

# scottish justice matters

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## **WOMEN AND JUSTICE ARE WE MAKING PROGRESS?**

# A Day in the Life of a client of the 218 Women's Centre, Glasgow.

**BEFORE ATTENDING 218** M's typical day was that she slept most of day and was up most of the night. No structure. Lack of self care, clothes unkempt, hanging around with unsafe company, shoplifting or borrowing to get money for drugs, drinking and heavy drug use, staying in associates' houses as no money to get home, avoiding places when owing money to drug dealers, feeling ill most days and often hungry, interrupted sleeping patterns.

## Accommodation

- ❖ Very untidy, unorganised, often no heat or lighting due to not paying electric bills. Unpaid council tax, no TV Licence, Often staying with associates or in unsafe places, eventually abandoned tenancy

## Financial

- ❖ Employment support allowance. Debt: Drug dealers, associates, sister, fines.

## Substance misuse

- ❖ Valium (50) a day, Heroin (1 bag) £10 every other day IV Use, Cocaine daily (£100) IV use and smoking, Alcohol daily few bottles of wine/cider or half bottle vodka. Cannabis daily.

## Relationship status

- ❖ Physically and emotionally abusive relationship with boyfriend

## Family

- ❖ Mother's substance use and mental health issues resulted in M being taken into residential care and then fostering as a child. At 16 she returned to her mother but this broke down. Four children, three of whom reoved and adopted.
- ❖ No contact with sister and her children (unless to borrow money)
- ❖ Regular contact with brothers who were using drugs.

## Health

- ❖ Not taking prescribed medication – ended up seriously ill in hospital – very low mood, not sleeping well, not eating regularly – weight loss. Not attending dentist – regular toothache, No methadone – suffering from withdrawals when couldn't get drugs.

## Offending behaviour

- ❖ Shoplifting, breaches of the peace, domestic violence.

## State of mind

- ❖ Feeling hopeless, no way out, lonely, depressed, anxious, isolated, unloved, unworthy, guilt, feelings of despair as children in care.

## Since attending 218

Now M's typical day is to:

- 06:30** Get up, shower, dress, have breakfast, put washing on.
- 07:30** Leave house, get bus into town and then train to X.
- 09:45 – 11:45** Contact with baby son.
- 13:00 – 15:00** Attend 218. One-to-one group work 2/3 days a week or go for lunch at Church then attend Turning Point Scotland Connect.
- 16:00 - 18:30** Volunteer at Social Bite; Women's group (crafts); Make a meal, watch TV, art and craft projects, complete any group homework, call sister, make food for taking to contact with baby, get clothes ready for next day.
- 22:30** Bath and bedtime.

## Accommodation

- ❖ Moved back to own tenancy in January 2017. All decorated and many items bought for house since then. Managing bills. Up to date with council tax and paying TV licence monthly. Staying every night in own house

## Financial

- ❖ Employment support allowance. Debt: none.

## Substance use

- ❖ Not used drugs or alcohol since January 2017.

## Relationship status

- ❖ Single.

## Family

- ❖ Visiting sister and kids every weekend, regular phone calls.
- ❖ No contact with brothers as still using drugs and in and out of prison.

## Health

- ❖ Taking medication as prescribed. Eating regularly. Healthy weight. Regular dental check-ups. Daily methadone prescription: on a reduction plan at moment.

## Offending behaviour

- ❖ No offended since starting programme. No outstanding charges/ fines.

## State of mind

- ❖ Feeling: excited about the future, mood levels good most days, valued member of society, confident, increased self esteem, sense of achievement, counting the days until baby son is returned to her full time care (hopefully before Christmas).

**Thank you to M for permission to share her story and also to the staff of the 218 Centre.**