

Mark's story

Focus Ireland supported over 14,500 people last year as part of our work Challenging Homelessness and Changing Lives. Mark Wright (28) tells his story to help highlight one of the human stories behind these figures.

The young Cork man tells how he battled through serious addiction leading to homeless and how he later turned his life around with the help of Focus Ireland.

He said: 'I got caught up in drugs at a very young age when I was 12 and gradually the drugs increased and I would have ended up homeless. It is like been caught in the headlights. Not knowing where you will sleep.' He admitted: 'Most nights I was going to sleep towards the end of my addiction hoping the drugs would kill me.'

He said: 'In that situation I could not get clean. The only reason I got clean

eventually was because of my children.' Mark explained how at this point he contacted Focus Ireland and got on the path to recovery and turning his life around. He said: 'When I went into Focus Ireland I was greeted by another human being. He shook my hand. There was a sense of belonging inside. That he did consider me another person and he didn't judge me on where I was after coming from.'

Focus Ireland worked with Mark to support him and help with everything from his addiction issues through to money management and access to education. Staff at the charity helped to get him signed up for a two-year night college course in UCC to get a Diploma in Youth & Community work. His Focus Ireland support worker helped him through his college with a weekly study session. Mark said: 'My Focus Ireland Case Worker kept me going. He said: "We have plans for you.

Keep doing what you have to do. Keep turning up. Keep working." I finished my first year last year and he was such amazing support.'

Focus Ireland continued to work with Mark to help secure accommodation and get him settled and back on track in life. In a short video he tells how Focus Ireland secured a home for him. He now plans to finish college and get a job.

He said: 'I was nearly crying when I got the place. I can't express how much it means to me. It's not just my home, it's a home for my children.' The young father said his life has changed completely and he puts it down to the support of Focus Ireland and his children. 'I am more confident now. I am a brilliant father to my children. I will be forever grateful to Focus Ireland for what they have given me – and to my children. It means the world to me. My future looks good now.'



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