

## Tawfiq, 42

Having lived a life of crime and addiction for twelve years and after becoming a father in that life, it was pretty obvious that I'd managed to make a mess of my life.

I knew that it was time to ask for help. I always knew that but I never actually did ask for help. I knew that I couldn't change by myself. By the grace of God I was given a chance to go into detox followed by a drug and alcohol treatment programme.

After six months of doing this it was time to go back into the big wide world that I had just ran away from. This is where the YMCA came as another blessing from God for me. I came into the YMCA and it was my home for the following fourteen months. In that time I received continuous support from staff and residents. I was given a chance to reintegrate into life slowly. Part of that was taking on volunteering roles in the kitchen and gym.

Having built up a good support network, I moved out of the YMCA into my own accommodation. I now work in the gym as a relief instructor, and I still volunteer in the kitchen on Sundays. The YMCA is still home from home to me and I stay in contact with the staff, in particular my keyworker. Staff are still ready to help as and when I need it.

I can honestly say I do the best I can as a father, I now look after my two children. I no longer use drugs or commit crime, which is an absolute blessing.

I have completed a Level 2 Fitness and Instruction course and Level 3 NVQ in Health and Social Care through the YMCA and, as a result, have now been working in the fitness industry and in Supported Housing for nearly three years.