

Spark2Life

3 Year Strategy

2025 – 2028



Spark²Life

Prevent Harm • Promote Life



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Letter from our CEO

I am proud to share with you Spark2Life's Strategy for 2025–2028, a bold and exciting roadmap for the next chapter in our journey to empower young people and communities affected by injustice. This strategy is a direct result of the invaluable input from our staff, service users, and partners who have guided and shaped our vision for the future.

At the heart of Spark2Life is a deep commitment to preventing harm and promoting life. Our mission remains clear: to empower young people, particularly those at risk of offending, by equipping them with the tools and support to make positive life choices. As a community-inspired, black-led initiative, we are dedicated to creating lasting, meaningful change—one young person at a time.

Our strategy is built on three core aims:

1. Increasing the positive impact we have on young people and communities by expanding our reach, enhancing partnerships, and creating sustainable, holistic support services.
2. Influencing policy and practice to break down barriers and ensure that solutions are driven by the needs of those we serve. By elevating the voices of young people and using evidence-driven advocacy, we will work to dismantle systemic obstacles and promote equity.
3. Building a sustainable future for Spark2Life, ensuring that we have the financial resilience, strong governance, and inclusive culture to continue delivering impactful work for years to come.

This strategy is not just a plan, but a commitment to investing in our future: investing in our foundations, our people, and our ability to adapt and grow. Over the next few years, we will focus on getting the essentials right, ensuring that our services are more effective, and using our successes as a platform to create new opportunities for growth.

We are excited about the journey ahead and look forward to working with you—our partners, supporters, and communities—towards a brighter, safer, and more just future.

Thank you for your continued support and belief in our work.

Sincerely,

Dez Brown
CEO, Spark2Life



*“If it wasn’t for you I would
still be on the roads
selling drugs.”*

- young person who engaged with our services



Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to shape this strategy – our staff, our service users and our partners. The focus you see here is a direct result of what you told us.

All young people deserve to feel
safe, nurtured and empowered.

Too many young people in the UK grow up without access to the care, safety, or opportunity they deserve. Poverty, school exclusion, exposure to trauma, and community violence have become daily realities for thousands of children. Last year alone, over 13,000 children were cautioned or sentenced, many before they've had the chance to live full, free lives. Knife crime, gang involvement, and exploitation are not isolated problems; they're symptoms of deeper social failings.

But it doesn't have to be this way.



At Spark2Life, we work to reduce the risk of children and young adults entering cycles of offending.

We exist to **Prevent Harm & Promote Life.**

We empower people to overcome adversity and thrive through holistic, therapeutic support that centres wellbeing and resilience. And we use our platform and partnerships to advocate for equitable systems—systems that listen, respond, and offer hope.

We are a Black-led organisation rooted in the communities we serve. Our approach is relational, culturally competent, and grounded in lived experience. Many of our team members, including our Founder and CEO, have personal experience of the criminal justice system and bring unique insight, empathy, and credibility to their work with young people and families.



We are trusted by those we support because:

- We meet people where they are. Whether in schools, on the streets, in prisons, or online, we offer non-judgmental support that builds trust and connection.
- We stay for the long journey. Healing and change take time. Our flexible, person-centred approach means we walk alongside young people at every step.
- We challenge systems, not just symptoms. We advocate for structural change to ensure that children and young adults—especially from Black and marginalised communities—are treated with fairness, dignity, and care.

