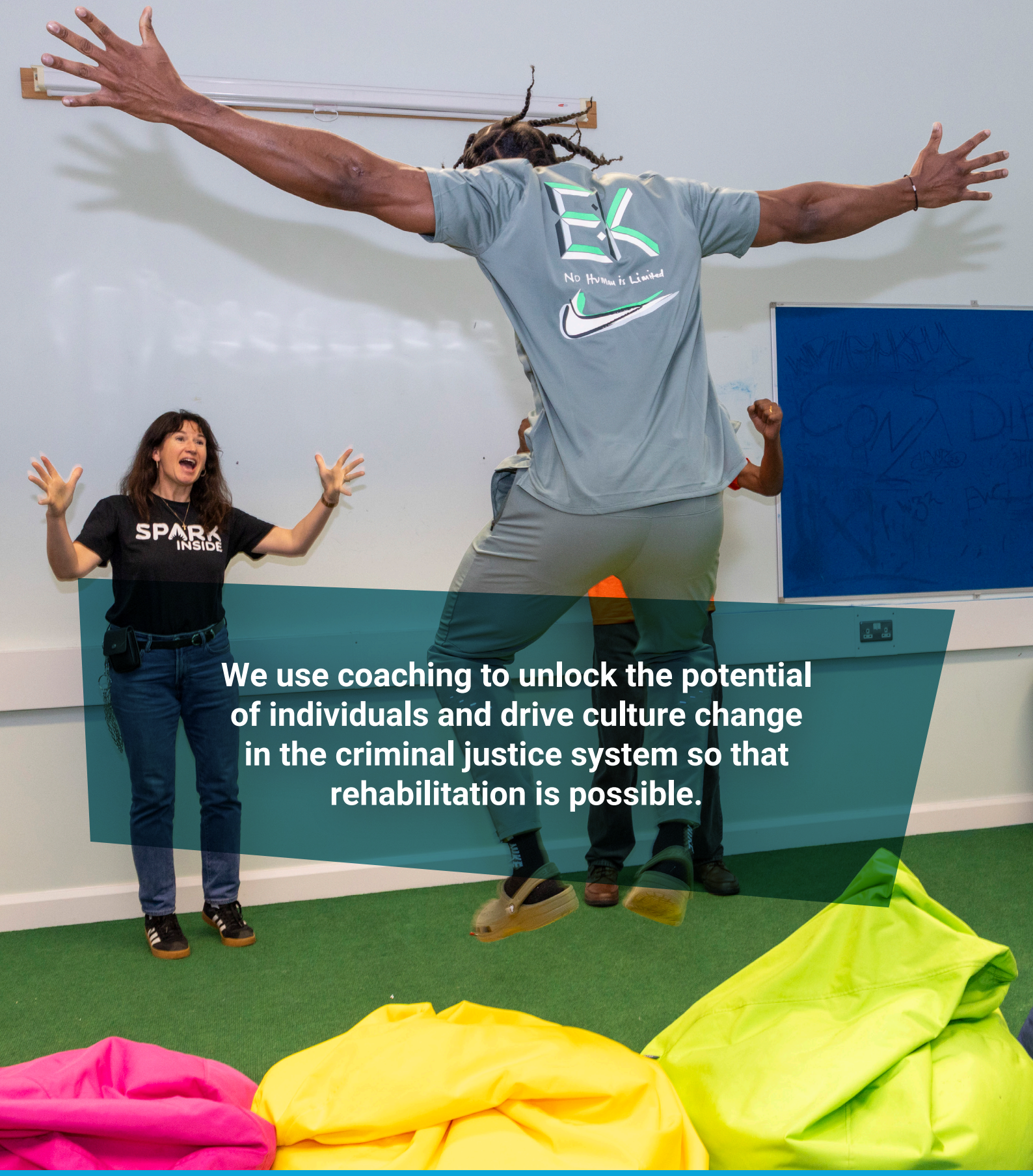
SPARK INSIDE
COACHING IN PRISONS®

# IMPACT REPORT

## 2025 - 2026






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

**437**
Young People Reached

**86%**
Made Progress

**>5:1**
Social Return on Investment

# A WORD FROM OUR CEO

# This year has been our most ambitious and impactful yet.

In 2025/26, we reached more young people than ever before. We delivered our award-winning Hero's Journey programme across **11 prisons**, provided more than **1,000** one-to-one coaching sessions in custody, and began piloting innovative new approaches with women in prison.

