

IMPACT REPORT

2022 - 2023



A WORD FROM OUR CEO

When I joined Spark Inside, one thing was clear to me: Coaching in prisons was just the most exciting thing to be part of. And to this day, Spark Inside's purpose – unlocking individual's potential and driving culture change in prisons – remains to me, utterly compelling.

In this sector and in society as a whole, many may find themselves asking, 'Is **transformational change in prisons possible**'? Well, this impact report shows that it is, and that should be hugely encouraging to anyone who reads it. Despite huge challenges, this report demonstrates significant, lasting change in young people's lives made possible by their own commitment, effort and unique strengths. And it truly shows the power of coaching.

An incredible **96%** of young people reported making progress in their lives. In real life terms that meant for one young person:

"Every area of my life, [my coach] sat down and helped me realise what I could do better, and I've taken that on board. I've now got my own business, which I'm building, I have the highest paying job I've ever been in by far and I'm in a healthy relationship. Everything is better now."



Vicki Cardwell, CEO

This year we were delighted to see the results of an independent Cost Benefit Analysis of our Hero's Journey programme, which found that every **£1** invested in the Hero's Journey generates **at least £5.94** of benefits, for criminal justice agencies, health services, victims and employers. This means that the savings generated for society significantly outweigh the cost of our programme, which we were very pleased to hear.

2022/23 has been a year characterised by growth, exciting milestones and new adventures - we are so proud to have coached more prison staff including 9 Governors, expanded into a new prison and successfully piloted Black Hero's Journey.

So how did we do it?

We were keen to make up for lost time from the pandemic, and to reach many more people who live and work in prisons. The team had to grow to do so and this year we welcomed:

- Eight new coaches to our brilliant highly qualified, accredited team
- Three new Service Delivery Managers to expand our reach in prisons
- Three new trustees, two new Board Fellows and our first Ambassador
- Five new Champions to inform and shape our work.

I am very proud to work with this passionate and expert group.



Spark Inside staff



Spark Inside coaches

INDIVIDUAL CHANGE

USING COACHING TO UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL OF INDIVIDUALS

Where are we heading next?

Our sights are set on taking Hero's Journey to many more young people in prison. We are doing this because we are extremely confident in its quality – it is a tried and tested programme with real impact.

We will redouble our efforts to drive culture change in prisons, spurred on by the young people we work with who are urging us to do this.

And here's to you!

This year Spark Inside celebrated turning 10. It's a new decade, with the same spark. We are incredibly grateful to all our donors and supporters. The grant funders, corporates and individuals who have helped us are part of an exciting mission. I hope this report encourages you too.



Marking 10 years of Spark Inside with an anniversary celebration

Hero's Journey

Hero's Journey™ is our award-winning life coaching programme for young people in contact with the criminal justice system.

The programme consists of group workshops in prison, where our life coaches support young people to identify what they want in life and how they can achieve their goals. In 2022/23 we delivered over **60** workshops across **5** prisons, supporting **117** young people to embark on their Hero's Journey.

After the workshops, young people can choose to receive one-to-one life coaching sessions that can start in prison, and continue on release if they are near the end of their sentences. This year we were able to offer one-to-one coaching to **143** young people, through a total of 416 sessions.

We measure the impact of our coaching with young people using the Youth Outcome Star, a recognised industry tool, where young people assess their progress against a number of metrics including **interests and activities, hopes and dreams, health and wellbeing, education and work, communicating, choices and behaviour.**

We were delighted that this year, **96%** of young people reported making progress in at least one area, **88%** reported making progress in at least two areas, and **82%** made progress in three areas.

“Now, looking back, I see the difference doing the Hero's Journey made for me. I'm now more open to talking about things - even my mum has noticed the change in me. The one-to-one coaching and Hero's Journey workshops gave me a new perspective. If people who don't know me well can see my potential it gives me hope for the future.”

