

Case Study: SF

Background: After working with Matt from the Homeless and Rough Sleeper team, SF took up the opportunity to attend a detox/rehab residential treatment centre. SF has provided details of his recovery journey so far whilst still attending the detox/rehab centre. We have not used SF's full name and have removed identifiable locations for confidentiality and safeguarding reasons.

SF's story...

Can you tell us about your story before Change Grow Live (CGL)?

"I have been an addict for 28 years, using heroin and crack, IV. I got to a point in my life when I was spiritually and emotionally bankrupt, I had lost all self-respect and worth, I was completely powerless over my addiction. My addiction has affected me in every way possible. Physically, I contracted Hep C, nearly had my leg amputated and I have DVTs (deep vein thrombosis). Mentally, I had a loss of will to live and developed deep-rooted depression. During my active addiction, I felt like a social outcast and had given up on life. Totally demoralised in every sense.

I moved to Birmingham; I was in fear for my life from drug dealers from my hometown. I was referred to the CGL Homeless and Rough Sleeper team by the staff at my hostel in the City Centre. I was scripted the next day, this rapid prescribing stopped me from shoplifting to fund my habit and enabled me to consider my recovery options.

Can you tell us about the support you received from CGL?

I was met with respect and compassion, my CGL keyworker, Matt showed me a genuine interest in me and my situation. I felt like my keyworker listened to me and my immediate issues would be addressed. My first meeting inspired me and showed there was a way out of my situation if I was prepared to work. I felt positive and excited.

The one-to-one key working sessions really benefited me, it gave me a positive relationship with my worker and inspired me and gave me the belief that I could make the changes to become a better member of society and address my addiction.

The Housing support from CGL really helped me and got me out of the hostel environment, which enabled me to focus on my recovery and see what was possible.

When I was at my lowest and I knew that I didn't want to live, but that I didn't want to die either. The encouragement and support from my CGL Keyworker to attend Mutual Aid Groups, enabled me to start building a positive support network in recovery.

Can you tell us about your current recovery journey?

The option for detox/rehab offered by CGL, has been life changing and I am now clean from all substances and Methadone.

I am in currently in a residential treatment centre, for the first time in many years I have hope, belief, gratitude, and faith. I have completed my detox and I am completely abstinent for the first time in 14 years. I was nominated as peer of the week for attending all groups despite being ill from detox and adjusting. We have workshops, peer lead groups, treatment step work and one-to-one counselling with workers.

This support from CGL and the centre has allowed me to start rebuilding my life and help me gain my self-respect and feel optimistic. I look forward to leading bright, positive future being a better father /son/ brother and live life on life's terms. I am excited to see the truly beautiful things life has to offer.

What advice would you give to people starting their recovery journey?

Be honest as you can, recovery isn't an easy option but if put the work in, it is worth it. I would suggest getting into NA or mutual Aid Groups.

I have so much gratitude to CGL, without them my parents would be burying their son.

Change Grow Live has been doing this for a while, they know about addiction and recovery. I could not be happier with the service provided to me."

A message from Matt [Recovery Coordinator] ...

I have been working with SF his engagement with myself and CGL has always been excellent. SF is a client who previously used heroin and crack for 27 years, IV. SF had been methadone script since 2008 and felt 'stuck in the same script cycle and couldn't see a way out'.

SF identified that he wanted to be considered for rehab due to several unsuccessful community attempts at detox over the last 14 years. During his treatment journey with CGL, SF stated he was in the 'right place' to benefit from intensive group work to overcome previous trauma and address his substance misuse; I believe this was because of his engagement and willingness to address the immediate issues such as physical and mental health, both of which had hindered his recovery. I supported SF to GP appointments and eventually he had the confidence to attend these himself.

SF requested a reduction on his script in preparation for rehab, he reduced from 80ml to 40ml and then went to rehab to complete the detox. SF completed everything that was asked of him to prepare for rehab, this included 3 mutual Aid meetings per week, regular drug testing (clean from illicit) and being willing to move from the hostel environment into a recovery supported living (prior to rehab). This preparation work paid off and SF is now 90+ days clean and due to his excellent behaviour was offered the position of 'House Leader' at the Rehab Centre!

We would like to thank SF for sharing their story with Change Grow Live Birmingham and wish them all the best with their next steps. Thank you to Matt for supporting SF with his journey.