The impact of our work is clear. During the year, **437** young people took part in our programmes and 86% made progress in at least one key outcome area.

> **One statistic that stood out for me was that three-quarters of the young people we coached increasingly stayed out of trouble, making good and safe choices.**

That is an impact that ripples out to families, friends and communities.

We also delivered more than 1,000 one-to-one coaching sessions in prison for the first time. Independent analysis continues to show that Hero's Journey delivers strong value for money, generating at least £5.94 in social value for every £1 invested.

We were honoured to receive national recognition for our work, including being highly commended in the national Charity Awards,




winning the national Diversity Awards, winning the HMPYOI Feltham Staff Award and being highlighted twice as notable positive practice by the rigorous His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons.

This year also marked an important step in our development as an organisation. Thanks to the extraordinary support of The October Club and our wider community of funders and partners, we secured investment that will enable Spark Inside to establish roots in the East Midlands and South Yorkshire.

It's important to stop and reflect that all of this impact has been achieved in the context of severe challenge. Prisons and the criminal justice system have rarely been out of the news this year, **but we remain steadfast in our mission to enable young people to rewrite their futures, while contributing to a more effective and rehabilitative justice system - which is more needed than ever.**

**Thank you, to everyone who has supported us as we continue on this journey.**
**You truly make the difference.**

# USING COACHING TO UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL OF INDIVIDUALS

## Hero's Journey

**Hero's Journey is our award winning life coaching programme that empowers young people in the justice system to rewrite their future. Through group workshops followed by one-to-one coaching, young people are supported to identify where they are in their life's journey and equipped with the tools, confidence and resilience to build a bright future that excites them.**

In 25/26 we were delighted to reach more young people than **ever before**, coaching **437** people in prison, through the gate and in the community. For the first time, we delivered over **1,000** one-to-one coaching sessions in prison.

**437**
recieved coaching in prison during
**2025/2026**

**274**
recieved coaching in prison during
**2024/2025**

**242**
recieved coaching in prison during
**2023/2024**



**123**
workshops
across
**11**
prisons

| | |
|---|---|
| HMP/YOI ISIS | HMP BRIXTON |
| OASIS SECURE SCHOOL | HMP HIGH DOWN |
| HMP MOORLAND | HMP FELTHAM |
| HMP WORMWOOD SCRUBS | HMP RANBY |
| HMP EAST SUTTON PARK | HMP COLDINGLEY |
| HMP STANDFORD HILL | |

We are proud to see the positive impact our work has on the young people we work with and that in the past financial year **86%** made progress in at least one outcome area.[1]

| % of young people who reported making progress in the following areas: | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Communicating**<br>Listening, understanding, confidence and respect | 73% |
| | **Choices and Behaviour**<br>Staying out of trouble, making good and safe choices | 73% |
| | **Interests and activities**<br>Involvement in positive activities, developing skills | 65% |
| | **Education and Work**<br>School, other education, training, apprenticeships, work | 56% |
| | **Hopes and Dreams**<br>Feeling hopeful, having goals, proactivity, motivation | 69% |
| | **Health and Wellbeing**<br>Emotional stability, stress management, healthy lifestyle | 59% |




[1]Youth Star is an evidence-based tool for measuring change.

Jason, a young man who took part in the Hero's Journey, had this to say about the experience:

> **"To have such a beautiful connection and conversations, to find such beauty in such a dark place is really special. My coach helped me rediscover the good in me – the stuff I'd forgotten."**

We're enormously proud of the impact our programmes have on young people like Jason, but the impact doesn't stop there. Behind the statistics are real human beings who, through coaching, commit to leading purposeful, productive lives after imprisonment, and this has a profound impact on wider society as well as the individual. In fact, an independent Cost Benefit Analysis of our work found that **every £1 invested in Hero's Journey generates at least £5.94 of benefits to society.**

> **"After coming out of prison, Spark Inside continued to support me. I started one-to-one coaching with Milca. She's been a huge anchor, helping me to understand myself better and figure out my direction."**

Want to know more about our impact? Thanks to our generous funder, The Henry Smith Foundation, you can watch/read more about two young men who embarked on their Hero's Journey, here:

henrysmith.foundation/stories/how-spark-inside-unlocked-my-true-power

henrysmith.foundation/stories/how-spark-inside-reignited-who-i-am



# Black Hero's Journey

**In 25/26 we ran 12 Black Hero's Journey programmes, supporting 115 young Black and Mixed Heritage men across 4 prisons and through the gate – a 50% increase in delivery from 24/25.**

This tailored programme provides a space for participants to explore their identity, heritage and culture and come away from workshops feeling empowered, uplifted and more able to carve out a bright future.