- Hero's Journey participant

Mia Wheeler, Governing Governor at HMP Brixton said this about Hero's Journey:

“I was honoured to be invited to share in the celebrations of men who bravely shared their commitments for a more positive future, reflecting and exposing some of their most personal mistakes and aspirations before graduating from the Hero's Journey Programme with Spark Inside. Their vulnerability and strength was humbling, inspiring and harder than I think anyone really appreciates. Finding how to articulate their hopes for a future they were always capable of creating was raw and deep.

Spark Inside genuinely makes a difference to their perspective and future decisions. I am so passionate about the astounding change and impact that can be achieved in some of the most challenging environments in our society.”



Black Hero's Journey

In 2022/23 we ran the first **two** pilots of our Black Hero's Journey programme in HMP YOI Isis. Originally developed in 2019, the decision to create this programme came following feedback from young people in prison, who told us that it would be beneficial for our coaching workshops to acknowledge the specific challenges young Black men face. Our initial pilot of the programme had to pause due to Covid, so we were overjoyed to get it up and running this year, and have been heartened to hear the positive responses so far.

Our 2022/23 pilots, involving **15** participants, have gone brilliantly well and have been enormously valued by the participants. When the young men in HMP YOI Isis first heard about the programme, they commented: **"How did this get past the system?", "Someone [in the prison] must have been sleeping at the desk when they put this forward!"**.

We even saw young men giving up their social time, including choosing to leave an England World Cup match, to attend the workshops – something virtually unheard of in our experience of prisons.



Programme staff and coaches at HMP/YOI Isis to deliver Black Hero's Journey

Participants have shared their thoughts on the experience:

"It's like a sense of self-worth...before I'd only see myself in the light of, 'I'm just gonna sell drugs for the rest of my life', in and out of jail. I've been in jail like four or five times...and I never saw a point where I thought 'I need to stop', I just come out, do the same thing. But this made me see that there's other options in life. I'm not just worth selling drugs. I can do other things, put my mind to other things."

Prison staff also rate the programme:

"We are delighted to be piloting the Black Hero's Journey here in HMPYOI Isis. We have seen brilliant engagement from young people for the programme, as there is really nothing else like it in the prison system. We have also seen - and been impressed by - the positive changes in the attitudes and behaviours of young people after their participation. I would like to see this programme rolled out to many more young Black men in prisons and YOIs".

- Emily Thomas, Governor of HMPYOI Isis.

If you would like to know more about the impact Black Hero's Journey has on young people, you can watch a video interview with Jeffrey, one of our longest-serving coaches and Tyrone, a young man who was in the very first pilot group, [here](#).

INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

CHANGING PRISON CULTURE SO THAT REHABILITATION IS POSSIBLE

Prison Staff Coaching

In 2022/23 we reached an exciting milestone, having coached more than **80** prison staff, including **nine** prison Governors, through a total of **367** sessions. We also began a new project, offering coaching to every member of prison staff in London who went through the most recent Custodial Manager assessment – Custodial Managers being the highest grade of uniformed staff. We are so pleased that **26** staff members chose to take up the offer and are still being coached today, building their skills and confidence as they settle into these new positions.

Ian Bickers, London Prisons Group Director, had this to say about the project:

"Such important work and talking to this group of staff they have been hugely grateful for a brilliant intervention at the start of their next career step - thank you Spark Inside and good to see how we are impacting this vital group! I am proud of this association with such a brilliant organisation."

We are pleased that next year, we will be working with a team of researchers and academics from the University of Lincoln to evaluate the impact of our prison staff coaching. We will be interviewing a broad sample of our prison staff coaching clients to understand how they benefited from the experience, how our service could be improved and what worked best for them. We look forward to publishing the report in November 2023!



Alex, 40
Prison Governor and Spark Inside coaching recipient

"I think it was that opportunity to step away from day-to-day work and talk with someone independent. It was solely about my development. I liked the fact that I was able to be really honest about my current experience and what I wanted to achieve.

I really liked the fact that it was external to prison. Talking about leadership and managing people and career goals almost outside the lens of prison, that was really refreshing. It was the bigger picture issues of 'what kind of a leader do I want to be?' 'What leadership skills do I need to develop'?