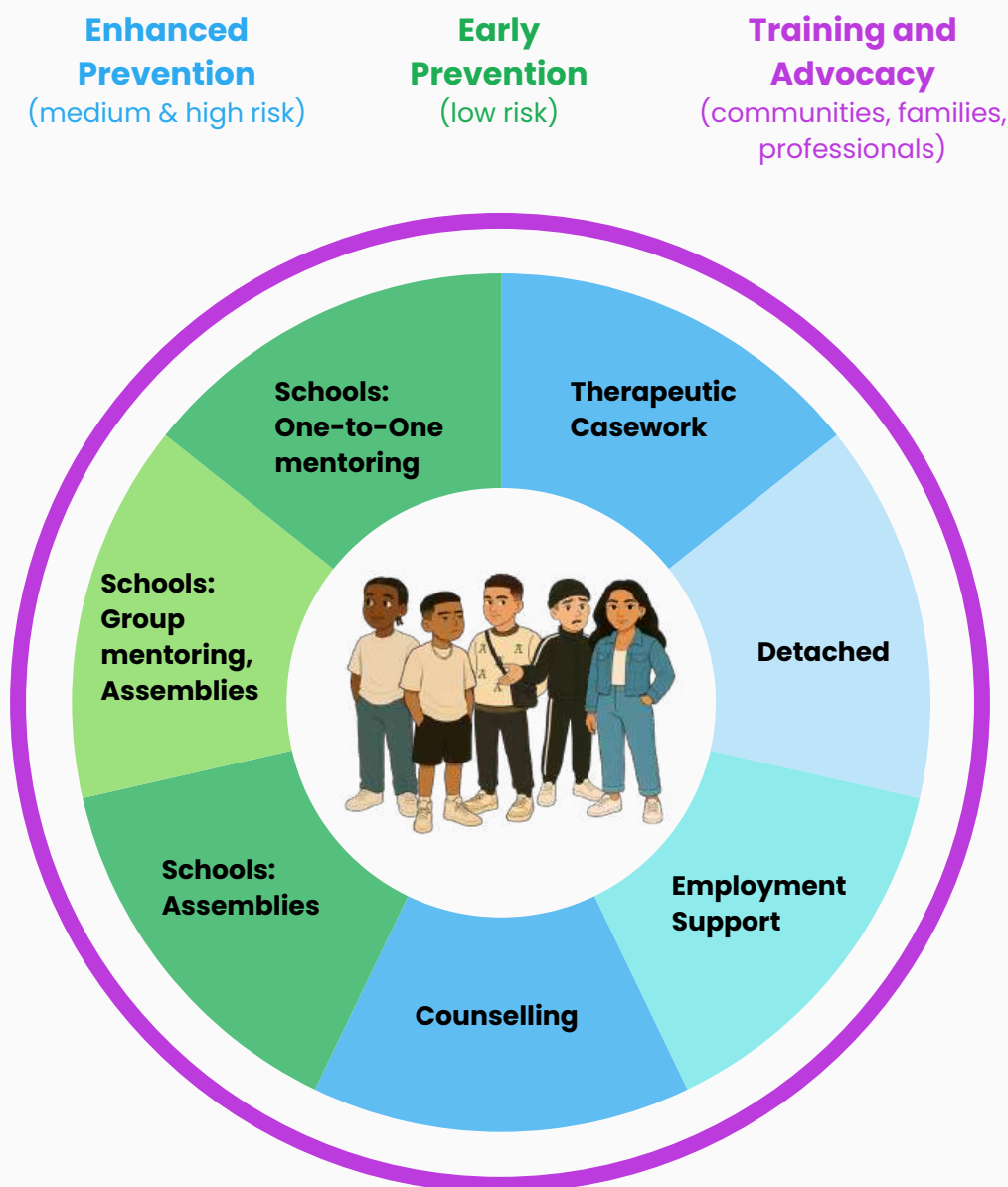
Our mission is clear: prevention, empowerment, and justice.

This strategy sets out our priorities for the next three years as we work to create safer communities and brighter futures—for young people and for everyone around them.



Our model of Prevention

At Spark2Life, our approach to prevention is responsive to the varying levels of risk that young people face. We work to prevent harm, violence, and criminal exploitation at critical transition points in young people's lives: from their time in school and pupil referral units, through to potential involvement in the criminal justice system. Our Model of Prevention is delivered directly to young people through two interrelated strands: Early Prevention and Enhanced Prevention. Beyond our direct interventions, we work systemically with their parents, professionals and communities by training, empowering and advocating on young people's behalf.



Early Prevention

Reaching Young People Before the Risk Escalates (Low Risk)

Our Early Prevention programmes support children and young people aged 11 to 17 who are at risk of exclusion from school or early involvement in crime. We work across London, Essex, and Kent in both mainstream schools and Pupil Referral Units, helping young people stay engaged in learning and build confidence in themselves.

We offer **group mentoring**, which creates a structured space for guided conversations, peer learning, and shared reflection. Young people are supported to explore topics such as identity, self-worth, communication, and emotional regulation in a safe and respectful environment.

Our **one-to-one school mentoring** offers more focused support for pupils who are struggling with behaviour, emotional wellbeing, or personal development. Mentors meet regularly with each young person and work closely with schools to ensure sessions are responsive and relational.

For young people who need further emotional support, we offer access to our in-house **counselling** service alongside mentoring.

All young people we support through schools, have access to our **Employment support**, helping them find employment, training and further education opportunities.



