

**Unlocked**

Leading change  
on the inside

# LEADING CHANGE ON THE INSIDE

**OUR IMPACT & STORY**

 UnlockedGrads

 unlockedgrads

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# CONTENTS

## FOREWORD

## OUR STORY

- 6 THE PROBLEM AND OUR SOLUTION
- 8 MEASURING OUR IMPACT
- 10 TACKLING DRUG ADDICTION IN PRISON
- 12 OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

## INSPIRE

- 14 RECRUITMENT
- 16 ATTRACTION
- 18 A RIGOROUS SELECTION PROCESS
- 20 RECRUITING A DIVERSE COHORT

## DEVELOP

- 22 TRAINING & PERFORMANCE
- 24 SUMMER INSTITUTE

- 26 IMPACT ON THE WINGS
- 28 FIRST NIGHT IN PRISON
- 30 IMPROVING ACCESS TO JOBS
- 32 DRIVING SYSTEMIC CHANGE

## GROW

- 34 SCALING OUR IMPACT AND REACH
- 36 WIDENING ACCESS TO OUR LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

## AMPLIFY

- 38 OUR AMBASSADOR NETWORK
- 42 WORKING ACROSS THE SECTOR



# FOREWORD

**NATASHA PORTER**  
**CEO, UNLOCKED GRADUATES**

## **WE BELIEVE THE QUALITY OF A PRISON SYSTEM CANNOT OUTPERFORM THE QUALITY OF ITS FRONTLINE PRISON OFFICERS.**

These individuals can set the culture and act as the face of justice for every prisoner. This has never been truer than during the last two years when, for most prisoners, their officer became the sole face of the outside world. One prisoner I met recently explained he could now identify every officer just from hearing their footsteps on the landings. He said that what he heard each morning defined whether it would be a bad day or a less bad day. This is the power of every prison officer.

It is disappointing that prison officers continue to be undervalued, but we are helping shift this. We see more than 20 applications for every place on Unlocked. We have placed over 600 prison officers in 37 prisons, across England and Wales.

**We reach a third of the prisoner population. These officers are making a difference.** They stay, get promoted, and take on new responsibilities. The Governors we work with want more of them.

Nevertheless, demonstrating impact on our ultimate mission of breaking cycles of reoffending is incredibly challenging. This, our second impact report, is a live update on that work. In it we highlight our progress in attracting excellent people to the prison officer role and showcase some of their extraordinary work. It is my hope that this will be useful for sharing best practice and highlighting how impactful prison officer work is.

I also wanted to acknowledge those of you who make our work possible. Our model only works from the 'inside', and our colleagues across His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) and the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) have been incredible at making sure we can deliver our mission. From Ministers, to the CEO and Permanent Secretary who have consistently supported our approach, through to Governors, officers and staff who make practicalities work: thank you.

**Prisons are, by their nature, a closed world, but often breaking cycles of reoffending comes from breaking down barriers and bringing in new ideas.** Certainly, a big part of our impact comes from being an independent organisation with a different perspective. This impact is compounded by the support of bigger networks of partners: funders, who allow us to experiment and try new ideas, corporate partners who offer pro bono support, mentoring and expertise; and a myriad of organisations from across the criminal justice sector who have embraced the opportunity to connect by speaking at our events and hosting work placements.

We could not do it without all of you, so thank you. I hope you will enjoy reading about some of the achievements that you made possible this year.

*N. Porter*

# THE PROBLEM

Just under half of those that leave prison today will be reconvicted within a year, with the country footing a bill of over £18 billion for ex-prisoner reoffending. The crimes committed by people reoffending profoundly impact others. They damage the lives of victims and can make whole communities feel less safe. When people reoffend this can also have a negative impact on friends and family, especially on dependent children if they return to custody.

But solving reoffending is complex and challenging. There is no quick fix. Some of the most vulnerable groups in society are disproportionately represented in prisons, and many have been failed at various points in their lives. A quarter of male prisoners were taken into care in childhood. **Over half (57 per cent) of people entering prison have literacy skills below what we expect from an 11-year-old.** Prisoners and ex-prisoners alike have a disproportionately high risk of drug addiction, self-harm, mental illness, homelessness, and suicide.

“A prison officer is integral to anyone’s prison experience. If you ask anyone who’s served time or is serving time, they’ll tell you that a good officer can make all the difference. A bad officer can also make all the difference.”

FEMI,  
Ex-prisoner

“When officers use their authority well – that is, legitimately and carefully, every outcome is improved: suicide, disorder, violence, political charge, and even prisoners’ futures.”

PROFESSOR ALISON LIEBLING,  
University of Cambridge

# OUR SOLUTION

We believe that the way you break cycles of reoffending is through prison officers. **Prison officers are the only professionals who can build a relationship with every prisoner** – including the most vulnerable and challenging. They set the culture on the landings and have the power to create a safe and secure environment focused on rehabilitation.

This is based on evidence. Academics have shown that high-performing prison officers lead to better outcomes in prison and reductions in reoffending post-release too.

