

Lee says that making excuses shows that you're not willing to do it, and you need to **be honest with everyone**. After many years of using different drugs and much time spent in jail, Lee was given an ultimatum by his wife which made him realise he had to stop. When on methadone he had continued to use heroin, but he started on 16mg buprenorphine and became drug free. As time progressed, he became bored of buprenorphine controlling his life and concerned about health implications and the impact on his family. He started a gradual reduction of 0.4mg a fortnight and has got down to 8mg. He works hard and keeps himself busy **and he has not noticed the drops at all**. He intends to continue with the reduction and end his treatment.

His advice to anyone about to start a reduction is to **keep your mind and body occupied**. If you are not able to find work, then go to the gym or a walk. Focus on your goal. **Reach out and speak to someone**, there will always be someone to talk to – a friend, family member, your worker, the Samaritans etc. Find an activity to do or somewhere to volunteer. There is so much to do, **don't let your mind make excuses**.

Lee is looking forward to being drug and treatment free and using his experiences to help others.



Recovery IS happening through CDAS. See how others in Stoke are moving forward with their recovery journey and find out what helped them and what could help you.

Welcome to our newsletter which is designed to show you how well people are doing in their treatment, to inspire you and encourage you with your journey.

Fred found it helpful to attend groups and talk to people in the same situation as him. He came to CDAS as his cocaine and alcohol use had spiralled out of control. After 13 years of social use, Fred started to rely on cocaine to get him through the day when he went through a stressful period. He then used alcohol to wind down at bedtime, and the cycle became one he could not stop by himself. With the support of his partner and friends he was able to become abstinent, but this was only short lived and the habit quickly started again when he was given some more cocaine. This time he knew he had to make it work as he had too much to lose. **The groups showed him that he was not on his own. He has learned that life can be so much better without cocaine, and has developed new ways of thinking.** When he was dealing with cravings, he reminded himself that although cocaine would make him feel good in the short term, **it would be followed by 12 hours of feeling awful, depressed and paranoid.** This helped him get through the cravings and he now finds that he doesn't have them anymore. **He keeps himself very busy and active, and finds that it is helpful having a strong support network around him.**

For someone seeking help with their addiction, Fred would say stick at it – take the first step. **Give the groups a go and don't be put off by other people – everyone there will be in the same boat as you.** For those who think that they can't do groups, Fred would say again, give it a go – they really do help and the facilitator is great too.

Louise started drugs at a young age, but managed to function well and keep it a secret. Heavy amphetamine use helped her do what she needed to do with the children. However, when the children left home, she started on monkey dust and then heroin. Things rapidly went downhill and she found herself homeless, wearing 3 pairs of leggings because she was so skinny and cold. She was heartbroken to hear that her son had started injecting drugs, and she was desperate to see her grandchildren again. **Desperation led to determination and she self referred to CDAS. Once she got used to the dose she stopped using heroin and completed her treatment in less than 2 years.**

Louise found the **groupwork** really helpful, both face to face pre-pandemic and online when lockdown started. She also started going to **NA** which she found really helpful too. She got back into stable housing and reduced all the way down through her methadone doses. She said **"the reduction was hard, but it was worth it"**.

Life has improved so much for Louise in this time, and she is now very much involved in her grandchildren's lives.

This improvement in life is available for anyone who commits to it and takes up the support available to them through their worker and the group work.

A big **Well Done** to everyone who is making positive steps towards their recovery at whatever stage you are at. Keep going with it.

Thank you to those who have allowed a snippet of their story to be shared.