I recognised that it was a real investment in me as well. And I think that gives people a boost. I feel like people want me to develop and be a great leader and they've put this on for me.

If I think about myself, I manage maybe six or seven people who would in turn manage six or seven people, and it kind of spreads. I think that it has value for more than just me. There is a value to the organisation in that if the seven people I manage are developed in terms of their skills, their ability to manage their workloads, their ability to do the jobs that they're employed to do, that can only be a positive thing to the wider organisation."



SYSTEMIC CHANGE

DRIVING CULTURE CHANGE IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM SO THAT REHABILITATION IS POSSIBLE

As well as using coaching to unlock the potential of people who live and work in prison, a key part of our mission is to drive culture change in the criminal justice system, so that rehabilitation is possible. We have ambitions to change entire systems, championing equity and opportunity, and we do this through our advocacy, policy and campaigning work.

In 2022/23 we have made some exciting strides towards this mission.

Being Well Being Equal

This year we published our [Being Well Being Equal Report](#). Our [campaign](#), calling for the prioritisation of the wellbeing needs of young men, particularly Black men in prison, initially launched in 2020 when young people in prison were telling us about the terrible impacts that covid restrictions, and the prison environment, was having on their wellbeing. And with **75%** of the young people we work with coming from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, a clear theme that emerged through our conversations was that many felt that their identity and heritage played a significant role in how they were being treated.

“Black people are getting treated unfairly – everyone needs to be thinking about equal rights. On the surface it seems okay, but behind the scenes there is a real problem... are Black young men getting equal access to jobs in prison? Do they have roles like Wing Reps? There is a lot that prisons need to be held to account for”.

- Young man in custody

It was clear to us that if we want to truly support young people to build a brighter future, that we also have to fight to create a better system and ensure young people’s voices are really heard. In February 2023 we published our report, which included the expertise and insights of our Being Well Being Equal Alliance, made up of Wipers CIC, Zahid Mubarek Trust, Race Equality Foundation, Centre for Mental Health and Clinks.

The report presents a consolidation of the research, policy and practice concerned with the wellbeing of young men in custody, as well as insight from expert organisations and, most importantly, young men themselves.

“I think it would be better if they looked at people to see what their strengths are, see what their talents are, see where they shine!”

- Young man in custody

We were encouraged to see the report met with great enthusiasm and support from policymakers, senior HMPPS leaders and the wider sector.

“I think it’s brilliant! Particularly in thinking about how to promote this work and ensure that prisons understand how to practically implement the learning from the report to produce better outcomes for young adults from black and minority ethnic backgrounds.”

Lisa Short, HMPPS Young Adults Team Lead

“There is lots within this report for us to consider in terms of our future activities across HMPPS.”

Alana Ajani, HMPPS Race Action Programme Director

We were delighted that Leroy Logan, MBE - Chair of Transition to Adulthood, former Chair and founder of the Black Police Association and subject of the Steve McQueen film series Small Axe, published a blog in support of our report.

He wrote:

“Spark Inside’s recommendations could not be more timely when we consider the scale of the challenges young adults face...Right now, with organisations like Spark Inside working directly with young adults, we have a chance to create a criminal justice system that focuses on rehabilitation rather than punishment. A system where young adults can gain the skills and confidence they need to thrive. A system where every young adult can unlock their full potential. But we need to grab this chance with both hands if we are to ever make it a reality.”

We hosted a Roundtable event, to discuss the findings of the report and ensure our calls to action are implemented. The event was chaired by Leroy Logan MBE, and guest speakers included Alana Ajani Director of HMPPS Race Action Programme, Lisa Short HMPPS Young Adults Team Lead, alongside our CEO. We were pleased to welcome some fantastic guests from the London Probation Service, MOPAC, HMPPS, NHS England as well as representatives from the Alliance. We saw such interest in the event that we are now hosting a follow-up online event, in collaboration with the HMPPS Race Action Programme, which will be open to all prison staff.