Officers can also play an essential role in supporting education, with Unlocked Graduates emerging as a recommendation from the Coates Review of Prison Education. Our founder, Natasha Porter, was an advisor on this report, and came to believe that, even if it were possible to fix all the problems found in prison classrooms, it could still not make a difference to the most vulnerable and difficult prisoners. Often, **the only professional who reaches these prisoners is the prison officer**, and if they make it through the series of locked doors to spend time with a teacher, it is because a prison officer has encouraged them to attend education.

# MEASURING OUR IMPACT

This report offers a snapshot of our progress, seeking to set out early impact and tell our story.

We are still a relatively young organisation. **Our ultimate goal is to measurably reduce reoffending rates;** however, this is a long-term endeavour. We feel strongly that we need to track our performance and share data that will allow our prisons, partners and participants to hold us to account.

We therefore rigorously collect data on recruitment, diversity and inclusion, participant performance on the programme, support, and retention. We also regularly ask our partner prisons about our participants' performance.

The picture in prisons over the last five years has been complex, so it is hard to make any definitive claims about our officers' impact on the system.



**GRACE** took on the role of facilitating sessions for a support group for young Black prisoners with a history of trauma. Named 'Game Changers', the support group gave prisoners the opportunity to voice their thoughts and feelings, as well as the chance to seek practical and financial advice for their release from prison. The whole team of Game Changers' facilitators were awarded a 'Prison Officer of the Year Award' for their outstanding work in making a real difference to prisoners' lives. Prisoner feedback was very positive, with one of the prisoners writing: "Grace, we need more prison officers like you. Keep up the good work!"

“The Unlocked officers were just very consistent and that made a real difference. That kind of a relationship with a prison officer really does make you change your ways.

**TYREASE,**  
Ex-prisoner

**However, we are committed to seeking ways to analyse our effect on prisoners and prisons.**

For example, we have analysed the changes in annual MOJ prison performance ratings data from June 2020 to the latest publication in July 2022. We focused on five measures that were consistent across both data sets - prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, prisoner-on-staff assaults, self-harm incidents, accommodation on the first night following release and employment at six weeks following release. These measures are all factors that we know impact on the likelihood of a person reoffending.

Our initial analysis has shown that in the prisons where Unlocked Graduates' participants have been working in the last two years, there have been constructive movements across all five of these measures. Whilst these are early days and the data has several important limitations, not least that our officers on average make up less than 10 per cent of the workforce, it is encouraging to see that our officers are working with their colleagues to drive change in prisoners' lives. We will continue to monitor these trends going forward to understand further changes that can be detected in publicly collected data.

# TACKLING DRUG ADDICTION IN PRISON

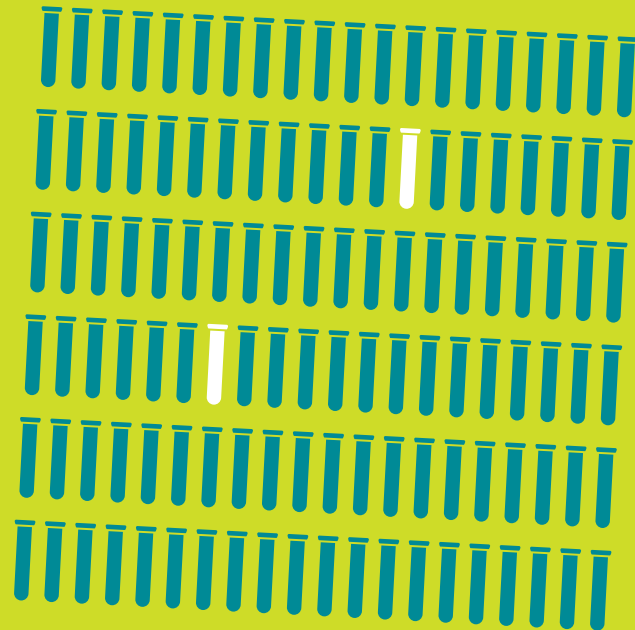
**The new enhanced wing at HMP Pentonville is a bold attempt at implementing the latest best practice when it comes to rehabilitation for habitual drug users in prison.**

When the No 1 Governor conceived the idea, several of the Unlocked participants approached the prison's Drug Strategy Lead to ask to be involved, looking for an opportunity to be part of this project to address addiction in HMP Pentonville.

Partnering with the charity Phoenix Futures, the intervention includes

a six-week intensive course similar to the early stages of a 12-step programme supporting prisoners to deal with drug issues.

The wing offers enhanced opportunities for those in recovery and seeking to detox. Those who join this wing have to show a high degree of commitment to their



**Last month, just two drug tests out of 120 were failed. This is a huge shift. In Pentonville, it is not unusual for one in every six random drug tests to come back positive.**

drug rehabilitation. Without this additional support they can be some of the most disruptive and vulnerable prisoners in the prison. They volunteer for regular additional drug tests, and the wing offers increased incentives and freedoms not afforded on other wings. Critically, they work hard to increase purposeful activity as boredom amongst prisoners is considered a key trigger for drug use.