Enhanced Prevention

Supporting Young People at Higher Risk

Our Enhanced Prevention programmes support young people aged 11 to 30 who are involved in, or at serious risk of becoming involved in, the criminal justice system. These young people often face multiple challenges including exploitation, exclusion, trauma, and long-term disengagement. We offer consistent, relationship-based support that is rooted in trust, cultural competency, and lived experience. All strands of this work are designed to meet young people where they are and support them to move forward with confidence and stability.

Therapeutic Mentoring

Therapeutic Mentoring is our flagship programme within Enhanced Prevention. It offers a non-clinical, person-centred intervention for young people who are at different points in their journey through the justice system. This includes those at risk of arrest or exclusion, as well as those with experience of court proceedings, custody, or probation. The focus is on building a trusted, stable relationship over time with a mentor who listens, challenges, and supports without judgement.

Unlike statutory or clinical services, this programme is informal and rooted in lived experience. Mentors work flexibly in the community, meeting young people in local spaces and offering consistent contact over a sustained period. The goal is to build trust, shift thinking, and help young people make meaningful choices that reduce harm and create opportunities for change.



Enhanced Prevention

Supporting Young People at Higher Risk

Detached Mentoring

Detached Mentoring responds to the need to reach young people who are not in school or services and who may be at high risk of involvement in crime. These young people often spend significant time unsupervised in public spaces, especially during the day. Our team carries out direct outreach in areas where serious youth violence and exploitation are known to occur.

Workers connect with young people in parks, high streets, or local hotspots, taking time to build rapport through informal conversation and presence. Once a relationship is established, young people are offered mentoring and further support. Detached mentoring helps reduce the risk of harm, reconnects young people with services, and provides a trusted adult at a time when they may be most vulnerable.

Employment Support

We recognise that one of the most effective ways to reduce reoffending and promote long-term change is to support young people into meaningful work. Our Employment Support offer sits within Enhanced Prevention and is tailored to the individual needs and aspirations of each young person we serve.

Our Employment Advisor work one-to-one with young people to build confidence and readiness for work. This includes support with CV writing, job applications, interview preparation, and referrals into training or apprenticeships. We also partner with corporate employers, training providers, and local agencies to connect young people with opportunities that match their skills and interests. For many of the young people we support, this is the first time they are able to imagine a future that feels possible. Our role is to walk with them as they take those first steps.



"If it wasn't for you I would still be on the roads selling drugs."

- young person who received mentoring

Training & Advocacy

Our Advocacy and Training programmes equip young people, parents and professionals with the tools, insight, and awareness needed to navigate systems that often feel unsafe or exclusionary.

Stop and Search

At the heart of this programme is our Stop and Search initiative. We deliver youth-led workshops that educate young people about their rights, increase their confidence in police encounters, and create space to reflect on personal experiences. Alongside this, we provide training to professionals, including police recruits and school staff, shaped directly by young people's voices. These sessions focus on trauma, power, and the impact of racialised policing, offering practical ways to improve engagement and rebuild trust.

AQA Accredited Wholistic Mentoring

Our AQA Accredited Wholistic Mentoring course equips parents, professionals, and community volunteers with the tools and confidence to support young people in a relational and trauma-aware way. The course blends theory and practice, covering areas such as behaviour, boundaries, communication, resilience, and the impact of trauma. Participants gain a deeper understanding of the social and emotional needs facing many young people today, and leave with strategies that are practical, culturally sensitive, and rooted in lived experience. As an accredited programme, it provides a formal stepping stone for those looking to deepen their skills, take on mentoring roles, or progress into youth-focused careers.

Parent Champion

Our Parent Champion Programme empowers parents and carers to support their children through some of life's most difficult transitions. Many of the families we work with face barriers related to exclusion, criminal justice involvement, or breakdown in services. Through workshops, peer support, and individual guidance, we help parents develop the knowledge, language, and confidence they need to advocate for their children and engage with professionals effectively.



Investing in our future

The theme for our new Strategic Plan is investing in our future; we do this by investing in our foundations, our customers and our growth. This investment is made up of time, energy, focus and where required, finance. It is about putting love, care and attention into our charity so that we can best deliver our vision and mission.



Our three strategic aims overlap and link together. In the first year of the plan, we need to get the essentials right. As we do, we are then able to better support our beneficiaries and demonstrate the improvement in impact. If we get our essentials right and have clarity around the impact we have then that gives us the platform to invest in our future by looking for opportunities to grow and develop, helping positively impact on more young people and ensure an even more sustainable Spark2Life for the future.



