



STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2027

Unlocking Potential and Driving Culture Change so that Rehabilitation is Possible.

VISION

The futures of people affected by the criminal justice system are determined by their potential, not their past.

MISSION

We use coaching to unlock the potential of individuals and drive culture change in the criminal justice system so that rehabilitation is possible.

Why We Matter

Spark Inside is an award-winning charity that has transformed the lives of over 1,500 people living and working in our prisons.

For more than a decade we have pioneered coaching in prisons, showing the value of coaching to change lives and systems. We are the first and still the only charity taking professional coaching to young people in prison.

Our coaches help people find their 'spark' and equips them with the skills and mindset to build a future away from crime.

Ultimately, we believe coaching should be available to anyone who wants it in the justice system.

Over the next three years we will continue to reach young people, those with the greatest need and the greatest potential, in prison, the most challenging of environments, with our impactful and exciting programmes – Hero's Journey and Black Hero's Journey.

But that is not enough. Prisons need to change. From our experience over more than a decade working in prisons, we know we need to drive culture change because the environment impacts the outcomes.



Our Ambition

We Will Coach Many More Young People in Prison.

We are confident in the quality and impact of our coaching programmes. Our ambition is to reach every young person in prison. The next three years will move us closer to this goal.

We Will Champion a Coaching Culture in Prisons.

This is a redoubling of our efforts to drive culture change in prisons, spurred on by the young people we work with who are urging us to do this. In the next three years we will innovate, test and showcase new approaches.

What is Coaching?

Coaching is a facilitated conversation, allowing individuals and groups to find their own solutions to problems they face. It is based on the core belief that the person is the expert of their own life, and so, unlike mentoring, coaches offer limited advice or guidance. Instead, coaches empower people to do their best thinking. We have a team of almost 20 professional coaches, who are fully qualified and trained, with over 2,000 hours of coaching experience, including with blue-chip, global companies.

Our coaches use tools and techniques, like specific questioning and thought-provoking prompts, which can help transform thinking, improve relationships, impact environments, achieve goals and change lives.

Our Impact

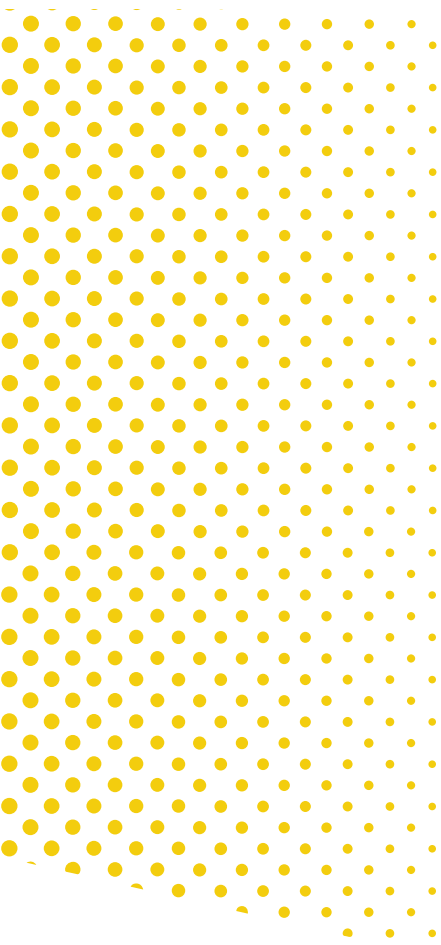
96% of young people we coach make progress in their lives across the following areas: Interests and activities; Hopes and dreams; Health and wellbeing; Education and work; Communicating; Choices and behaviour.¹

Adjudications for violent behaviour in prison decrease, as young men's involvement in Hero's Journey increases.

Young people who fully engage with life coaching are at lower risk of reoffending.

Every £1 invested in the Hero's Journey generates at least £5.94 of benefits, for criminal justice agencies, health services, victims and employers.

An independent evaluation by the University of Lincoln found that our prison staff coaching improves confidence, skills, wellbeing and retention.



“Spark Inside genuinely makes a difference to young people’s 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.” - Mia Motter, Governing Governor HMP Brixton

“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.” - Emily Thomas, Governing Governor, HMP YOI Isis

“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.” - Damian Hinds MP, then Prisons Minister

“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.” - Young Person

¹ Change in complex, so we purposefully use a holistic tool to reflect and measure young people's progress - [The Outcomes Star](#).

"Hero's Journey blew my mind. I could not believe that something like that even existed in the system. The reason why I speak so highly of it is because I didn't know my purpose before this course. It opens your mind and soul, it makes you a better person. It shows you a path that you were already on but you just didn't know." - *Young Person*

"It was that opportunity to step away from day-to-day work and talk with someone independent. I was able to be really honest about my current experience and what I wanted to achieve. What kind of a leader do I want to be? I manage maybe six or seven people who would in turn manage six or seven people, and it kind of spreads." - *Prison Governor*



Our Strategic Aims 2024-2027

To deliver more of this impact, we will do the following:

AIM 1

Coach many more young people in prison and through the gate

AIM 2

Champion a coaching culture in prisons

AIM 3

Continue to be effective and to evidence this impact

AIM 4

Be a skilled, diverse, and sustainable organisation with our own coaching culture

AIM 1

Coach many more young people in prison and through the gate



The Challenge:

We currently reach 200 young men each year across six prisons in London and the South-East. We are very effective at coaching in prisons, and are recognised for the outstanding levels of engagement on our programmes and valued by the prisons we work in.

