

## **My name is John and this is how CGL Newham Rise has helped me**

“I have been using drugs since the age of 16; I have drunk alcohol since I was 11 and have been in and out of prison since the age of 13. I am now in my late 50s, my journey has been long.

“I was institutionalised at a young age, I was placed in care when very young, my parents did not want me. Drugs and alcohol were helping me to forget my past and live my life. I have tried to reconnect with my family many times, but they were not around for me and told me things like “you are never going to change.

“I started my journey with CGL Newham Rise in 2017, I would come to the meetings, I would go for detox and pick up a bottle the same day after this. I was not ready to make the change, but the recovery workers at CGL never stopped believing in me, even when I did not believe in myself. Time after time, for years, all they asked was for me to turn up to meetings and appointments, booking more when I didn’t show up.

“In 2019 I met my partner, I was at my lowest, suicidal, on the street, I wanted to end my life. She made me feel loved, I was ready to stop my addict life and willing to find help. I attended the meetings weekly, I stopped using drugs and got on a script. Soon I did not need the script anymore but my alcohol use grew bigger and bigger.

“In 2023 I asked to be sent to rehab, I could not manage abstinence in the community, I felt I was losing my battle with alcohol over and over again. By that point I received inpatient detox three or four times, I had problems with my heart and realised I needed to take myself away.

“CGL Newham Rise supported me in applying for rehab and took me there. I have now been sober since the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 2024.

“I am a service users’ representative for CGL Newham Rise and my mission is helping others to change, because change is possible. I have been volunteering for five weeks now. I feel grounded, helping others helps me. When I come to groups now, I feel like people want to listen to me, the encouragement is contagious and the message is offering a chance for people to change.”