

# SECOND CHANCERS



## **Transcript: Mark's story**

Set in the coastal town of Dunbar in East Lothian, this story explores why giving up booze is only half the battle.

"Before I went to prison, I was just a no-good, waste of space. An alcoholic. Every day, morning to night, drink. Nothing else mattered, kids, money, nothing. Just alcohol."

"It was the biggest shock of my life, because I'd never been to prison or anything like that, I didn't know what to expect. First two or three nights, was probably the worst three nights of my life, just because of not knowing. I got to see an alcohol counsellor in prison, got that within the second week of being in there. I was just seeing the counsellor for the full period I was in, a hundred and nine days, one day a week and continued seeing him for nine months when I came out of jail."

"When I came out of jail, nobody wanted to know me, my daughter told me if I didn't work together, that was us, so I had to promise that would be me, I would never drink again, and I haven't yet, and I hope not to. Prison got me off it, my daughter gave me a reason to stay off it."

"In the space of coming out of jail, within, I think it was four weeks, I found out my son was working up in the Backlands, and I thought I'd go up and see if they were looking for any volunteers."

"Came up, volunteered for one day a week, to begin with, just to get me out the house, something to do, gradually got myself into working every day basically if I could, because it kept me going, stopped me thinking of drink, and it wasn't hard. I wasn't getting paid or nothing, I just come up because I enjoyed it. It gave me a reason to get up in the morning, basically."

"A year and a half ago, we got a stonemason to come in, because we were going to be working with historic walls in the gardens. After going on about four courses, I'm now employed with the Ridge one day a week, doing stonemason work. But on top of one day a week getting paid, I come in the other four days anyway, volunteering,

because I like it that much and it's not about the money. What I get here is a lot better, it's worth a lot more than money. It's always been hard, outdoor graft I've done all my life anyway. I couldn't see myself going sitting in an office for eight hours a day, five days a week, it's no' for me."

"The people I know now, it's a whole different circle of people and friends that I have now, that I didn't know before I went to prison, so I don't get judged on what happened in my past or anything. They know what's happened in my past, but there's no judgement or anything. I'm just taken for who I am, and they can see I'm not just a bum that drinks all the time. It's no' a Strike game now. It's how I want to live my life, and that's all I'm wanting, see."