise it'll have its hooks in you. I took on board what he said and just had little bits now and then but soon enough I started thinking I could be smart n do it just enough to help sort my emotions but not get hooked. Boy was I wrong. Slowly but surely I noticed I wasn't doing as my friend said, I was smoking it every other day. And then the rattling started. I knew I was screwed then but carried on anyway. At this point I've got to say that I really don't blame my friend for what happened. At the end of the day it was my choice to take it. I knew what it was about and I knew where it could end up. So everything that happened is on me.

At some point I got to know my dealer really well and he needed a reliable runner so he offered me the 'job', so with having little money coming in I took him up on the offer not knowing at the time he wanted me to work from 9am until 3am for just £20 a day. Needless to say that that £20 went on buying more gear at the time. All the stresses of running put pressure on my relationship with the girl I was with at the time. She didn't like me smoking gear but she was smoking crack so what can she say, really. But because of the pressure we would argue all the time so my dealer stopped me running for him which was hard because my habit had gone up quiet a bit at the time. Well some time had passed and someone and his mate I sort of knew who was a dealer needed a place to go and weigh up their stuff, awesome I thought. I get a bag a day for doing nothing but let them come and sort there stuff out. WRONG!! He was a bully. He stood in at about 6ft 4 and weighed about 22st. I was 5ft 9 and about 9 and a half stone wet through if I was lucky. So I got bullied all the time, ripped off, robbed my computer games, made to feel like I was scum and worthless. Like I didn't feel like that already. One day I came home (they had got the spare key off me to let them selves in when I wasn't in) and found loads of blood on the kitchen window sill. I asked them where the blood came from but they just said they didn't know so. I didn't push for an answer because the last time I did that I got a black eye. When they had gone I noticed my cat hadn't come out to say hi so I went looking for her, couldn't find her. I started freaking out. I went running around outside trying to find her, calling her name and nothing. I went down to my mums because my head was cracking up. I got back home at about 5am and she came out. I don't mind telling you I started to cry at the moment. My cat means everything to me. I picked her up to give her a hug and she growled. When I pulled my hand away there was blood coming off her tail. They had hurt her. I don't know how or when but I know it was them. I asked them the next day but of course they said they had no idea. Just as I was asking them I noticed she had a tooth missing too, but they wasn't going to tell me what happened. That was it for me. I had already lost the girl I was with

because of them, they had taken over my flat and now they hurt my cat. I told them there not to come round any more. I don't care where they go but they are not coming round again. They told me that they would come and pick up their stuff the next day. Fine I said. Next day came and they got their stuff out to weigh up 'what the hell you doing' I said 'oh just doing this and were going', ok fine I thought. But you ARE going today. After they had done they got ready to go 'hold up, what about all your stuff?' 'wel come for it tomorrow' he said. Hell no. They were going that night no matter what. I packed their stuff for them and told them, the big guy really wasn't happy. 'I can't take all that in my car. What if I get pulled?' 'Not my problem' I said because just 30mins before that he had said the same to me. He went nuts. He punched me in the face many times and then pulled out a kitchen knife and went to stab me in my right shoulder blade. If it wasn't for my best mate being there at the time he would have. But he did leave.

From there things got tough again. I wasn't getting the bag a day that I needed and the quality of the gear was shocking, shocking enough for me to try and inject myself which I never thought I would do. I never done it before and when I tried I was on my own. Looking back at it it was a really stupid thing of me to do. What if I went over? No one would have known because my mate only came round about once a week. And what about my poor cat? Anyway. Because of it being my first time I didn't realise how much the citric would sting, so I stopped and put the pin in the table and finished off what I had left on the foil all the time eyeing up the pin. I knew that if I didn't do something about it I would end up injecting it because the second time round id know what to expect so I plunged it into an empty meth bottle, snapped up the pin and cried myself to sleep because I couldn't believe that I was going to do that. To put myself even further into addiction and hell.

After that I picked up a 10 bag and a 10 bud and believe it or not, I got more off the bud. Next pay I did the same and the same thing happened again. I got more off the bud so I thought screw it, i'll just get a 20 bud instead so I did and stuck to my script. A few months later my new girlfriend came to live with me. She came at the best time really because I was really ready to do my detox and just get that chapter of my life over and done with so when I went to my next appointment at Guernsey I told the doc I want off it and I want off it quick so we worked out when I should start my detox. A few weeks later I started my detox. 2 weeks home detox. Things were a bit tough at first. Waking up with cravings, feeling run down, tired, not being able to sleep. But I can honestly say it wasn't like doing it straight off of gear. Yes it lasted longer but the rattle was no where near as bad and my girlfriend was an awesome support for me and my detox nurse was awesome. She never once judged me or looked down at me. Infact it was the opposite. Both my nurse and my girlfriend made me believe I could get threw it and I did. When I got signed off of my detox my nurse told me about a place called Addaction who do aftercare. I didn't know what to do for the best at that moment in time so I told her id go and to this day i'm really grateful I did because I doubt id have gotten as far as I have done if I didn't go into aftercare. I became a recovery champion for addaction after a few months, which was a good little lift actually. It made me realise that I was actually doing good in my recovery. My key worker told me about a course that the DAAT do called the Ambassadors course where you train to become a support worker and get a years placement in 1 of the treatment providers and help other who are in the situation I was in no less then a year ago. I thought it was awesome. Finely I can do what I've always wanted to do since I

was about 13. Be in a position where I can help others. So I took that opportunity and ran with it. On the course I met some really cool people. Some I will be friends with until the day I pass away. My confidence grew, my self esteem grew but more importantly my motivation grew. I wasn't just going to get through the course. I was going to own it. Even when I had an operation I still didn't miss a day. 9 out of 18 of us graduated. We had our graduation in the town hall with our friends and family. The mayor of Sheffield presented us with our certificates and our recovery ambassador badges, 3 of us (including) myself got a little prize for getting 100% attendance which I thought was really nice. When it came to working in our placements we all found it a bit difficult at first because we was all used to being together, now we were all spread out over the different services but we found ways to keep in touch and help out each other by letting them know what's going in within service who ever it is in. So we had like a little underground network going I guess.

I work at Guernsey house and I love it. I'm not just saying that because I work here and I'm writing this. I really do love it. When you are a service user of Guernsey house and you walk through the doors you have an opinion of the place and the staff. I would be the first person to put my hands up and say my first opinion of the place was totally wrong. The staff here are awesome and truly are helpful. Their kind, caring but more importantly for me, you can have a laugh with them. You would think they have a stick shoved somewhere uncomfortable, but they really don't. Like I said. I couldn't have been more wrong about the place.

The work I do is support work. Talking to people who just want a chat about things they can't seem to get their heads around or even just a chat about anything really. I don't mind just as long as the person leaves this building feeling at least a little better than when they first walked in. I support people who are going through detox too. That can be hard work but its soooo good to see when the person comes out of the other side knowing their going to be alright. I facilitate the SMART meetings down at turning point and I am co-facilitator for the SMART meeting here at Guernsey too.

So this is my life since I started to use. Like many I've been through hell and I have come out of the other side and doing something I have always wanted to do since being a kid. This July I would have hit the 3 year being clean mark. All I can hope for is that in the next 3 years I'm still clean but the only difference being that i'll be in the same kind of job but getting paid for doing it.

Thank you so much for reading my story.