Unlocked participants Jenny and Jace have both worked on the wing for over a year. They co-founded the wing and have been leaders in driving improvements, such as the decoration of the wing by prisoners and the introduction of new purposeful activities. Critically, they are also both writing their Master's research on key learnings from the project to share best practices across the system.

Since the wing opened in June 2020, it has been able to support roughly 60 prisoners at a time, with only 10 prisoners leaving the wing due to an infraction over the last 15 months.

Last month, just two drug tests out of 120 were failed. This is a huge shift. In Pentonville, it is not unusual for one in every six random drug tests to come back positive. Even nationally, one in 10 are usually positive. Critically, there have been no incidents of violence or self-harm in the last three months.

In July 2022, just over two years since the wing in HMP Pentonville opened, the Government announced a £120 million commitment to rollout specialised wings just like this one across England and Wales.



**JACE** could not understand why the wing was so quiet when he came on his shift earlier this year. It turns out the chess club he had founded had really taken off and the prisoners were concentrating on the latest match!

# OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

We recruit, train and challenge outstanding individuals to lead prisoner rehabilitation with the aim of creating high-performing leaders who will break the cycles of reoffending in prisons and throughout society.

We track a series of intermediate outcomes to determine the effectiveness with which we inspire graduates to become prison officers, develop them into leaders, grow to a critical mass and amplify their impact and ability to drive systemic change, visualised in our Theory of Change.

This work sits alongside our broader ambition to track and evaluate the direct and indirect impact our officers have on reducing reoffending. The evidence for such long-term measures will take some time to gather; however, we believe there are clear indicators of success that should quickly emerge from each stage of our operations.



When **GEORGIA** publicly challenged a prisoner for transphobic insults, she did not think anyone had particularly noticed. But the next day, a prisoner completely uninvolved in the incident asked her to help him arrange a visit with his boyfriend – it was the first time he had disclosed to anyone in prison that he was gay, but he felt safe to do so after hearing Georgia stand up against transphobia the day before.

## INSPIRE

**brilliant graduates to become prison officers through the Unlocked programme**

- ▶ High demand and competition for places
- ▶ High calibre, diverse applicants
- ▶ Improved appeal of Unlocked among graduates and those who influence them

## DEVELOP

**influential individuals to deliver change from the frontline of prisons**

- ▶ Unlocked officers retain high engagement throughout
- ▶ Training enables officers to be confident and competent, and therefore have more impact
- ▶ New prison officer-led ideas have a positive impact

## GROW

**to a critical mass where we can have the most impact across the system**

- ▶ Unlocked numbers grow, based on Governor demand
- ▶ The Unlocked model is considered as best practice
- ▶ The model is adopted across the system to help all prison officers

## AMPLIFY

**impact through Ambassadors, breaking cycles of reoffending together**

- ▶ A fast growing, engaged Ambassador network
- ▶ Ambassadors committed to maximise impact and actively work towards the mission
- ▶ Develop proof points that drive system reform



# RECRUITMENT

Our recruitment strategy is designed to persuade high calibre applicants, particularly those who would not otherwise consider a job in the prison service, that this is the role for them.

Our focus on graduates is, in part, because they are under-represented in the prison service, and we believe that their addition will diversify the problem-solving skills needed on the frontline. It also helps to raise the status of the prison officer role by actively targeting an ambitious group of jobseekers that society views as our 'best and brightest'.

We drew extensively on the insights from other independent, public sector graduate schemes who have demonstrated what makes frontline public sector roles appealing to the graduate workforce. It was their experience that led us to shaping a two-year programme. Similarly, including a high-status qualification and building a cohort model were seen as critical by these successful graduate schemes.

We are changing graduates' perceptions around working in the prison service. Only three per cent of recent finalists say they would positively consider a career in the

“ Before I came across Unlocked Graduates, I had never thought about working in a prison, but the programme was an incredibly rewarding experience.

GEORGI,  
Unlocked Ambassador

## DEMAND IS HIGH AND GROWING



We have received over 10,000 applications for our programme – steadily rising to over 20 applications for every place in the last two years.

prison service – however, **after reviewing the Unlocked programme and opportunities, nearly half (47 per cent) of graduates changed their mind**, saying they found the idea of working as a prison officer more appealing.

Our programme is highly competitive, with the number of applications to the programme increasing year on year; our approach is effectively attracting many top graduates, enabling us to select excellent participants.

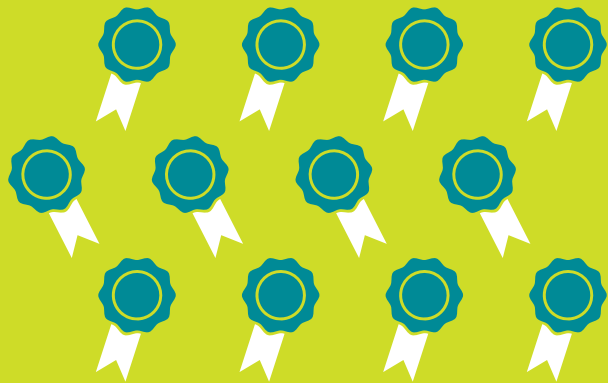
**We are reaching people who would not otherwise consider entering the service:** most participants on our programme had not considered being a prison officer before discovering Unlocked. When asked, just two per cent of our latest cohort cited 'always wanting to be a prison officer' as the main reason for joining the programme.