Aim 1

**We will empower
young people for
sustainable futures**

We will empower young people for sustainable futures

At Spark2Life our work begins with young people and particularly those who face barriers to stability, opportunity, and safety. Many are at risk of being drawn into cycles of exclusion, violence, or disadvantage. We believe in the power of trusted relationships, tailored support, and purposeful opportunities to break these cycles.

By walking alongside young people through their most vulnerable moments, we help them build the confidence, skills, and networks they need to thrive. This aim focuses on providing the right interventions at the right time, ensuring each young person we support can transition toward a sustainable and fulfilling future.

What we will do:

- **Expand our presence** in areas with the highest need, delivering our mentoring and therapeutic casework programmes to young people at risk of offending or disengaging from education and employment.
- **Develop trusted relationships** between young people and trained adults through consistent, trauma-informed, and culturally competent casework, mentoring and counselling.
- **Design and deliver tailored progression pathways** into education, training, and employment that reflect the aspirations and circumstances of each young person.
- **Deepen strategic partnerships** with schools, employers, training providers, and community organisations to unlock meaningful opportunities for our service users.

What success will look like:

- Young people will report increased confidence, self-worth, and purpose, supported by trusted adult relationships.
- Fewer young people will enter the criminal justice system, with data showing reduced reoffending and school exclusions among our cohort.
- Our programmes will demonstrate measurable improvement in educational engagement and access to employment or training.
- We will have established long-term, impactful partnerships across at least six boroughs, with clear referral pathways and joint delivery models.



A close-up portrait of a young Black man with short braids, wearing a black cap and a white t-shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a blurred brick wall.

Aim 2

**We will contribute to
creating safer and
more resilient
communities**

We will contribute to creating safer and more resilient communities

Communities play a vital role in shaping the lives of young people. We understand that resilience is built not only through individual change but also through collective strength. By equipping families, professionals, and community leaders with the tools and voice to support young people, we can create safer environments where positive choices are more accessible and harm is reduced. This aim centres on empowering the adults around young people while ensuring that community responses are collaborative, culturally competent, and grounded in lived experience. Stronger communities mean safer young people, and we are committed to investing in both.

What we will do:

- **Provide platforms for parents and adults** surrounding our young people so they can share their experiences and contribute to community-led solutions.
- **Upskill professionals and other trusted adults** to create strong support networks for young people.
- **Provide accessible, culturally competent wellbeing support** to young people, their families, and key members of their communities.

What success will look like:

- Communities will report increased resilience, trust in local services, and a shared sense of responsibility for young people's safety.
- Parents and carers will feel better informed, supported, and connected to networks of others facing similar challenges.
- Professional development sessions will result in stronger local support systems, with adults around young people better equipped to intervene positively.
- Young people and families will experience improved mental health and emotional wellbeing, reflected in outcome measures and service feedback.



Aim 3

We will influence policy and systemic change



We will influence policy and systemic change

Real lasting change requires systems to evolve in response to the realities faced by the people they serve. This aim is about amplifying the voices of young people and their communities to shape policies, frameworks, and services that affect their lives. By sharing evidence, forming strategic alliances, and advocating for reform, we seek to address the structural issues that perpetuate inequality and exclusion. Our vision is one where policy is informed by practice, and where the insights gained on the ground lead to better outcomes at scale.

What we will do:

- **Advocate for reforms** that address the root causes of youth violence, racial disproportionality in the criminal justice system, and school exclusions.
- **Build relationships with policymakers, service providers, and stakeholders** to co-design sustainable, youth-centered solutions.
- **Share evidence and best practice generated through our outcome monitoring framework**, amplifying voices of lived experience and promoting replicable models.
- **Share best practice models through the use of our monitoring framework**, including the use of data and lived experience to continuously improve and scale up impactful programmes.

What success will look like:

- Our campaigns will lead to tangible policy shifts or practice improvements that benefit young people directly.
- We will be recognised as a thought leader and critical friend within the youth, justice, and education policy arenas.
- Stakeholders will adopt elements of our prevention model into their own systems and services, scaling our impact beyond our direct delivery.
- Our publications and advocacy efforts will influence public discourse and appear in sector-leading platforms.
- We will build a cross-sector coalition that regularly collaborates with us to amplify young people's voices and implement solutions rooted in their lived realities.



Get in touch

If you would like to know more about Spark2Life or find out how you can get involved, then you can reach us with the below contact details

Find out more



www.spark2life.co.uk



Spark2Life



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Spark2Life



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