

Michael's story:

"I'd been on drugs of one sort or another since I was 14. The rave scene was on the go and I got heavily into ecstasy. I became lonely and isolated and the partying got less and less and the heroin got more and more. I got so chaotic I lost my job and then it was just heroin, heroin, heroin for years. That's all I did. Don't get me wrong, I did stop for periods of time but I'd always go back to it. I had issues, I was bullied at school and heroin just blocked everything out.

I went to my doctor as I needed to speak to someone truthfully, openly and without being ridiculed. I couldn't go on myself, I was approaching 40 and I didn't want to be like this anymore I met my ADA worker at my GP surgery and we hit it off. Through many years of drug abuse, I had severe mental health problems. I was scared to go out of my house, I wouldn't answer my door or open a letter. I explained all this to my worker. He made me aware of the DART programme which he thought could help me which I wasn't up for at all. He kept plugging away and I eventually went to DART. It changed my life. I was really scared at the beginning but in doing the course I learned so much about myself. It really helped me move on. I gained confidence doing the course and I then did the Recovery Coaching course and now I working to help someone else.

I am completely abstinent from heroin. It's given me a new found confidence and makes me believe I can help someone else.

*I've come out of isolation. I've changed my response to offers of new opportunities from 'No F*****g way' to 'Why not?' I'm volunteering at ADA, doing the AiR drop-ins and I've met lots of lovely people. I really think we can do something to help others. It's given me a purpose to get out of bed in the morning. My family and friends notice a huge difference in me. I'm just carrying on with the 'why not' philosophy and I'm looking forward to the future."*

Alcohol & Drugs Action