

Recovery in London

Alan F. London, England.

While I was getting sober in a treatment program in London, England, my friend Andrew was going to Los Angeles. I asked him to contact another friend of mine, whom I had not seen since 1981, back when I was using. I heard he was in recovery as well. I spoke to him from the treatment centre and he told me he was at the first meeting of Cocaine Anonymous and how popular it had become in the USA. I knew then, I wanted to start Cocaine Anonymous in London.

I spent eight months in treatment, three months in a primary centre, followed by five months in a halfway house. I went to AA and NA meetings every night. When I left the halfway house on May 31st, 1991, I started my life over again. I went back to work doing a job I had done at 15. I worked in a shop and went to meetings 5 or 6 times a week. I got into service making tea, greeting and acting as treasurer at the meetings. I was telling people I wanted to start Cocaine Anonymous in London. I asked my sponsor if it would be OK, he said no- so I changed my sponsor.

I was soon introduced to Lisa C who had been in Los Angeles in the summer of '91. She met Johnny S. at an AA meeting, he asked her if she would be interested in starting CA in London – she said yes. Lisa and I talked about starting CA, so she asked Johnny for a starter pack.

Lisa received the starter pack in November of '91. She got five people together and we met at my apartment. We decided to start a meeting. I booked a Hall on Hinde Street for the first Wednesday of the New Year; January 8th. (1992)

We voted Lisa in as Secretary and I was elected Literature Secretary.

Taking this commitment seriously, I flew to Los Angeles to pick up the literature. I went to the Cocaine Anonymous World Service Office met KD and took home key rings, literature and a set of 12 Steps and 12 Tradition banners.

At our first CA meeting there were 27 people. We now have an average of 20 people per meeting. We've also started a Monday night meeting in Chelsea with approximately 20 people per week. We hope to start another 3 meetings and our aim is for 7 meetings in London this year.

I was fortunate to be able to go to the World Service Convention in Montreal. I was very scared – I didn't know anyone. I had the best welcome possible and the start of three wonderful days. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone in CA for such wonderful hospitality and I 'will keep coming back'.