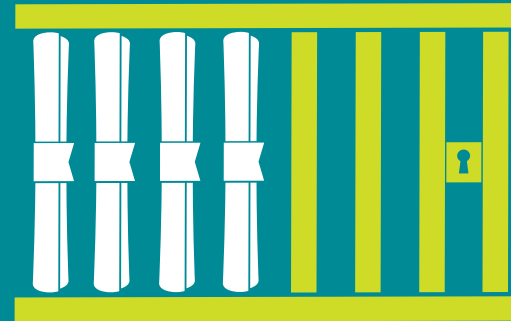
# ATTRACTION

Our award-winning recruitment campaigns have raised the profile of the prison officer role and reached candidates who would otherwise never have considered a career in the prison service. In line with other graduate schemes, our programme is two years long and encourages participants to enter a sector without committing to a life-long career.

**Shaped to match the priorities of ambitious graduates, four out of five (81 per cent) of our newest recruits cited the Unlocked mission as a reason for applying to the programme.** Professional development opportunities, such as building leadership skills and the chance to have genuine responsibility from day one, were other key motivating factors.



**We have won 12 industry awards for our recruitment campaigns.** This year, our Instagram won the High Fliers award, and TikTok highlighted our content as an example of best practice in reaching their audience effectively.



**Half of top university students think that Unlocked Graduates makes a career in the prison service more appealing.**

## WE'RE RAISING THE APPEAL OF THE PRISON OFFICER ROLE



**Our participants attended 86 different universities.** Over half were from the highly selective Russell Group of universities.

In the last six years, over 220 Oxbridge graduates applied to the scheme, and we accepted 24 onto the programme.

# A RIGOROUS SELECTION PROCESS

Our selection process was developed to be rigorous, fair and successful at attracting and selecting high-quality, and diverse cohorts of candidates with strong potential to be excellent prison officers.

Building on best practice from other graduate recruitment schemes and our consultation with a wide range of stakeholders in the prison service, we developed our core attributes for recruitment: a sense of possibility, motivation, resilience, self-awareness, leadership, decision-making and relationship building.

## THE APPLICATION PROCESS



“As a person with lived experience, I believe it is crucial to have such insight at the heart of recruiting prison officers. We have seen first-hand and experienced both negative and positive aspects of what forms the characteristics and skills of a good or bad prison officer. Having spent over two years as an assessor with Unlocked, I have seen how my input is valued, taken seriously and forms a part of creating a decision that is based on a broad perspective. A decision that not only draws on my professional experience but also my personal understanding of the prison and justice systems.

**KUDA,**  
Ex-prisoner

# RECRUITING A DIVERSE COHORT

It is vital that the prison workforce is representative of the people it works with. This is true of all under-represented groups and protected characteristics. We know that over a quarter (27 per cent) of the prison population are from an ethnic minority group, compared to 14 per cent of the general population. While seven per cent of prisoners identify as homosexual, bisexual or other sexual orientations compared with three per cent nationally.

Informed by the workforce challenges identified in the Lammy Review, we have made recruiting a diverse cohort a priority from our first year. In fact, the Review mentions our work as an example of best practice.

Since then, we have continued to **make diverse recruitment a priority**, being transparent with applicants about our wish to attract a diverse cohort and actively seeking to engage with the challenging issues surrounding diversity and inclusion.

We regularly gather insights and opinions from participants on these issues through our Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Board and weave these throughout our recruitment campaign. We have also built in more explicit training and support through the programme so participants coming from minority groups receive targeted support for some of the challenges and nuances they may face in the prison officer role.

## WE'RE DIVERSIFYING THE PRISON WORKFORCE



Our proportion of programme joiners from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds is **around one in five**, and trending upwards in the last two years. The existing proportion of ethnic minority public sector prison staff is currently less than one in ten.



**Unlocked participants studied in 91 different subject areas,** including Biochemistry, Physics and Astronomy, Engineering, Computer Science, Veterinary Bioscience, Biomedical Sciences, Classics and Ancient History.

# TRAINING & PERFORMANCE

We believe that the right training and support can radically accelerate the time it takes for a frontline workforce to make a difference. Weaving practical and theoretical learning, we support and develop outstanding individuals who excel in their roles, take on additional responsibilities, and influence best practice on and off the landings. **We have developed a model that other more established programmes in this country are already copying.**

## YEAR ONE



## YEAR TWO



We are proud of the Unlocked curriculum. It is carefully designed to provide participants with the deep domain expertise required to be an effective prison officer. It is informed by Scandinavian models of prison officer training and draws on best practice from a range of other sectors including teaching, social work and policing. Our training offer sits across two years in recognition of the time it takes to refine expert practice. We also require prior academic attainment, so training on underpinning theories can be pitched at a high level and we can build in deep critical analysis and significant independent research.

Our approach draws on participants' professional experiences within a developmental coaching framework, including lectures and events. We know that being a highly effective prison officer is not a skill which can ever be perfected, and we seek to embed a culture of continuous learning and development in all participants.

