

## Members Story 1

Jeff joined AA after being arrested for assaulting a police officer. By working with AA and Probation, for the first time in more than a decade he is sober, a fact which has helped him successfully complete his sentence. It was the first time Jeff, who is 41, had been in trouble with the law, but he accepts that at the time of the offence it was an accident waiting to happen.

He had reached rock-bottom, after a battle with the bottle that started when he was a child. Jeff said: "I have a sensitive nature; I have always felt different. I started drinking when I was nine. I now see that my old man was an alcoholic: it was always around the house, and in a way, I thought by drinking it, it would mean he would have less to drink. I was a latch-key kid. I began wagging school; I got bullied at home and the slipper at school. I'd not learned to read or write."

"I was full of fear but got a warm glow in the pit of my stomach from drinking. I now get that glow from being here to help other people begin recovery. The Operations Manager in our local Probation Office asked me to do be a point of contact for AA. To get that responsibility and praise means a lot to me and helps me keep going." Jeff stopped drinking after his dad had an operation and stopped himself, but once again hit the bottle after he left home.

"I did rag and bone with my family for years. I was ok then, but when I turned 35 things fell apart. I kept on getting into low-level trouble, fines, and cautions for drunk and disorderly. I think the arrest really was a blessing, but one thing I found really hard was talking about my progress with magistrates. I suffer from depression and anxiety, so to have to meet people I didn't know was very hard. It is a battle I face every day, but AA has given me hope because helping others helps me help myself."

Jeff got a one-year supervision order and tag, but magistrates varied his curfew to enable him to attend AA. He added: "AA and probation gave me two angles. One gave me experience and hope, the other structure, and the need to have to get out, to go to places. AA telling me why I had to go to probation also helped with my compliance and sobriety."

Jeff has not had any alcohol for more than two and a half years, and feels the support provided by AA and Probation has given him the ability to replace his thirst for drink with an infinitely more positive vocation.