Our programmes – Hero’s Journey and Black Hero’s Journey – are evidenced, effective and in demand.

We have a strong foundation in London but many young people in other areas of the country have access to even fewer programmes and even less charity support. To date we have only coached in the men’s estate, not in the women’s estate.

Coaching is hugely impactful at points of change. When our coaching continues through the gate the impact on a young person’s life is compounded. Equally, when coaching works alongside other changes, such as finding employment, it can multiply the positive benefits.

By 2027 we will:

- ▶ Reach many more young people in prison with coaching
- ▶ Expand into a new area of the country through creating a regional hub focused on a cluster of prisons
- ▶ Pilot coaching young women in prison
- ▶ Move Black Hero's Journey from pilot phase to core delivery and recruit more Black Hero's Journey coaches
- ▶ Offer through the gate coaching to every single young person we work with, aiming to have greater impact in young people's lives over the long term
- ▶ Prioritise coaching young people as they near release, in the key resettlement and training London prisons, where our programmes are popular and needed
- ▶ Build more partnerships with other organisations that offer employment, training and/or practical support – placing coaching prior to or alongside other interventions

Why do we Coach Young People?

As of 2024, there are almost 14,000 young people in prison and this number looks set to increase by 50% by 2026.²

Currently, specialist tailored support for young people in prison is extremely limited. **And yet, there are many good reasons to target this group for support...**

Young adult wellbeing in the prison system is significantly poorer than for older people in prison – with more negative experiences of relationships, mental health and safety, and higher rates of reoffending.³ Young adults in custody are more likely to self-harm, be placed on basic regimes, have poor engagement in education or employment, be involved in violence (both as perpetrators and victims), and experience restraint and segregation.⁴ This age group has the highest over-representation of Black and Minoritised individuals who have experienced significant inequalities both in the community and in custody.

While young people in custody have distinct needs, **they also possess unique strengths** and are at critical time in their transition to adulthood. Far **from being seen as a deficit, young adult development can be seen as a valuable opportunity for change**. As HMPPS states: 'late teenage years are the peak age for offending, but also the time when a young adult is most likely to desist from crime. Young adulthood is a crucial opportunity for criminal justice agencies to apply the right interventions.'⁵

² Ministry of Justice (2021) Prison Population Projections 2021-2026

³ HMI Prisons (2021) Outcomes for young adults in custody: A thematic review

⁴ ibid

⁵ [Young Adult Guidance Annex B Maturation WEB.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

In 2011, before we became Spark Inside, we asked young people in prison what they needed, and they told us they wanted two things:

1. **An intervention that didn't tell them what to do, and**
2. **Something that was tailored specifically to them and their journeys.**

They wanted coaching.

Coaching is particularly powerful for young people in prison. It is non-directive - instead of telling people what to do it empowers young people to make their own, more positive decisions and to start building the future they want. It is strengths and hope based, focused on the individual's potential, on the present and the future, not the past. The self-awareness, empowerment, and clarity of purpose gained by young people can be transformational, gaining them the mental strength they need to achieve their aims in the most difficult of circumstances. And we see that, more and more each year, in the impact data we record, and through the conversations we have directly with young people themselves.

**“Even if I find myself within a box I use my mind as a tool for freedom,
I see no obstacles, my development grew and went from strength to
strength,
I’ve been here before.
Over time my confidence just built and my self-worth became prominent,
I moved different so how can I get myself caught up within a race of
dominance with another man with no finish line?
My mental health is in line just knowing I am still in line,
It’s me versus me.”**

*Spoken word piece by JonnoAQ,
Spark Inside Champion and Hero's Journey Graduate*



AIM 2

Champion a coaching culture in prisons to help drive rehabilitation



The Challenge:

For over 10 years we have coached remarkable individuals who live and work in prisons. Both groups can feel as though they are battling the system. To give individuals the best chance at flourishing within the prison environment, we have got to create change on a systemic level - we have got to make an impact on prison culture. Many other organisations are working to change policies and even strategies, but we believe that culture change is what sticks and underpins everything else. "Culture eats strategy for breakfast". Supporting culture change must focus on relationships, capabilities and interactions. This is Spark Inside's expertise and how Spark Inside will make a system change contribution.

Our policy and influencing work is increasingly impactful. We want to go further and ensure that what we know about the value of coaching, the strengths of young people and need for equity, is embedded in the system.

