<Heading> **"Graham Anderson House was one of the best things to happen to me"**

<Intro> **Matt, 59, from Glasgow had began drinking heavily after his mum's death in 2007. One night, Matt fell and hit his head while drinking and suffered a brain injury. Staff at our brain injury rehabilitation centre in Glasgow supported him to heal and turn his life around.**

"After I lost my mum, I started drinking. I used to get up in the morning and buy cider and go to my brother's house to drink. I would fall asleep on his couch and then wake up the next day and do the same.

I got my brain injury from falling out a taxi. It was December 2010 and I had been drinking. I cracked my head on the kerb. I was taken to hospital and had tubes put into my lungs. I was in a coma for a long time.

The doctors didn't know who I was. My daughter's name and date of birth tattooed on my arm helped them identify me. They put her details in their computer. I remember meeting Dr Brian O'Neill and he talked to me about going to Graham Anderson House. I didn't really think there was anything wrong with me.

<Subheading> **Feeling frustrated**

I can't really remember what I was like when I was at Graham Anderson House. But I've read my reports which have been a massive eye-opener. At the beginning, I thought I would be out in for about three to four months. It turned out to be nearly 3 years.

They kept me there because of my behaviour. I was frustrated. I would see people being discharged and wonder what was happening to me. I believed there was nothing wrong with me.

I often felt like people were disrespecting and taking the piss out of me. I was the new character on the scene and had to put my foot down and be the boss. I did and said things that even I wouldn't have done before I had the accident. I was rude to staff. I used to get annoyed if they didn't do things the way I thought they should be done. I would look for mistakes and make a big deal about it. I came across as a bully.

<Subheading> **Seeing people with disability in a new light**

Before my brain injury, I didn't think about people with disabilities. I left school at 15 without any qualifications and spent time in ‘approved schools’ [former young offender institutions]. I was quite notorious in my local area. I worked as a painter and decorator, roadworker, labourer and bouncer, and also worked for a removal company. I spent some time in prison in between.

I remember catching the bus into the city centre in the early days at Graham Anderson House. I would feel annoyed at old folk or people with disabilities sitting in the good seats at the front of the bus. I would sit in them and not move for people who might need them more than me.

It wasn't until I'd been in Graham Anderson House for a year or so that I became aware of other people and the issues they face. I started to be more caring and helpful towards them. I can't remember the specific things I used to do in my rehab but the staff helped me to see things differently. I've got massive respect for people with brain injuries. They didn't ask for this.

<Subheading> **My priorities are different**

It took me a long time to realise that Graham Anderson House was one of the best things to happen to me. They did so much to help me back into society. Without them, I would not have the quality of life I now have. I wouldn't have the opportunities I now have.

I live in a flat on my own and do everything for myself. I go out and about as I please. Now, I get up for people on the bus if they need my seat. I don’t drink. But I can still go to pubs and enjoy myself.

I have two children: Steven and Stacey. And I also have four grandchildren. My daughter is my guardian which I really appreciate. I have a great life.

When I look back, I feel really angry for what I put my family through. My family tell me that if I didn't go to Graham Anderson House, I wouldn't be here at all. I'd be six feet under or floating down the Clyde.

Today, my priorities are living a healthy lifestyle, spending time with my family, looking after myself, volunteering and helping disabled people. I'm also on advisory groups for disabled people. I've got a lot to give back to society.”

[**Find out more about and take a look around Graham Anderson House**](https://www.thedtgroup.org/graham-anderson-house)