Practice-based learning, and in particular the work of Doug Lemov in education, underpins our pedagogy for prison officer skills. We have shared these approaches with other training organisations and the wider prison sector, and elements have already been adopted by them.

## MENTORING

We second experienced, mission-aligned prison officers to work as mentors in the programme, training them to provide both intensive support and challenge to participants. The role increases recognition of those who are outstanding at the craft of being a prison officer and builds long-term capacity for the prison service.

## MASTER'S DEGREE

Our officers complete a two-year master's degree that reflects the complexities of the prison officer role, broadens their expertise by focusing on the theory behind the practice and offers an academic angle to eliminating cycles of reoffending. Our academic partners have extensive experience in delivering undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.

# SUMMER INSTITUTE

An initial intensive residential course compresses all standard prison officer training into six weeks. Extensive pre-reading as well as longer days and weeks means more hours of learning than in the standard course.

Practitioner skills are the focus of Summer Institute. As well as the procedures and skills necessary to be an officer, there is a strong emphasis on values, de-escalation and evidence-based therapeutic techniques – ensuring our participants are day-one-ready to start on the landings.

In line with our philosophy of ongoing learning, practitioner skills are also developed throughout the programme. Participants receive 30 half-days of in-prison training which focuses on specialised aspects of the prison officer role. The focus on practitioner skills is central to the programme's impact. Our participants continue to develop over the two years, meaning their skills are always up to date, relevant and in line with best practice.

**Participants are developed into exceptional prison officers who make a real difference to prisoners' choices, through carefully crafted skills in resilience, problem solving and communication.**



**Over half (53 per cent) of officers currently on the programme have been promoted or taken on additional responsibilities already.**

These responsibilities include hostage negotiation, mental health training and new roles, such as foreign national officers, offender management officers, pregnancy and mother-baby liaison officers and equality officers.

“ It was amazing – there were originally no products on the canteen sheets for Black people. Straight away he just got it done. I'd say we needed a specific type of hairbrush, it appeared on the sheet the next week. I'd say a type of food and there it was the next week. He really took his job seriously.

**GODFREY,**  
Ex-prisoner

# IMPACT ON THE WINGS

We recently undertook a benchmarking exercise with a sample of 14 of our partner prisons, with representation from prisons from the north, Midlands, Greater London and the south. We were looking to compare the retention of Band 3 officers in the 2021/22 year to understand how well the retention of our Unlocked officers compared to those that entered the service via the standard route.

“ I think Unlocked is starting to influence how we too recruit and support. It is also attracting some brilliant people into the prison service as officers in other roles

PRISON GOVERNOR

Almost half (42 per cent) of Ambassadors who are still working in prisons are in middle or senior leadership positions.



The analysis showed that the retention of Unlocked participants is currently **13 per cent higher** during our two-year programme compared to those entering via the standard route. This is despite increasing numbers of participants being actively approached for other roles during their time on the programme.

Of all the Governors we recently surveyed, **100 per cent would recommend Unlocked Graduates to other prisons**, while all that responded thought that Unlocked Graduates were contributing positively to the prison service. Nearly 75 per cent of Governors thought that the training Unlocked gives to participants was 'very good', with the remainder rating it as 'good'.

# FIRST NIGHT IN PRISON

Unlocked participant Max works on the induction wing of a high security prison. This means he sees every new prisoner that enters the establishment. He was concerned that those in their first weeks in prison were potentially at much higher risk of suicide or self-harm.

He identified several possible ways to improve processes and the experience for prisoners to ensure greater safety for everyone. He presented his ideas to his manager and Governor and was encouraged to take them forward.

## Most notably:

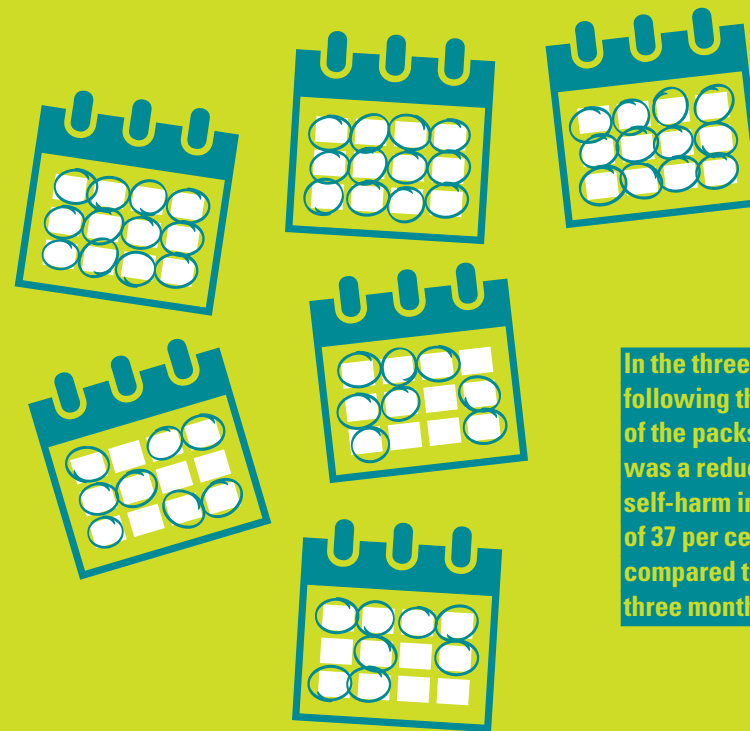
- He designed an induction booklet, which contain all the initial briefing materials, and then collaborated with other staff to translate them so that it could be more easily accessed by foreign nationals who make up a high proportion of prisoners in this jail.
- He created distraction packs (with stress balls, experience cards, workout guides, etc.) as a way to support anxious prisoners and start an open conversation about their wellbeing, which were funded via the Unlocked Innovation Acceleration Programme.
- He noticed that Muslim prisoners wanted to meaningfully celebrate Eid but were not sure how to do it. He secured funding to run an Eid celebration for all prisoners and staff to increase awareness