Staff from Spark Inside, Barrow Cadbury Trust and HMPPS, and Leroy Logan MBE at the Being Well Being Equal roundtable

Empowering young people to have their voices heard

This year we focused our efforts on developing our Champions Group and In-Prison Advisory Boards – two initiatives that empower young people with lived experience of imprisonment to have their voices heard, to shape and influence our work and to speak truth to power.

Our Champions Group consist of 5 young people, who have spent time in prison and who have been coached by Spark Inside, either through our Hero's Journey programme or one-to-one coaching. The Champions meet online every 6-8 weeks, and have group discussions facilitated by our Participation and Engagement Manager, on a range of topics which have included informing our policy strategy, feeding back on our business plan and 10 year vision and more. We also offer the Champions opportunities to develop professionally and personally, and have been pleased to team up with our corporate sponsors, PwC, whose staff have hosted tailored workshops for the group on admin, business, as well as a session on Neurodiversity.

In 2022/23 we held our first In-Prison Advisory Board in HMP Isis. Our model involves recruiting a small group (typically 2-4) of young people in prison as Spark Inside Ambassadors. We equip them with the skills, tools and confidence to survey and interview their peers on the wings, on a topic that relates to Spark Inside's work, in this case, 'What would enable you to participate in a programme that brings together prison staff and young people in prison, with the aim of building trust, empathy and respect?' The Ambassadors gather the insights and present their findings back to a member of our Senior Management Team and two members of our Board, who come in to the prison to meet the group. The Ambassador role is a paid role, and young people are given the chance to build skills in communication, interviewing and research that they can draw on in the future.

Our first In-Prison Advisory Board was a great success, and Ambassadors gathered the opinions of 35 other young people on the wings. The Ambassadors thoroughly valued the experience – they told us that it had encouraged them to push their own boundaries and to try new things. One person spoke of never having given a presentation before but now felt that they had a better sense of what is needed to deliver a good presentation, including planning and preparation.

Cecilia Cappel, Spark Inside Participation and Engagement Manager said:

“They spoke of being heard and feeling listened to. They said it was one of the few times they felt equal to those they were sharing the space with. They also felt comfortable and human. They said that they felt Spark Inside would create change and follow through on things.”



Group of young people gather at HMP Isis

A visit from the Prisons Minister

In February 2023 we were delighted to meet Prisons Minister Damian Hinds who came to visit our programme at HMP Wormwood Scrubs. The Minister met with members of our team working in the prison, as well as a group of young people who have embarked on their Hero's Journey, who shared with him the impact that coaching has had on their lives. The Minister also learned more about our work coaching staff in the prison. He heard from the Governor about how valuable it is to have an organisation in the prison that works with both staff and prisoners, and one that doesn't shy away from working with remand prisoners who make up a large proportion of the population at Scrubs, but who are often overlooked.

The young people were our greatest ambassadors, with one person saying:

“The one-to-one coaching gives you the space to be emotionally vulnerable. I can't tell you what a relief that is.”

Our fantastic coach Michael Roper took the Minister and three young people through a bitesize session of our Hero's Journey life coaching programme, and we were pleased to hear that the experience made an impact.

The Minister said:

“I was delighted to meet with young people who had completed the Hero's Journey, and to have the opportunity to talk with them at length about how it helped and encouraged them; it was really uplifting.”



Rishika Bhudia, Service Delivery Manager; Head of Communications and Advocacy, Louise Potter; and Head of Service Delivery Luke Carey ahead of Damian Hinds MP's visit



Spark Inside HQ Team

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO HAVE JOINED US ON THIS INCREDIBLE JOURNEY IN 2022/23. YOUR SUPPORT AND DEDICATION HAVE MADE A MEANINGFUL IMPACT, AND TOGETHER, WE LOOK FORWARD TO AN EVEN BRIGHTER FUTURE AHEAD!

To find out more about Spark Inside and the work we do, please visit our website or contact us below.

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Donell, Hero's Journey participant, in conversation with Noel, Spark Inside Service Delivery Manager. Keep an eye on our socials for the premier of this brand new film!