



# *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.*

Jane Sidlow

## **Hi, I am Jane, just another person who just lost her way.**

I am 44 years of age I was brought up in Chadderton and had a beautiful upbringing. At school though I was always teased for being big busted and would always hang around with the older kids. At the age of 14, I was expelled from school for stealing a coat, at 15 I was raped I started using gas and my life soon started to spiral out of control.

My first rehab was age 16 years, I was sent there by my parents, but treated it like a holiday it was in Canada. I have been in several rehabs Phoenix Futures, Acorn, 12 step programme and although I could get clean inside, I couldn't maintain it on the outside. I always wanted more of anything I was never comfortable in my skin.

## **What was lifelike for you at rock bottom**

I progressed to heroin and fell pregnant at 18, however but my son was quickly removed from my care due to neglect. My heroin use escalated and not long after I was sentenced to 20-months for aggravated burglary. I went onto having 3 more children all 4 to different dads, all of them were cared for by someone else because I wasn't in a position to. The father to one of my children died two years ago, his body had been dumped in Oldham following a heroin overdose.

For the next 30 years my life has revolved around mental health teams, detox after detox, time spent in psychiatric units and prison. I'd started to sell my body, I had another child, but again she was taken away from me.

Nothing my family did seemed to work, I grounded them down until they finally gave up on me. And I couldn't blame them they would bail me out, I would rob from them. What was the turning point for you? I ended up on streets of Manchester devastated broken yet again, I finally ask for help but something felt different this time.

I went to a course in Oldham and I did meetings. I was done I was beaten and in 2017 I went into Smithfield detox from there I returned to acorn and got clean and stayed clean doing the 12-step programme. It still gives me Goosebumps, now I surrender fully and have worked with everything that was suggested to me, and it started to work.

### **What helped?**

I follow a 12-step programme which I follow to the best of my ability, with help from my fellowship, I have a beautiful sponsor, I pray I walk I connect. Connection is important to me, isolating myself isn't healthy and I thrive on helping others.

It has been an up and down journey I hated everyone I judged everyone, however today I am able to let go of all the guilt shame I carried for 30 years, I am able to love I am able to show up and be responsible.

### **What is life like now?**

Some days are challenging, but my worse days in recovery doesn't compare to my life in active addiction and actually my addiction has made me a stronger person and has helped shape who I am today.

I've learnt so much about me and my life I've accepted the past I'm no longer a victim. I love life, I love nature today and that's from a girl who was dead inside, but who is smiling again.

Now my kids have their mummy back I go out dancing clean I have my first flat, I pay my own bills and have a car. I help out in my sisters shop and volunteer at sass, I've attended training course and have an array of certificates. I have gone from being a hopeless addict selling her body, not trusting men, I've been beaten by men but now I am in a loving relationship with a man who accepts me for me.