and understanding of the diverse groups in the prison.

- He is now in the process of setting-up a barbering workshop. He is commissioning a course that focuses on cutting hair for people of all different ethnicities – a priority in this establishment and not something most barbering courses cover.

We know this work is making a difference. Not only has Max been promoted to support new officers coming into his prison, but his translated induction booklet was mentioned as one of five notable positive practices in the prison's latest HMIP report.

Max launched the distraction packs on his wing in July 2021. In the three months following the launch of the packs, there was a reduction in self-harm incidents of 37 per cent when compared to the prior 3-month period. This was compared to a 7 per cent drop in self-harm incidents across the wider prison and reflects how Max's work alongside colleagues is having a positive impact on the frontline.



In the three months following the launch of the packs, there was a reduction in self-harm incidents of 37 per cent when compared to the prior three month period.



**JAKUB** recently ran a successful campaign to motivate prisoners to focus on their physical and mental wellbeing at his prison. He set up a running challenge with the aim of completing 120 marathons across the whole prison. He ended up raising almost £500. It boosted morale among prisoners during an extremely difficult time and brought attention to some of the mental health issues affecting the men on the landings.



# IMPROVING ACCESS TO JOBS

**Lili had just completed her time on the Unlocked programme when the Accelerator Prisons pilot project launched. It aimed to deliver targeted interventions to reduce reoffending.**

Lili had already been promoted during her two years on the Unlocked programme and saw this as a way to stay on the frontline, working with prisoners while building links with employers and the local community.

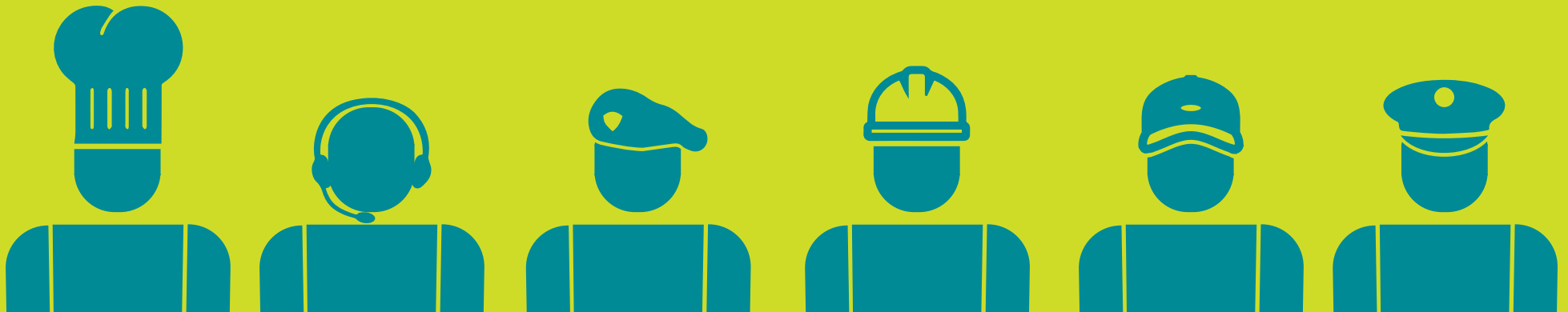
Through her work, 280 ex-prisoners have received support from the employment service since it began. Just under 200 (194) were released directly from HMP Wandsworth, and 75 (39 per cent) of them received a job offer.



**ESME** became aware of prisoners having difficulties filling out essential paper applications due to not being able to read or write. The Shannon Trust work in Esme's establishment to improve literacy in prisons, and Esme wanted to help to raise their profile and outreach in the prison. She set up Shannon Trust representatives across the prison who could help their fellow prisoners with reading and writing.

This compares to a national average of just 16 per cent of prison leavers being in employment six weeks after leaving prison and has coincided with a positive shift in Wandsworth's employment data over the last 2 years.

**Just under 200 prisoners were released from HMP Wandsworth, and 75 (39 per cent) of them received a job offer.**



# DRIVING SYSTEMIC CHANGE

Our participants are uniquely positioned to identify solutions to problems they face on the frontline. The Innovation Acceleration Programme (IAP) is designed to support and amplify participant impact by funding small-scale, evidence driven innovation projects in their prisons. To receive funding, participants must demonstrate close working with non-Unlocked prison officers to develop a solution with senior level buy-in which has the potential to be sustainable long-term.

