



Foundation



Head 4 Health Case Study: Ben

**Ben joined our Head 4 Health programme in early 2022.
Below he shares his journey:**

“I grew up as the eldest of 3 children and the only boy in what I would describe as a middle-class family. My upbringing was good and probably described as privileged. As a teen I was sent to a private school which separated me from my childhood friends against my wishes. It was at this time I first found myself feeling isolated, like I really did not belong. The pressure to achieve from family and school was heavy.

I left school with good results in both GCSEs and A-levels and further going onto study at Birmingham University gaining a degree in Biological Sciences. However, living away from home for the first time and discovering my freedom combined with my prescription of family expectations led me to rebelling against society, family etc. I took drugs, drank to excess, clubbed till I got into trouble with the law.

I ended up in a bad place, addicted to heroin and committing crime to fund my habit. I went to prison and even though I stopped getting into trouble I still could not break my love affair with drugs. Addiction led me to mental health issues (or perhaps the other way round) I suffer from depression and anxiety problems. I often feel I let down everyone important to me losing my motivation along the way. I just could not face the world. At the point I started Head 4 Health, I was trying to stay clean sticking to script, looking to better my life.”

How did you hear of Head 4 Health?

I first heard about H4H through Maxine at Social Prescribing who made the referral for me. I had also seen an excerpt on Match of the Day prior to this. I came along because I have problems and want to sort them out. It's not just my issue with addiction but the mental health issues at the core of it. I knew the course would give me something to get stuck into and be part of as I often feel isolated. I hoped it would help. Nothing ventured nothing gained.

How did attending Head 4 Health make a difference to your life?

I've noticed I have used less often and although I still get tempted, I am for the most part sticking to script. I'm more motivated than before plus more active. I have made new friends whom I continue to keep in touch with and have arranged to meet. I don't feel isolated from the world now I know I have support from others should I need it. Overall, I think my confidence has improved, I'm more hopeful for the future.

Do any particular experiences from Head 4 Health stand out?

1. Meeting new people in a similar situation to myself. Talking to them and hearing their stories. I made good friends at the group and intend to carry on attending follow up sessions.
2. The activities are great fun for all ages and abilities. I especially enjoyed the boxercise.

Ben's Summary

I would recommend Head 4 Health to anyone who is at the point where they are ready to make changes to work on themselves and their mental wellbeing.

It's a great and safe environment with a group of similar lads. Steve and AB went above and beyond to make sure our experience was a good one.

Health Officer Steve Maiden's added:

“Ben came to the Head 4 Health project early this year.

He felt isolated from the rest of the world and had suffered from addiction for most of his adult life. Ben states his problems started as a child coming from a privileged background going through private education but always feeling the lesser person which he rebelled against. With the help of the project Ben has met people with similar problems to his own. Ben has begun to socialise more making friends and becoming a popular member of his cohort. Ben has found a new liking for physical activity since coming on the course and is now looking for volunteering work in the community stating he wants to give something back.”