One Black Hero's Journey participant told us:

> **"The first session, I felt the energy, I was locked in. Each session had a focus and it was enlightening... broadening my horizons and finding things out about myself that I might have ignored or not really focused on previously. It showed me...I'm still capable of achieving great things."**





Spark Inside Coaches accepting the National Diversity Award

As well as winning two awards, we were hugely proud to see Black Hero's Journey highlighted as positive practice in an HMIP (His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons) report for HMP Wormwood Scrubs and HMPYOI Feltham.

We look forward to sharing an external evaluation of this HMPPS Innovation Grant Funded work in 26/27.

# Coaching Women in Prison




**This year we continued our one-to-one coaching with women in HMP East Sutton Park.**

We have now supported **34** women to build the confidence and clarity to tackle challenges like self-esteem, family relationships, and planning for release.

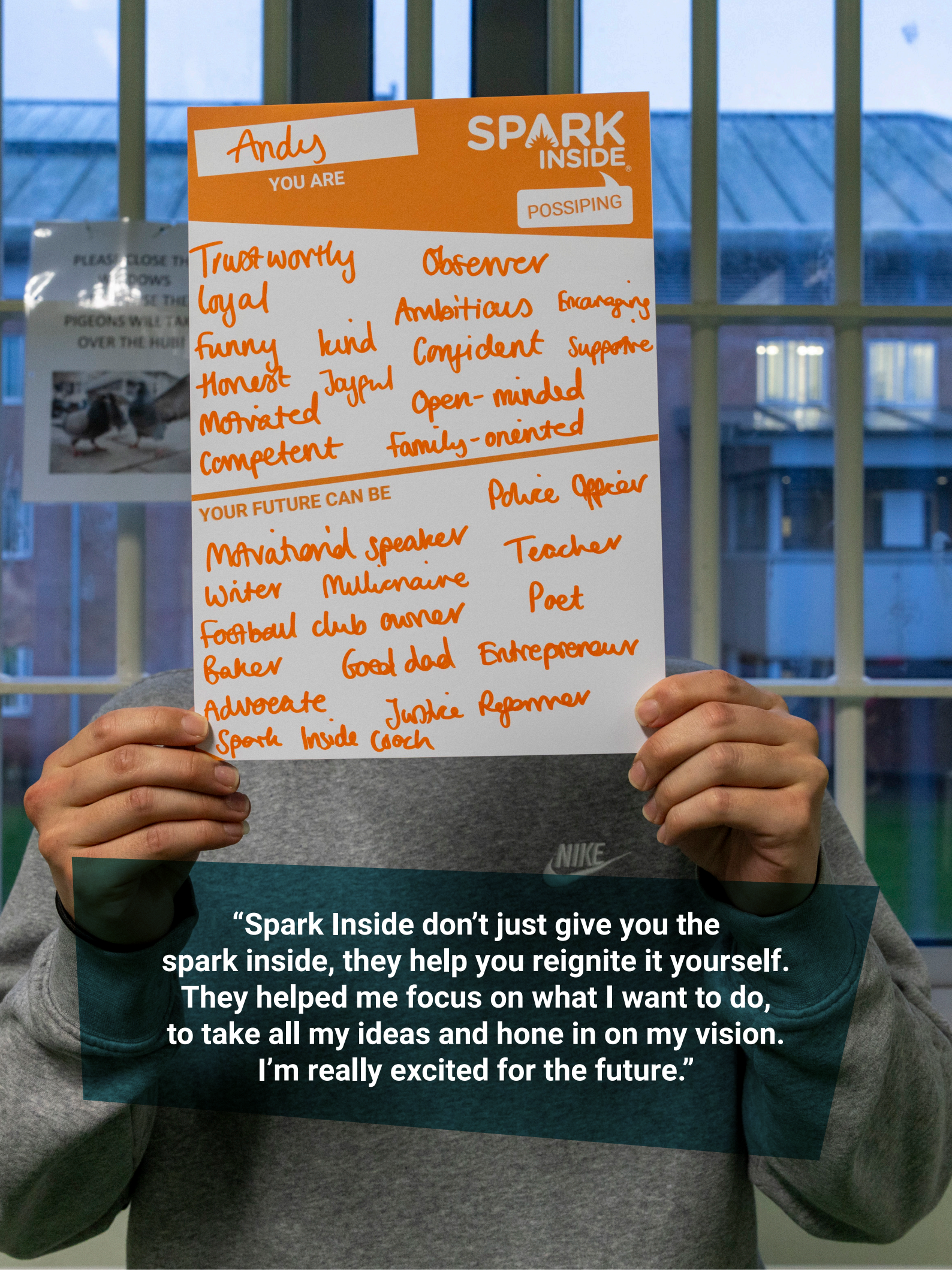
> **"My confidence has grown so much, and I have made so many changes. If it wasn't for coaching, none of that would have been possible".**