**These projects provide excellent opportunities to develop skills while bringing new ideas into the prison service.**

Coached in change management techniques by our corporate partner PwC, Unlocked officers are encouraged to design and deliver impactful projects including (but not limited to) new programmes or equipment for prisoners, training and work with external organisations or funding for in-prison events.

We believe rehabilitative prisons need to be underpinned by evidence. As part of their Master's degree, participants undertake a research project based on a problem, question or an initiative that they co-identify with the prison Governor. These are focused on making targeted, tangible recommendations either to policy-makers or operational prison staff. **Over 300 papers and dissertations have now been written by Unlocked participants.** A selection of specialist 'policy papers' have been shared with HMPPS and MOJ policy-makers over the years and from 2023, we hope to release a selection of these papers publicly to better share ideas.

We see this as a critical way to start driving system-level change from the frontline and demonstrate the importance of prison



**To date, we have supported 47 small and 32 large projects.** Through this we have invested over £65,000 in frontline prison innovation and reached almost 15,000 prisoners.

officer perspective. The outcomes of the research projects and policy papers are to uncover useful solutions for the prison service by instilling a data-driven, research-informed approach.

This year topics include the new drug-free wing in Pentonville, institutional cultures around use of force, the impact of staff wellbeing on productivity, retention and rehabilitative cultures, promoting family ties and preparing people with learning disabilities for release. In each case, the papers conclude with substantive recommendations for their prison, practitioners or policy-makers.

# SCALING OUR IMPACT AND REACH

We have grown year on year, expanding to allow for the formation of clusters critical for our mentoring model across London and the South East, the North West, Yorkshire and Humberside, the Midlands and Wales.

**We focus on some of the most challenging prisons and institutions where we know the prison officer on the landings can make a big difference.**

We challenge officers to go above and beyond from day one. We place participants in prisons that need us the most with some of the most demanding working environments. They have worked across the men's estate, including high security and foreign national prisons, women's prisons and prisons holding children.



NIYI wanted to find a positive way to address racism in prison and create an environment where more open conversations around race could take place. He created 'Together against racism' ribbons for officers to wear on their epaulettes. An eye-catching way to raise awareness, they have now been shared across all prisons in London.



## WE'RE REACHING PRISONERS

We have placed **over 600 prison officers in 37 establishments** in England and Wales. This is more than one in three public prisons in England and a third of the prisoner population.

Year of first placement: ● 2017 ● 2018 ● 2019 ● 2020 ● 2021 ● 2022

# WIDENING ACCESS TO OUR LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

We recruit our Mentoring Prison Officers by seconding existing brilliant prison officers from across HMPPS. Not only do they benefit from their own dedicated training programme in coaching and mentoring but they work across multiple prisons within a network of mentors, building wider knowledge and experience of different prisons in the system.

After two years, they return to their HMPPS employment. Typically, their period as an Unlocked MPO reflects an opportunity to be promoted as they return with substantial new skills and professional experience. Many have moved into training and development roles as a result of their time with Unlocked.

Tony was an Unlocked MPO between 2018 and 2020. He took what he learned while on Unlocked – particularly around practice-based learning and coaching as well as his own research – to develop a new induction programme at his home institution, HMP Belmarsh. New recruits receive additional support over their first 18 months on the job including one-to-one mentoring, access to a support group chat and ongoing supervision of their practice. **Retention of the current group of new recruits that Tony supports is at more than 90 per cent in their first year** – significantly higher than the estimated national averages for new recruits.

**The Unlocked training approach has also influenced wider prison officer training.** Initial training has now moved from just an intensive initial programme to a one-year apprenticeship to recognise the need for longer-term development and the usefulness of our coaching model. This has created a new opportunity for the two programmes to share ideas and approaches.

“ I have to say I was a bit sceptical of Unlocked. I was not convinced graduates would bring any special skills and was concerned their training programme meant that the Unlocked officers would sometimes have to be off the wing when we needed them. But a number of years since I first had a group of Unlocked officers join, I am a complete convert. These officers bring a different perspective and genuinely challenge me (in a good way) with their new ideas and follow through. I’m now lobbying to get more each year.

**JENNY LOUIS,**  
No 1 Governor, HMP Belmarsh

# OUR AMBASSADOR NETWORK

Ambassadors are key to our mission of developing outstanding leaders to break cycles of reoffending in prison and throughout society. **Our aim is to create a network of Ambassadors with exceptional leadership skills** using their frontline experience to impact systemic changes in prisons, the wider criminal justice system and beyond.

