

JULY AND AUGUST 2023

THE 'KEEP THE HEID' NEWSLETTER!

From North Ayrshire Justice Services Service User Involvement Project



WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING?

It's been a busy few months for us all. We've had a trip over to Arran with some of our project members and we launched our first walking challenge too. Both were a big success. Our walking challenge was set up to allow service users who would like to take part in something but either cannot join a group, or would rather do individual activities. We set the group the challenge of walking the equivalent of the Ayrshire Coastal path and our project members smashed it! We've had really positive feedback about how this challenge helped them feel a part of something but also encouraged them to get out and get their steps in. We're really pleased about how well it went and will be looking to do it regularly now. Our trip to Arran was also brilliant and our project members said they really enjoyed themselves.



TURNING YOUR LIFE AROUND...



This is part two of Adam's story...

"I was really scared for those first two days – random place, random people, random workers – but I knew I needed to go. I had sat up all night the night before using cocaine as I was terrified but thankfully my mum organised all my stuff and made sure I was packed. The peer worker who took me up also spent time reassuring me.

I'll be honest, when I got there it looked a bit like a jail from the outside, but I walked in the doors and it was bright and welcoming. Everyone was brilliant and cuddly. They offered me tea or a drink and I was immediately overwhelmed with how nice they were.

I was shown to my room and got a nice brand new room which made me feel really lucky.

They gave me a walkie talkie and told me that there was an isolation period of 3 days where I'm not allowed out my room. The first three or four hours I was a bit devastated – and was still under the influence – but I realise now that's why you do this... so you're not triggering the other boys there who are further down their recovery path. The walkie talkie allowed me to ask for things I needed and I got three meals a day.

At the end of the isolation period I felt a bit scared to leave the room. Originally when asked to leave isolation and give up my phone I admit that I kicked off and felt scared. However, they gave me another day to come to terms with it all and I accepted it.

When I first got there my plan had been to control my drug use in the community. I got detoxed and had no withdrawals which was great. Then I started my groups and did one to ones and had about five lightbulb moments a day! I realised I was powerless over alcohol and substances. It was six days in when I realised that I would be chasing sobriety and wasn't interested in controlling drugs/alcohol use.

There was also a group on the ripple effect about how your crime ripples down a big, big line of everyone around you and those impacted. It devastated me to a point where I knew that my life had been changed forever. Turnaround made me a new man. All of these things made me realise that I don't want to ever be involved in this again.

The last week in there I felt like a different man – like a new man who I actually liked. I had never liked myself, never mind loved myself.

(cont below)

"IT HAD BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I DIDN'T THINK I WAS A BAD PERSON"



TURNING YOUR LIFE AROUND...



" I started to believe the positive things the staff were saying. The staff in there would love for me to go back and volunteer when I'm six months sober – and this helped me see that I was worthwhile, and I'd gone from people not wanting to be around me to people actually asking me to come back and help others. I realised that life is worth living and that my life was going to be brilliant because I could function and wanted things in life that I never ever wanted before. Not material things, just to be able to walk down the beach and see the birds and things I never noticed before because of drink and drugs.

Now (at the time of interview) I am 97 days sober.. getting my 90 days sober chip at my recovery group was a feeling I can't even put into words. I couldn't even get an hour sober never mind 90 days. I'm volunteering with a local charity – The Harbour – they support people with recovery, homelessness, domestic abuse and bereavement and all aspects of mental health.

I volunteer in a community van which helps people flee domestic abuse or help people move who are struggling. We help people to get furniture and get settled. The majority of the time we don't always see the people we're helping which I have realised is a good thing because in the past if I helped someone I wanted praise and maybe a tenner for that help! Now I'm doing it just for the good of helping and my own self worth is improved by doing this even without praise.

My social worker on this Order – I feel that nature (my view of a higher power) put her in my path. I think I need to thank her because she understood me and gave me the courage to ask for help and then finally got the help that I'd always been wanting. She made me feel safe to ask for it.

We hope you enjoyed reading Adam's story as much as we enjoyed sharing it. He should be incredibly proud of himself and his hard work.

"SOMETIMES ALL IT TAKES IS ONE PERSON TO MAKE YOU FEEL SAFE ENOUGH TO ASK FOR HELP BECAUSE YOU KNOW THEY CARE ABOUT YOU"



LAST BUT NOT LEAST...



For this edition we revisited our classic spaghetti bolognese and it was very popular! Here's our recipe:

Ingredients

(makes four portions)

One Brown Onion
Two garlic cloves
One or two OXO Cubes
One box of passata
Small pack of mince
Pack of spaghetti
Oil
Salt and pepper

Method

Chop up half an onion (or more in if you like).

Press down on the garlic clove with the side of a knife. The skin should pop. Peel it off and chop the garlic.

Add a splash of oil into the pan and fry the onion over a medium heat until it is soft.

Add the mince and fry until browned (this usually takes around five minutes).

In a separate pot, add the spaghetti and boiling water. Wait until the bottom of the spaghetti softens to allow you to move all of the pasta into the pot (so that it isn't hanging out the side). Add a pinch of salt and boil until soft (usually around eight-twelve minutes).

Add the tomato passata, OXO cube and mixed herbs to the mince mixture – you can add a pinch of sugar to take the acidity off the tomatoes if you like. Keep stirring occasionally and reduce to a low heat.

Drain the pasta and serve with the mince on top (some people prefer to mix the pasta and mince together before they serve).

"THIS WAS BRILLIANT.. WE MADE THIS ONE NIGHT AND THEN TRIED MAKING SPAGHETTI AND MEATBALLS THE NEXT NIGHT. THANKS FOR INSPIRING ME!"

(MAD PROJECT MEMBER)