In an exciting 'first' for Spark Inside, we have now began delivering our first groupwork pilot in a women's prison! The programme, which is still in development, uses a range of models to improve understanding of internal and interpersonal conflict, support participants to build confidence, recognise and tap into their potential and overcome limiting beliefs.

Feedback from the women who have taken part so far has been extremely positive.

> **"I feel more confident, at peace and much more positive about myself and my future."**

At the end of 25/26 we secured HMPPS funding for this work, which will allow us to expand our coaching offer to more women at HMP East Sutton Park, and into HMP Downview and Send across three years. This funding will also enable us to further test, develop and improve our groupwork offer for women.




**“Spark Inside don’t just give you the spark inside, they help you reignite it yourself. They helped me focus on what I want to do, to take all my ideas and hone in on my vision. I’m really excited for the future.”**

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

## Prison Staff Coaching

**This year, we coached 39 prison staff members, supporting them in their wellbeing, to manage stress and build resilience in an environment that continues to be extremely challenging.**

**We continued our partnership with Prison Reform Trust (PRT) on its Next Generation Leaders programme, offering coaching to aspiring prison leaders aiming to push forward reform and improve outcomes for people in custody.**

PRT's review of Next Gen found that:

> "Spark Inside provided a vital bridge for transferring their learning from inspirational leaders outside prison, to specific problems they were encountering inside prison."

On our partnership, Pia Sinha, CEO of PRT said:

> "The offer of one-to-one coaching through Spark Inside allowed our Next Gen leaders to build, generalise and crucially apply learning inside their prisons.
>
> The feedback from participants speaks for itself. We are incredibly proud to have partnered with Spark Inside and look forward to continuing this for our next cohort too."



The Next Gen Leaders

## The Conversation

**In 25/26 we continued to pilot The Conversation, our systems coaching programme which brings together prison staff and residents, using Deep Democracy to enhance relationships, improve empathy, and support sustained, positive cultural change on prison wings.**

Following on from the success of our first pilot at HMP High Down, we got stuck into Pilot 2 at HMP Wormwood Scrubs, working with **25** staff and **26** prisoners to shape the deselection process for the prison's Incentivised Substance Free Living Unit. It was a privilege to work alongside this group of highly engaged people living on the wing, as well as a fantastic mixture of staff, from Governor Grades, to Custodial Managers, Wing Officers and partners from The Forward Trust. We hope to leave a lasting legacy as a result of this work.



Work has now begun in HMP Isis for Pilot 3, bringing us to a total of **69** staff and **34** prisoners engaged across the pilots so far.

## Coaching Skills Training

**We completed our pilot in HMP Brixton, delivering coaching skills training for prison gym staff. Gym staff are highly influential members of the prison workforce, who often enjoy positive relationships with young people in custody. For this reason, we wanted to equip this team with coaching skills that enable them to have even more powerful interactions with young people.**

Training includes supporting staff to find coaching moments in their role at work; attune to listening for feelings and values; and how to ask excellent quality questions.

Feedback has been positive and participants are enthusiastic about its potential to impact wider prison culture:

> **"The Prison Service should introduce elements of it in all staff training. It's a people job and you deal with people whether as staff or prisoners, to be more aware and tolerant would be great for anybody in the job."**

We look forward to publishing an independent evaluation of this work in 26/27.