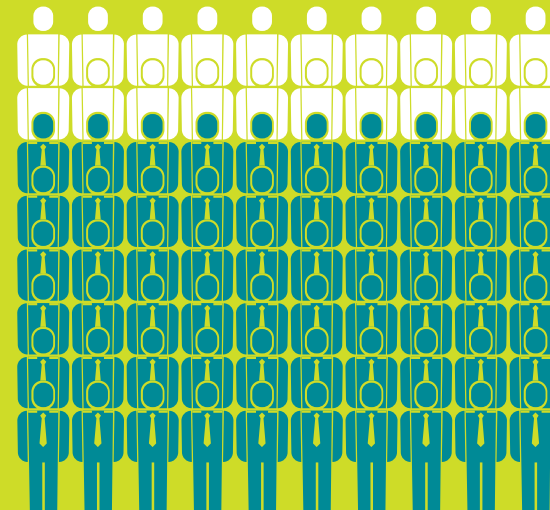
Our goal is to have a network of Ambassadors actively working towards the mission and having ongoing impact on breaking cycles of reoffending and reforming our prison system. Supported by a range of philanthropic funders, we are well on our way to achieving this target. We now have almost 300 Ambassadors working across the criminal justice sector – the majority remain within HMPPS, and nearly 90 per cent still work towards the mission in their primary role.



**ZAC** noticed that foreign national prisoners on his wing were more likely to suffer with their mental health, family connections and communication issues. He set up a forum as a way of listening to and working with the foreign national prisoners and their unique struggles. Each month, the forums bring together five foreign national prisoners to raise issues with Governors and the immigration team. Actions are published on the wing, and the prisoners have their voices heard through direct contact with the prison management.



The majority of Ambassadors remain within HMPPS and nearly 90 per cent still work towards the mission in their primary role. We now have almost 300 Ambassadors working across the criminal justice sector.



Around 75 per cent stayed on the frontline beyond their two years, and the majority stayed in criminal justice, taking on roles in organisations including probation, policy and justice charities.

# STAYING FRONTLINE AND SPREADING INSIGHT ACROSS THE SYSTEM



**SABRINA PARKINS** was part of the first cohort of Unlocked Graduates. A highlight of her time on the programme was when she delivered a thought-provoking speech at 10 Downing Street at the end of her two years on the programme. Sabrina was promoted in the prison service and is currently working as a Security Governor at HMP Brixton.



**CHRIS MOSLEY-FERRO** is working in a specialist prison-based role as part of the Reducing Re-Offending Accelerator Project as Head of Education, Skills and Work since finishing the Unlocked programme. He works to provide strategic oversight to support the prison to become a place of meaningful work, leading on education, skills and work within the prison.



**SUMAYYAH HASSAM** worked as the Assistant Private Secretary to the Minister for Prisons who was able to use her perspective on the frontline and bring fresh insights into Whitehall. She now works as a Prison Inspector.



**TAMARA HÖFER** has recently been awarded €15k for her project 'Richtungswechsel' by an Austrian Incubator Programme for start-ups working to fight educational inequality. 'Richtungswechsel' will support graduates working as prison officers in Austria and is inspired and supported by Unlocked Graduates.



**FRAN HALL** joined KPMG after being a prison officer for two years. Not only is she working on justice-related projects but she supports KPMG's existing relationship with Key4Life, providing employability workshops and mentoring in prisons and for prison leavers.



## WORKING ACROSS THE SECTOR

Unlocked Ambassadors continue to contribute to the Unlocked Graduates' mission to break cycles of reoffending. They are using the exceptional leadership skills and frontline experience gained from their time on the programme to impact systemic changes in prisons, and the wider criminal justice system.

This is highlighted in the success of projects and programmes which have involved our Ambassadors' insights and support across the criminal justice sector.

The huge success of the StandOut programme in HMP Pentonville, where Unlocked Ambassador John has led StandOut, has seen 95 per cent of ex-prisoners continue to access StandOut support post-release.

Penny Parker, the CEO and Founder of StandOut states that "This is directly because of the way the coaches work. They build relationships and create trust, supporting participants to develop a holistic life plan rather than just solely focusing on getting into employment. Our Unlocked Ambassadors are brilliant members of our team, helping empower

participants to transform their own lives, realise their potential and escape the justice system for good." Penny has overseen the hiring of three Unlocked Ambassadors to work as StandOut coaches.

Peter Dawson, Director of the Prison Reform Trust, spoke on the ongoing impact of Unlocked Ambassadors across the criminal justice sector stating that "Unlocked is seeding the whole system with good people and fresh thinking... it is a tremendous force for good."

This is exemplified by the 75 per cent of Ambassadors who have stayed on the frontline beyond their two years, and the majority who have left stay in criminal justice, taking on roles in policy and in organisations such as Switchback, Bounce Back, StandOut, the Criminal Justice Alliance and the Prison Education Trust.



StandOut has seen 95 per cent of ex-prisoners continue to access their support post-release from HMP Pentonville, where an Unlocked Ambassador leads their work.



**ANDREW** wanted to raise awareness of the difficulties faced when navigating the prison environment for those with autism and similar disabilities. He successfully delivered a sensory-focused presentation to staff and prisoners. He created the presentation content, activities and arranged for officers to attend, so that they could learn about what they can do as prison staff to support prisoners with disabilities.



“ The most important person in any prisoner’s life is not the minister of justice, not the commissioner of the prisons, not even the head of prison, but the warder in one’s section.

NELSON MANDELA