



# Making recovery visible

*In Sheffield we know that there are 100's if not 1000's of untold stories (often shared in closed groups) that the general population don't get to hear about. Sheffield Recovery Forum is STILL on a mission to change that.*

Chris

## What was life like growing up?

Once upon a time in a place called Norfolk Park there was this lad called Christopher that kept getting into trouble, nicking cars, not going to school, teachers were that scared of me. When I would run out of school they would send the older school kids after me. Resulting in me getting the belt off dad and all that!

## What was life like for you at rock bottom?

What was going on for you at this time? I have been at rock bottom since the age of 14, I started glue and gas sniffing had my first prison sentence, first sexual encounter I had already been in foster places since age of 9. I went to court at age 14 cos and was sent to Limb Lane up Dore, coppers would take me back let you straight back out. I was in court with 40 old chargers by the time I turned 15. I was put in Hull prison, then my cases were committed to Crown, to went to Armley prison in the mean time I was unruly so they put us in a place in Wales.

What's the first time were I experienced staff actually hitting kids well there was kids getting raped by older men, one of my pals did, I didn't find out until in my twenties when he got 60 grand because it happened to him. The only thing that kept me safe was probably was my mouth not been timid any way I have been in and out of jail since age of 14, care since age of 9.

Last prison sentence was at 40 I was released from Pentonville every time they put you in a place with people drinking or taking drugs you have not got a prayer. I was down London for 18 years in and out of their jails always having to start again cos the bird I was with met another guy so your clothes and whatever you bought was gone cos it was always junkie birds I was with. I have been lucky really I only ever caught Hep C / A.

## **What was the turning point for you?**

How did this come about? I was homeless in town, Sheffield, and I got kicking 4 ribs one side 3 on the other side, anyway I have never had a bank account so my money goes into my parents account they saw the state I was in and allowed me back home so I think that was really the turning point in my life I have been stabbed, shot at since living with xxxx on Norfolk Park. There is so much more I have been through with the crime I committed but not enough paper.

## **What is life like now? How are things different?**

I learned to read and write in prison, (can't you tell!) so all of my education took place there. I have always had a problem with my image the way I looked people judged me as soon as they saw me, a criminal with the tooth missing and the skull and cross bone on the neck I had this tattoo on my neck before it became popular to have tattoos all over you.

I have got a long way to go cos I have been told I am institutionalised and have a lot of suppressed youth, I have not experienced life properly never had a mortgage, never paid milk man, I was essentially brought up in her majesties hotels. What are you grateful for? I come across as aggressive but I have got a big heart, I also love people I am not a nasty person anyway this is the short version of my story.

