

# This is Phil's story about how Julian House helped turn his life around.

After nearly 30 years of drug abuse Phil turned his life around – now he has a full-time job at Julian House and says every day is a reminder of how far he's come.

“My parents divorced when I was 13. I started hanging out with the wrong crowd, drinking and smoking dope. Before I knew it, things got out of control and I'd moved on to heroin and crack cocaine.”

The first of Phil's three sons was born when he was just 19. “I was barely more than a child myself. I lived a double life for years; holding down jobs as a painter/decorator to support my family – in between spells in prison for burglary, theft, fighting and dealing to support my drug habit.”

In 2012 Phil was locked up for another four years – and he finally decided enough's enough. “I was sick of going to prison. Sick of being estranged from everyone I cared about.” Especially his boys who he'd not seen for years. “So I enrolled in a drug free wing. It was easy to stay clean in prison – but I knew the test would come when I was back on the street.”

And that's when Julian House stepped in; Phil applied to See Change – one of our addiction recovery houses. “I thought I'd give myself a fighting chance, and I haven't looked back. See Change is a safe environment – from 1-2-1 counselling sessions, to peer support groups, a dedicated keyworker to encouragement on tap – I can't blow their trumpet enough.”

## “It's never too late to start again”

After a few months Phil started volunteering, which turned into a part time position with a local social enterprise. “I wanted to get back on my feet – buy a car so I could start rebuilding my relationship with my family in Cambridge.” And when Julian House offered him a full-time position as a maintenance man he jumped at the chance.



**Julian House**  
The home of opportunity

“I really like the ethos of working for a charity, and the variety of what I do on a day to day basis; One week I can be fitting a new kitchen, gardening the next. But the best thing about my position at Julian House is the reminder of the life I don't want to go back to.”

Until six years ago Phil hadn't lived more than three consecutive days as an adult man without substance misuse. “Drugs cuddled me when I was down, and celebrated with me when I was up. I thought I couldn't cope without them. What I didn't realise back then is that I was just existing.... today I live.”

Phil admits he has lots of regrets, but after years of not feeling at home in his six-foot skin he's finally happy. “I just take it one day at a time, talk to people rather than trying to undo all the knots myself, and don't look for escapism anymore. I'm grateful for everything I have – job, house, car, partner, kids, grandkids.”

“And now when people ask me to tell them about myself, I'm not Phil the ex-criminal, or Phil or ex-drug addict anymore – I'm just Phil.”