

# JAMES' STORY

Trying to forget childhood abuse led to James experimenting with drugs. It felt like an “epiphany” when he first tried heroin at 18, but it would be several years before he started to use “huge amounts of heroin every day”. It ultimately cost him his home and he ended up on the streets. One day James had had enough, “I woke up and literally thought, ‘this is ridiculous’, and I went cold turkey”.

James was unprepared for withdrawal. Despite the pain he was successful and stopped taking heroin, but after bumping into an old drug-using friend he relapsed.

For a long time he didn't want to accept that he had a problem, but eventually “no matter how much denial you're in, when you're sleeping on Clapham Common on a bench, denial kind of ends there”. After years of trying, James has managed to stop using completely, “it was a mixture of things, changing location, starting to work with good drug workers and a change of medication as well. Those three things came together to really make a change”.

He is positive about the future. “I've started my own organisation, a social enterprise helping people with alcohol and drug problems.” James rues the lack of information available to him though, “there are so many approaches to recovery. It wasn't until I'd been through the treatment system several times that I even started hearing about these sorts of things”. He believes information is critical to getting the right treatment, “the more you learn, the better you can advocate for yourself”. James adds, “I'm not saying that if I'd had all the information from day one it would have been a great success immediately, but there would have been a hell of a lot of a better chance”.

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## My Recovery My Choice



Everyone's story is different. To know more about opioid dependence ask your healthcare provider for a My Recovery My Choice booklet or visit [www.myrecoverymychoice.co.uk](http://www.myrecoverymychoice.co.uk)



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