

Chris's Story

Hello, my name is Chris. I am 25 years old and I live in Devon. I would like to tell you a story about myself, C-FAR and where I was before going onto and completing the Life Change programme.

When I was just 16 my mother passed away suddenly with cancer. I was in care for sometime not knowing about what had happened. This became a big blow at that stage in my life. I took a turn for the worst and started a long road that ended up in prison. I spent about 4 years in and out of prison, courts and police stations, all for petty offences to provide me with drugs. This was to block out what happened in my life.

In July 2000 I was accepted to go on the C-FAR programme. I desperately wanted to change and get out of the cycle I was in. Every time I was released from prison I didn't have any structure or direction. This caused me great anger and resentment leading to my committing more crime and doing more drugs. I prayed every day for the 5-months I had at Portland Young Offender prison. I thought that C-FAR was the golden opportunity to move on and rebuild my life.

When I was accepted to go to C-FAR it was miracle come true. My life was about to change in a way I did not know was coming. July 2000 was a hot summer and I was on the second course to be run. The first day was unique. The staff greeted us in a positive way with a lot of support. The accommodation was lovely. Everything was new, clothes, toiletries and footwear. It was all laid out with really good food to complement what C-FAR was about. The Life Change programme was packed into 11 weeks and it was really challenging to us all. During the course I met my family for the first time in a long time when they came to my graduation day. After that I moved to Exeter to start a new life.

Since C-FAR I have worked in some hotels and restaurants cooking, cleaning and learning a trade. I have learned so much about myself and the work place. Now I have a good boss and a nice place to work. I have been in a loving relationship for nearly 2 years and in the summer I am going to be a Dad.

I would like to say, on behalf of myself and all other trainees who have been on the Life Change programme, a big thank you to all the staff that worked at C-FAR. You are strong hearted people who carried out unique and great work. Your ongoing mentoring support to me has been very important in helping me to get where I am. I am only sorry that the programme is no longer running. The Government made a mistake in not providing the money needed and I hope that it will start again to help more offenders get a new life.

Chris