# SYSTEMIC CHANGE

## A key part of our mission is to drive culture change in the criminal justice system, so that rehabilitation is possible. We do this through our advocacy, policy and campaigning work.

## Being Well Being Equal

**Our Being Well Being Equal (BWBE) campaign has gone from strength to strength this year. Since last year's Roundtable, which brought together policymakers and practitioners in the justice and health sector alongside Spark Inside Champions, we have made strides in co-developing practical tools that promote positive wellbeing for young Black men in prison, which can be used by young men themselves, prison staff and Healthcare teams.**

In collaboration with our BWBE Champions, four young Black men with lived experience of imprisonment, we have co-created a **Mental Wealth** Toolkit. The Toolkit builds on the Champion's concept of mental wealth, which reframes mental health; which often carries stigma for young Black men in custody, into something that is more strengths-based, that you proactively build, invest in and improve as you would physical health.

The resources have been well received so far:

> "This work is inspirational, I am very impressed."
>
> Regional Health in Justice Lead for Oxleas

We would like to thank HMP Portland for allowing us to meet with staff and young Black men in their care to share the resources and look forward to further developing and launching the finalised kit in 26/27.



# Champions

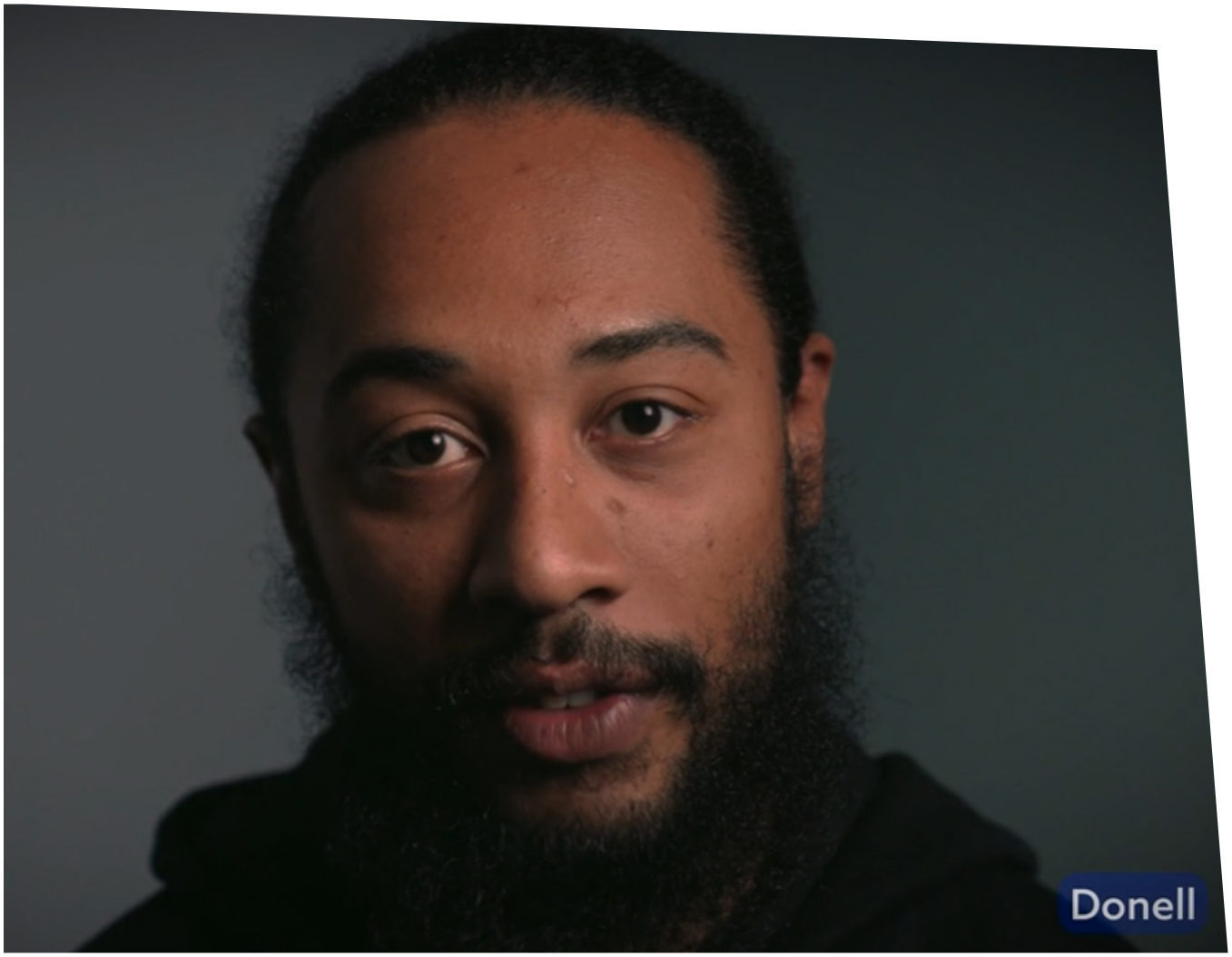
**Our Champions Group consists of 8 young people who have had coaching with Spark Inside. They meet regularly and discuss topics relating to our work, inputting their views and ideas and shaping the way we do things.**

