



Drug and Alcohol Service

Birmingham

Case Study: Matthew 05.09.2022

"My demeanour changed when I drank. I had a sense of overconfidence, arrogance, obnoxiousness, and being short-tempered. I was also overly defensive. My productivity and cleanliness declined."

Matthew always worked in environments in which *grabbing a pint* or getting a drink after work was the norm. Matthew gained great success in becoming a director of a carpentry company, but this meant many nights away from home stopping in hotels with nothing to do but go out for a meal and a drink. Living out of a suitcase and traveling across the country, Matthew found himself wanting more than ciders and beers, and started drinking brandy and spirits. Matthew's habitual drinking continued leading to a relationship breakdown and returning to live with his mother. Matthew's family noticed his drinking habits more and more and pleaded with him to get support.

"When people are constantly nagging you, you dive deeper and deeper into world of oblivion."

Matthew reached out for mental health support and attended a couple of AA meetings to "keep everyone sweet" and to please his family. Matthew even borrowed money from his sister to attend a residential rehab that offered a detox and a 12-step programme in a shared house environment. Unfortunately, whilst Matthew enjoyed the routine and structure, he found the faith-based focus of recovery monotonous and like "ground-hog day". The moment Matthew returned home; he went straight back to drink.

At the beginning of 2022, Matthew sought help for his mental health and with his mother's support, put in a self-referral to Change Grow Live. After a rocky start to entering treatment, missing appointments, and phone calls due to alcohol consumption, Matthew managed to be seen by a nurse for the initial assessments. Chris, Matthew's Recovery Coordinator, was persistent and made sure he got the appointments he needed.

It was decided that a Community Detox in our local hubs would be the best next step. A Community Detox means you can be seen by medical professionals and people with lived experience in the hub whilst living at home. Luckily Matthew's mother was a great support and could help monitor Matthew's detox at home. It also meant Matthew could still see his children and be in the local area. Matthew was turned away on the first day of detox because he was too intoxicated, but the staff welcomed him gladly the following day. Matthew shared that this time round he "was doing it for me, I told everyone that I was doing it for me, and I was not doing it to appease anyone. My previous detox, I was doing for everyone else".



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"Staff were part of the group. I felt welcome and they made you feel part of the team."

"It is a breath of fresh air, it was so much more personal. Very informative and I felt part of the family."

Throughout the detox, Matthew's self-confidence grew, his sleep improved, and his short-term memory improved dramatically. Matthew is now over 2 months sober and looking forward to the future. Matthew has kept himself busy by attending an Intuitive Thinking Skills course, joining other peers on a Recovery Walk, attending a couple of AA meetings, and engaging with several other groups from our Throughcare programme.

"I feel confident and happy. I feel content."

Matthew has a slow reintroduction back into work and is self-aware of becoming complacent with his feelings towards alcohol. Matthew has now moved out of his mother's and his children now visit every Friday. "I am completely transparent with my children, and they still do have concerns. I bought a breathalyser to reassure the kids and I want them to be involved in my recovery."

"I have a fire in my belly". Matthew wants to regain his driving license by Easter 2023 so he can take his children on trips and is making a huge effort to reconnect with family.

We asked Matthew for a piece of advice for anyone who may be sceptical about detox and rehab:

"People should believe in themselves. If they really want to get better, then they need to attend. Go in with an open mind, as people have preconceptions of detox and rehab."

Thank you, Matthew, for sharing his story. The information in this case study is factual from 05.09.2022.