By 2027 we will:

- ▶ Coach more prison staff to support their wellbeing, sense of agency and to impact positively on prison culture
- ▶ Prove the concept (adapt/confirm model, pilot and evaluate) of **The Conversation** – our systems coaching programme for large groups of prison staff and prisoners, designed to enhance relationships, improve empathy, and support sustained, positive cultural change on prison wings.
- ▶ Pilot equipping people who live and work in prison with coaching skills and approaches so they can listen better, challenge effectively and unlock their own and others' potential
- ▶ Make the case with HMPPS, prison and political leaders for a coaching culture in prisons and how it can support a rehabilitative environment
- ▶ Advocate for strengths-based and hopeful approaches with young people – showcasing coaching as a powerful tool to impact lives positively
- ▶ Maximise impact from our Being Well Being Equal campaign – by inspiring and working alongside HMPPS and prison leaders to adopt our recommendations

The Conversation

An evaluation of our original pilot of The Conversation in 2014-2018 found that prisoners who participated showed an 81% improvement in positive behaviour according to the prison measurement scheme. Staff who participated reported increased empathy towards prisoners and 100% of participants from both groups said they would recommend the programme.

What Do We Mean by a Coaching Culture?

Developing a coaching culture in prisons goes further than offering coaching. It supports people to build the following capabilities:

- ▶ Powerful listening that allows people to do their best thinking
- ▶ Skillful challenging that creates understanding and moves the conversation forward
- ▶ Commitment to growth on both sides of the relationship



AIM 3

Continue to be effective and evidence our impact



The Challenge:

The prison system is a highly challenging operating environment. Many frontline staff (both in public and charity sector) are over-stretched. The consequence is poorer quality support that lets young people down. At Spark Inside we need to remain distinct from the system and prioritise excellent, high-quality coaching that can help people transform their lives, ultimately making society safer.

We have great programmes, excellent coaches, and want to continue to lead the way in coaching in prisons. As we grow, maintaining this standard of training and equipping our coaches and team will be ever more important, as will continually improving our programmes with the latest, external evidence.

Core to being a strong organisation is that young people with lived experience inform and shape all that we do, that their voices are heard. We have a good basis with our Champions group and our exciting peer research model of In Prison Advisory Boards to build on.

By 2027 we will:

- ▶ Embed the expertise of lived experience in our core decision-making through our **Champions** group
- ▶ Ensure continual quality improvement of our programmes via **In Prison Advisory Boards** peer research model
- ▶ Re-examine our core Hero's Journey programme (to incorporate new external methodologies)
- ▶ Maintain high progression onto one-to-one coaching and continue to ensure individuals and communities are equally supported to engage and thrive in our programmes
- ▶ Commit to externally evaluate all new programmes
- ▶ Submit data to Justice Data Lab by 2027 in order to establish a statistically significant result on our impact on reducing reoffending
- ▶ Harness and nurture our coaches' commitment to excellence and sharing our learning journey as one single team

Our Champions

Our Champions are a small group of young people with lived experience of the justice system and/or our programmes, who routinely meet, with the support of our Participation and Engagement Manager, to shape and inform Spark Inside's programmes, policy and strategy.

Our In Prison Advisory Boards (IPABs)

Our IPABs are made up 2-4 Ambassadors, a paid role, which sees young people in prison equipped with surveying and interviewing skills so they can gather the insights of their peers on the wings relating to Spark Inside programmes – allowing them to shape and inform our work.



AIM 4

Be a skilled, diverse, sustainable organisation with a coaching culture

The Challenge:

We want to change the prison system, but we cannot outperform our own culture. We need to continually deepen our own coaching culture at Spark Inside – one that listens well, challenges effectively and is committed to growth, of the organisation and of each other.

As we champion equity and opportunity for young people in prison, we need to put equity, diversity and inclusion at the heart of all that we do too.

We want to grow Spark Inside's reach in a sustainable way, with diverse income streams. We see that too many prison charities run hand to mouth, in a way that negatively impacts on their participants as well as their staff. We will be different.

By 2027 we will:

- ▶ Build a skilled and diverse team of coaches, staff, Board and young people as we grow
- ▶ Enhance the coaching skills and approaches of our whole team and culture
- ▶ Increase our income so we can coach more young people
- ▶ Maintain diverse income streams as we grow, through a combination of grants (60%), commissioned income (30%) and philanthropy/corporate support (10%)
- ▶ As we grow in size, we will never lose sight of our quality, and we will only seek funding opportunities that allow us to maintain our high standards



We will continue to channel our values, that make us who we are:

SPARK

We want to feel a strong sense of passion and 'spark' for everything we do. We commit to people, projects and partnerships that align with our values.

HEART

We maintain an open mind and an open heart, and we always act with kindness and consideration.

STICKABILITY

When the going gets tough, we stick with our participants, our projects and our commitments. We channel our grit and resilience to make it through challenges and we don't give up easily.

IMPACT

Our impact on our participants is at the heart of every decision we make and it is how we judge our success, so we take evaluation seriously.

LEARNING

We are humble, curious and constantly developing. We apply and share our learning to amplify our impact.

INNOVATION

We celebrate creativity and design new ways of doing things, based on evaluation data and stakeholder feedback. We innovate to remain relevant to our participants' needs.

Be part of our journey

If you have been inspired by what you have read and would like to support us in achieving our goals over the next three years, there are plenty of ways you can get involved. Your support truly makes the difference, so join us on our journey.

Contact us on team@sparkinside.org to learn more, or visit www.sparkinside.org/support-us

Thank you



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

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