**One Million Stories – Brian Tunney**

**Brian is an excellent example of how sport can be used not simply as a platform for an active and healthy lifestyle, but as a tool for recovery. Here he shares how the sport of cricket has supported his battle with alcoholism**

Brian Tunney, a full-time carer from Dagenham, has lived in London all of his life, and has spent the last several years suffering from alcoholism. Back in January 2017 he decided to turn his life around.

Brain made several attempts to tackle his addiction, however it wasn’t until his enrolment in [Addaction](https://www.addaction.org.uk/); one of the UK’s leading mental health, alcohol and drugs charity, that his new alcohol-free lifestyle appeared to stick. Following the excellent support Brian received from Addaction, he has now gone on to become a service user rep, and has been invited to meetings which involve the commissioner of the Substance Misuse Services within Barking and Dagenham.

As well as this new position of importance, Brian has found a love for the sport of cricket, and this has also played a vital role in his recovery.

Read on to find out more about Brian’s story and the important role sport has played in his recovery.

**When and how did you first get involved with cricket?**

The commissioners of the Substance Misuse Service within Barking and Dagenham asked me if I was interested in getting a group together to attend the 2-day tester for cricket (run by [Essex Cricket](https://www.essexcricket.org.uk/)) over at Barking Park in November 2017. I attended the 2-day tester course and really enjoyed it.

**What attracted you to cricket?**

The thing that attracted me to cricket was the fact I wouldn’t think about drinking and I would be out enjoying myself and socializing.

**It sounds like cricket made a difference for you. What impact has it had on your life?**

Cricket has had a massive impact on my life by keeping me active and fit. It has also kept me stable throughout my recovery and stopped me thinking about alcohol. Cricket has given me an opportunity to have some time to myself as I am a full-time carer.

**What’s been the best thing about getting involved with cricket?**

The best thing about getting involved with cricket is to see other service users enjoying themselves and having fun. It’s also gave me a close community that I can talk to. Another great thing about getting involved is the fact I have been given the chance to go to the [Essex County Cricket Club](https://www.essexcricket.org.uk/) ground in Chelmsford and the [House of Commons](https://www.parliament.uk/business/commons/) to meet [Lord Patel](https://www.parliament.uk/biographies/lords/lord-patel/2443).

**What’s your involvement with cricket at the moment?**

I am now a team leader within our own little cricket group and we meet every Thursday. I have been abstinent from alcohol since January 2017 and I now feel it’s time to give something back into the Borough.

**Do you have a vision for your involvement with cricket in the future?**

I have been offered a Level 2 cricket coaching course, which means I will be working with residents within the Borough. I am very happy about this as it means I am giving something back into the community.

**Any other thoughts that haven’t been included already?**

I am really pleased with the support I have had with all the people I have met during this period. I am happy that I have been given this opportunity to do the cricket and I would like to thank everyone for the support within my recovery.