

It was time to find herself again

At 65, Jean is just about coming to the end of her treatment, after starting heroin use over 30 years ago. When she started, Jean used heroin on and off for about 15 years before entering treatment. Although treatment was different then to what it was now, Jean had for many years thought that she would be on methadone forever, even after coming to the decision to stop using heroin 7 years ago. However, after a while of being heroin free she began to question this, thinking that she *wanted to find out who she is again, feel herself, feel her body, and feel normal.*

When Jean decided that she wanted to come off her methadone, she started to reduce really quickly, as she was thinking back to previous detoxes. However, this did not work for her. She then decided to *listen to the advice of the prescriber and case worker.* She stabilised on buprenorphine and then reduced a bit *more gradually.* As part of this reduction she has been through some hard times, but through it all, she is very pleased that she is doing it. *Determination* is what keeps her going through it. Although there were times that she did not think that it is possible, she recognises now that *the difficulty is only short term, and that in the big scheme of things it is worth it*



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.

Recovery is like being a baby – you have to learn new behaviours.

Growing up, *trauma, violence and alcohol* had been a big part of Dave's life. Since he was a teenager he had tried various drugs and drank lots of alcohol. This all seemed normal to him. Therefore, when he broke his leg around the age of 33 and struggled with the pain it seemed a natural step to go into town, find someone, and buy some heroin. He was at rock bottom and he just did not care. Drugs remained a part of his life for a few years, whilst functioning well and keeping his job.

Dave decided to come into treatment because *he became fed up of putting himself through withdrawal every time he did not have any money for drugs,* as he never went out to offend to fund his habit. He recognised that it was *a waste of his life for both himself and his family.*

Dave has now recently finished his methadone treatment and is enjoying living his life, a healthy diet, time with his son, time with his partner, making plans for the weekend, being active, going to the gym, and his job. He benefitted from *therapy, and feels happy with a balanced life.*

To those thinking of coming off buprenorphine, Dave would say *change your life – you can't have a different life without changing the things around you, such as cut out those people you don't need in your life, move area, get busy, find a hobby, get a job. You have to work hard mentally. Recovery is like being a baby – you have to learn new behaviours and everything.*

"I'm back".

Baz had been using cocaine since he was 40, and describes this period of his life as a bit of a *midlife crisis.* Although for a while his use was social and manageable, the last 18 months things had got out of control and had started to cause problems. His alcohol and cocaine consumption were far too high. Baz recognised that he needed to stop his use because of his general behaviour. *He was staying out all of the time and not spending any time with his children or his partner.* After a long weekend binge he went to the doctor and has not touched cocaine since then. He was advised to refer to CDAS.

What worked for Baz was *getting back into exercise, and getting his life back.* He has improved at pool again and started taking the children out again – doing the things that he used to do before this. In the immediate future he is getting work done on the house and then planning a holiday.

To someone struggling to give up, Baz would say you need to *fight for yourself.*

To someone who hasn't even thought about quitting yet, he would say, *start to think about it!*

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.

