

Karen, 43

My name is Karen and I am originally from London. I have two grown children and a baby granddaughter who still live in London.

I came to Bournemouth in November 2008 to a treatment centre after being in a detox centre for six weeks. I have been an alcoholic for many years and also dependant on drugs such as valium, cocaine and crack for twenty years.

I left treatment after six months and came to the YMCA in May 2009 to start my new life. I love it here in the YMCA! I have support with day-to-day issues, and it is something that I need. I go to college and volunteer for the Prince's Trust. I never feel lonely here and there is a diverse group of people that live here - a variety of ages and different walks of life. There is always someone to have a chat and a laugh with.

The YMCA has plenty of activities from football the Women's Nights. It is a place where I feel supported and has helped me stay clean: thirteen months now without any substances. The YMCA is a stepping-stone for me for when I get my own place. I am and will always be grateful to this place, and all the people who live and work here.