

# A Quick Chat with Phil

**3 minute read**

## **Tell me a little bit about yourself.**

I've lived in York all my life. I had one bad year, tried to get medical help but couldn't. Ended up self-medicating on drink and drugs, went to prison, came out of prison, and ended up homeless for 2 weeks so I started drinking and things again.

I am on a long journey, now in recovery but I'm homeless and don't know where to go basically.

## **What was the prison recovery wing like?**

It's a drug and alcohol team that runs it and they do groups like NA, AA, SMART, the 12 Steps and set you off on that recovery route.

It was good, but I was there when it was COVID and was only doing 2 groups a week which helped but could have done more. But the community on there is brilliant because it's all people in the same situation, wanting to get off drink and drugs.

## **What have probation been like?**

I asked my probation officer for help, and she rang up the day rehabilitation centre and got me in within a week of me being out so probations been really, really helped me but the housing situation, I got out on the Friday

evening (prison), came to York, oh, we can't help you. So, I had to go all weekend sleeping on the streets.

### **What is living in a hostel like?**

I'm using that as a coping tool because people in there are on drink and drugs, it's not nice being around that environment when you're trying to do the recovery.

The staff are all for me because of me being in recovery, I don't know, they seem to be helping me quite a lot because I'm trying to help myself.

### **Tell me more about your housing situation...**

Because I took my name off the council house that I had with an ex-partner, the council turned round and said we haven't got a duty of care for you, you've made yourself homeless, we can't help you for ten years. I was sofa surfing and living on the streets.

To me, I shouldn't have had to gone down that road of being homeless, I was helping my daughter, that's why I took my name off the council property, she couldn't get housing benefit or anything, I just thought of protecting my daughter and I got punished.

### **Are you getting housing support now?**

My key worker keeps saying by the time you finish the day addiction rehabilitation programme you should be looking into going into shared housing but now she's saying it could be after Christmas.

I just feel like I'm in limbo at the moment, so I don't know what's going to happen.

**Do you have any other support?**

At the moment I'm still in the day rehabilitation programme which is keeping me going. There's a Menfulness meeting last night, that was good. I've been passed on to mental health services but I'm waiting for an appointment, 18 weeks so they reckon, so it's just a waiting game basically now.

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

It's all felt difficult and there's only really the day rehabilitation programme that's been brilliant and probation service, it's just the housing. Um, I originally went to the council when I came out of prison that first night and they says, well, there's nothing we can do, so it was dreadful, sleeping out on the streets in September. It's really, really awful being kicked out of somewhere and nowhere to go.

**How are you today?**

I'm fine, I'm feeling really good, recovered after COVID but it took me back to my prison days being locked in my room all the time! It's not nice but I was protecting other people.

**Thank you for sharing Phil.**

Yeah, I'll do anything to try and help.