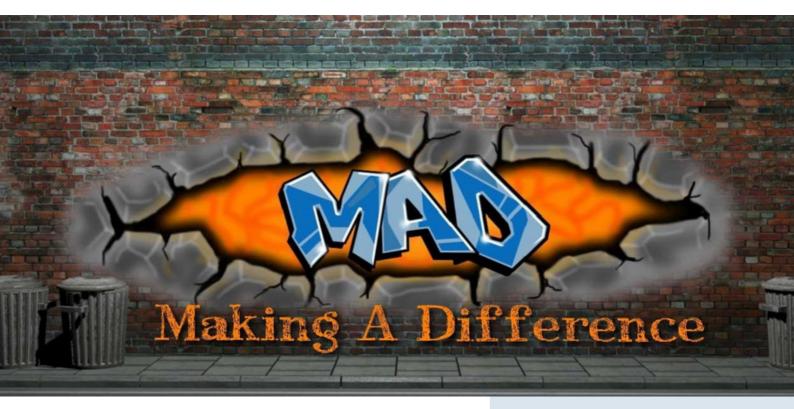
# THE 'KEEP THE HEID' NEWSLETTER!

From North Ayrshire Justice Services Service User Involvement Project



# **WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING?**

One of our Project members was talking this week about his experiences in community recovery groups. He spoke of how he had to try a few different ones until he found one that he felt comfortable in and how in the past he would have given up after trying the first one and feeling uncomfortable. He recognises that he has changed now and that he is more focused on his recovery and his future. He spoke of a phrase that he heard from someone in the group that has really stuck with him as he has realised this very accurately represented him in the past. He spoke of understanding now that in the past he would be desperate for his loved ones to believe he was changing, but never backed this up with actions and how this must have felt for them. So we're going to leave you with these words of wisdom:

There is no change where there is no action.

"Words without actions are just manipulation"



"THEY JUST THOUGHT I WAS A HYPER WEE WEAN SO I NEVER GOT THE HELP WHEN I FIRST NEEDED IT"

### **TURNING YOUR LIFE AROUND...**

One of our Project members sat down with us this week to share the story of how he became involved in the justice system and how he overcame his addiction issues and turned his life around. This is Part One of Adam's story...

"So way back when I was at primary school, I think I was always a well behaved boy, I was always hyper but I got away with it because I was a wean. Then I got diagnosed in Primary Six with what they called a brain deformity at the time. I later realised it was Attention Deficit Disorder but that's what they called it at the time because no one really understood it.

When I went to the big school, I realised other folk were doing well but I wasn't. I found it hard to concentrate and would shout out answers instead of waiting. The teachers called me bad and gave me rows about me not listening, and I got put out of class all the time. By Third Year I thought of myself as a bad boy and just started hanging around with the wrong crowds. That's when the drink and drugs came in. It started with cannabis and solvents.

I don't blame the school, but they just didn't know what it was and they genuinely thought I didn't care. But I did care... it was just that my brain was 500 miles an hour quicker than everyone else's.

I began to really stick to the bad boy label and this meant that I started being suspended – which at first I liked because I got time off school. But then they expelled me at the end of Third Year and I couldn't do my exams because I was embarrassed that I'd been asked to leave.

This cycle of drink and drugs and misbehaving continued for many years. I was involved in getting into bother and had time on probation and supervision in the community. It became a pattern of getting lifted and getting the cells overnight.

Fast forward to 2021, my life felt unmanageable and I was taking every substance I could get my hands on. But lying to everyone that all I did was have a pint or two and smoked cannabis.

At this time I began having problems with a neighbour and was convicted of being in possession of a weapon. I was made subject to a Community Payback Order with a period of Supervision in the community".

(cont below)





""IT'S HARD TO REALISE THAT YOUR FRIENDS THINK YOU MIGHT HAVE DIED WHEN THEY DON'T HEAR FROM YOU"

### **TURNING YOUR LIFE AROUND...**

"The relationship I had with my Social Worker was a good one and I felt she understood me. She recognised if I forgot appointments that it was me struggling with how hectic my life and brain were and that I wasn't just not caring.

I was still struggling with substances and alcohol and my Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. My drug use then got that bad that my family were all taking a step back. Good friends didn't want to spend any time with me because of what I was doing and people were coming to the door every few days just to check I was still alive. Which is quite hard to say.

I didn't spend any time with anyone who deserved my time. I just went to people who sold or used drugs and I prioritised them.

Until I came to Supervision and told my social worker that my life had become so unmanageable and I didn't know what I was going to do and I needed help. It's the first time I had asked for help properly – doctors and other services had turned me away in the past numerous times because they said I had to get sober first but that was what I needed help with. She told me she could get me help. There's a place called Turnaround which is a residential rehabilitation facility and I would go in for six weeks to work on my recovery.

I worked with the Turnaround staff alongside my Social Worker on the run up to me going in, but I was still heavily using - primarily cocaine at that time. It was quite a dark period of time as I was hoping to get in soon but originally was given a start date in May 2023. Then my Social Worker spoke to the Turnaround staff to ask if there was anything that could be done so I could start quicker.

In the meantime, my mum let me move back home to support me because my mental health had deteriorated, and I was considering suicide and was having very dark thoughts.

I was sitting one Tuesday morning and the house phone went and it was one of the workers from Turnaround to say I could start in two days if I wanted to. She arranged for a peer mentor in the community to bring me up and I agreed".

Part Two of Adam's story will be shared in our next newsletter.





## LAST BUT NOT LEAST...

For this edition we revisited our classic Loaded Mac and Cheese and it was very popular! Here's our recipe:

Ingredients (makes four portions)

250g of macaroni 40g butter 40g of flour 600mls milk 300g cheddar 3 spring onions (optional) 2 rashers of bacon (optional) Salt and pepper to season

#### Method

Cook macaroni in large saucepan of boiling salted water according to instructions on packet. Drain well and set aside.

Melt the butter over a medium heat in a saucepan. Add the flour and stir to form a roux (thick paste) for a few minutes.

Gradually whisk in the milk a little at a time. Cook for 10 minutes to a thickened, smooth sauce. Meanwhile, pre-heat the grill. Remove sauce from the hob, add 175 grams of cheese and stir until melted.

Cook bacon in frying pan or grill and cut into bite size pieces. Slice the spring onions. Add macaroni, bacon and spring onions to the sauce and mix well. Transfer to an oven proof dish and sprinkle over remaining cheese and grill until the cheese is browned and bubbling.

We loaded ours with bacon and spring onions. But you could use pepperoni, sweet corn, cauliflower, tomatoes, pulled pork...let your imagination go wild!



**"THIS WAS** ABSOLUTELY AMAZING., I WILL 100% BE MAKING IT AGAIN!"

(MAD PROJECT MEMBER)