In the past year our Champions have made incredible contributions to our work, including supporting us on recruitment panels, providing training/guest talks with our Coaches and shaping the content of our programmes.

This year, we were excited to produce a short film featuring one of our brilliant Champions, Donell, a young man who first met one of our coaches, Jeffrey, in a YOI when he was just a teenager.

Donell shares the highs and lows of his journey from prison, to homelessness, to becoming a successful business owner and father, and how coaching helped him to get there.

You can watch the film at [sparkinside.org/news/donells-story-how-coaching-unlocked-his-hero-within](sparkinside.org/news/donells-story-how-coaching-unlocked-his-hero-within)



We continue to offer growth opportunities for this fantastic team of young people, including funding training and qualifications, and offering networking and development opportunities. This year, the group welcomed Spark Inside Ambassador, author and entrepreneur **Dr. Kenny Imafidon MBE** who delivered a powerful session on purpose. We were also pleased to accompany the Champions to a showing of the Olivier Award winning play, **Punch** by Jacob Dunne, for a Christmas social.

Last but certainly not least, we were thrilled to be joined by three Champions at **The October Club Annual Dinner** at **The Savoy**. We were privileged to have Spark Inside Champion, Javel, representing us as the keynote speaker at this incredible event attended by over 400 supporters.

In his speech, he said about being a Champion:

> **"Spark Inside gave me a sense of belonging, a space to share my thoughts and ideas. A place to measure my successes against others who were equally as driven to changing their lives as myself."**




We would also like to thank **Lord Timpson OBE**, Minister of State for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending, who spoke powerfully on our behalf at The October Club event and championed our work. Funds raised from the evening will support us to establish roots in the East Midlands and South Yorkshire for the first time.




Our East Midlands Coaches after a day's delivery in HMP Ranby

# IPABs

**Our In-Prison Advisory Boards (IPABs) continue to be a key mechanism for gathering insights from young people in prison. This year we worked with a group of 9 young men in HMP Isis, and through a series of focus groups and one-to-one interviews, gained valuable insights into what characteristics are important for the "Heroes" we use in our programmes.**

The group highlighted the importance of relatability, authenticity, and showcasing people who have achieved the seemingly 'ordinary' whilst still being aspirational. Based on this feedback, in 26/27 we will work with the IPAB group in HMP Isis to co-write the stories of two new heroes, mapping them against the Hero's Journey steps and ensuring their stories engage and inspire future participants.

We look forward to updating you on this next year!

# Changing Narratives




**We continued to make the case for coaching as a valuable tool in the criminal justice system. We use our external communications, our website, social media and traditional media to spread the word about the power of coaching and to champion young people as a group who face specific challenges and have distinct needs, but who also possess unique strengths and have the greatest potential for positive change.**

This year, over **18,000** people followed us on social media and used our website. We were delighted to be interviewed for a feature in **You Can Now Magazine**, to be part of the hugely popular **Life After Prison Podcast** (watch this space!) as well as being regularly covered in the key justice sector news outlets.

Next year, we will continue to champion coaching in the justice system and redouble our efforts to change narratives, shifting the focus to young people's potential, not their past.

# WITH HUGE THANKS TO EVERY INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANISATION THAT HAS SUPPORTED US IN 2025/26!



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

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