

A Quick chat with Tom

3-minute read

Tell me a little bit about yourself.

I'm living in York, have been here for 20 years. Two years ago, I was in hospital with alcohol addiction and my landlady said she didn't want me back, so I basically had nowhere to live in York. It was last July, I was offered a place on my own, my own place, which I took and yeah, been there for just over a year now.

How did you find living in a hostel?

It wasn't a particularly pleasant environment for me to be in and obviously, they do have issues with alcohol and drug use in the building. I was quite lucky because going from hospital they hold accommodation at a hostel for people in hospital that are discharged with nowhere to go. So, they move people on as quickly as possible, so I was only there a couple of months.

How was your experience at the hospital?

To be brutally honest I don't remember much of it, it's quite a big blank. It's just general feelings I have now seems to be quite positive. They did show me that there were options available and that, you know, you could work through the system to get back on your feet.

What was your experience with drug and alcohol services like?

I did have previous attempts at sort of sobriety, but they were based on reduction type situation, which I just don't think works. I think they were really good, straight away they referred me to a day rehabilitation programme. Obviously once you go to the day rehabilitation programme, it is a full abstinence programme, which was quite a big difference. I wouldn't say I didn't struggle, but I know it was all towards the ultimate aim of moving on.

Did you find support from others going through similar experiences?

Yeah, I mean that was strongly encouraged. I was doing the meetings and going for coffee and things like that. It was a combination of getting support but also not being in the hostel, sort of sitting in your room because there's nothing you know. I was also introduced to Never Give Up and I ended up volunteering with them which I'm still doing to this day. So yeah, I definitely found a lot of support through that kind of thing.

How did you find the job centre?

The moment I left the day rehabilitation programme, there's pressure on there. The agency they referred me to were just completely rubbish and it just felt like they were trying to push me into it, it didn't matter, just anything. I just didn't sort of cope with it. I was in touch

with somebody that works as a volunteer at Restore and filled out the forms for me, a big weight off my mind, contacted the job centre and everything was sorted out and so, I'm still, at the moment, not getting any pressure from them kind of thing.

Any standout help?

There was a girl that worked at a support organisation at the time, and she was really helpful. And obviously, there was lockdown, but within a few months of that starting, erm, she said, you need to start looking at the next move kind of thing but I didn't feel any extra pressure, it was just, I don't know whether it was because money was sorted out and I didn't get stressed or I was just in a better place myself, but, you know, I knew it would kind of get itself sorted out eventually.

What worked well and what could have worked better for you?

I would say having that continuity, you know, people leave jobs. It was just very unfortunate that the woman suddenly left just as I was moving on. The only biggest thing was the not knowing who is in charge of my case. I tried to contact them, and I was always fobbed off kind of thing, getting different messages from different people. So, having that continuity towards the end I think made a big difference, it definitely worked for me.

Thank you for sharing Tom.