



3rd Pillars Project

2025

YEAR IN REVIEW



WELCOME FROM OUR CEO

MIKE CROFTS



Criminal Justice policy is under a microscope. Prison capacity is at breaking point; the solution for this is helping people to not commit crime in the first place and not return to prison, ending the cycle of reoffending. This sounds simple, but years of policy makers avoiding the pressing issues has made criminal justice a challenging arena. We have had the opportunity this year to inform a number of reviews to improve the system at large.

This is the first full year of pursuing our five year strategy and I am delighted to see how we have gone from strength to strength. The 3Pillars team have grown the programme, increased our impact and we are developing organisational sustainability, all whilst advocating for a better system and supporting sports based mentoring across the criminal justice estate.

Our programme growth has seen pilots in HMPs Lowdham Grange, Sudbury and ISIS, whilst our team have expanded our excellent work in HMP Dovegate as well as enrichment programmes in Feltham and Werrington YOIs. Additionally we have added a Lived Experience, Assistant Coach and Mentor Programme in HMP Dovegate, where we are training graduates of previous courses to deliver our Rugby Academies themselves.

I am delighted that we have managed to increase our impact with the addition of a PhD Studentship in collaboration with Loughborough University, the growth of our post release team, who are now supporting more and more people in the community post release and the evolution of our programme which has undergone extensive reflection and development by the team.

The final strand of our strategy has focused on building sustainability, which we have done with the support of some amazing and forward thinking funders and fundraisers, as well as improved efforts to communicate our work, and a process of team growth, which has brought some excellent people into the team; their energy and passion for the work is palpable.

Reading the feedback from people in prison who complete the course and prison staff alike is inspiring. I recently read about a man who has spent much of his adult life mired in drug debt and addiction, he referred to himself as a “lost cause”. A staff member observed that being involved in the 3Pillars course had given his life fresh meaning. It is examples like this that prove how meaningful and worthwhile this programme is.

"Your course has really improved the behaviour of some of these lads (referring to the assistant coaches). It gives them a focus, something to work towards and look forward to each week. It steers them away from any trouble, they don't want to be involved in case it means that they get removed from the course."

- PEI from Dovegate, HMP Dovegate

OUR PURPOSE

At 3Pillars Project, we enable people in the criminal justice system to find hope, opportunity, and community.

OUR MISSION

We are on a mission to develop the most effective sports-based mentoring programme for individuals in custody and post-release.

Through the power of sport, particularly rugby, we empower people to thrive beyond prison by building resilience, self-discipline, and a sense of belonging. We believe that everyone deserves the chance to rebuild their lives, and we are dedicated to providing the tools, support, and encouragement to do this.

HOW WE WORK

3Pillars Project provides sports-based mentoring through our GAMEPLAN programme to inspire, challenge and empower young men within the criminal justice system. They start their journey with us whilst in prison and through our Rugby Academy they become part of a team, boosting their physical, mental and emotional health on and off the playing field. We work with every young man as an individual, to their time frame, whether this is for months or years.

Participants can progress on to our Fit For the Future Academy to help them resettle into the community post release. Through mentoring and helping them to gain qualifications, training and employment opportunities, our apprentices are able to build a better future whilst in prison and beyond. Many of our programme graduates join our Leadership Community to give back at the end of the programme.



OUR 5 YEAR STRATEGY

was released at the end of 2024. Here are our 3 core goals

GOAL 1



Grow the programme

Expand GAMEPLAN in the Midlands, London and beyond.

GOAL 2



Grow the impact

Ensure sustainable, high-quality, high-impact delivery, showcasing best practices in both delivery and monitoring & evaluation

GOAL 3



Build sustainability

Ensure sustainability and financial resilience through proper resourcing, diverse funding, and a clear delivery plan.

Talk about what we do to share best practice and reinforce our life-changing impact in the sector.

3PP THEORY OF CHANGE



THE CONDITIONS IN PRISONS AND BEYOND

- Limited time out of cell
- Poor physical and mental health
- High reoffending rates
- Fractured or absent relationships
- Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Intersections of race and class shaping identity and experience
- Substance misuse and addiction cycles
- Stigma



OUR GAMEPLAN INTERVENTION

In-Custody Rugby Academy:

- Rugby development
- Qualifications
- Personal development workshops
- Critical reflection
- Mentoring and Coaching: 1:1 and group
- Building physical health and confidence
- Peer to peer leadership
- Stoicism workshops

Fit for Future Academy:

- Pre and post-release support
- Employability support and work placements
- Outdoor adventure challenges
- Residentials
- Links to Community Gyms and Rugby Clubs



MECHANISMS FOR SUCCESS

- Person-centred ethos
- Strengths-based approach
- Equity-conscious delivery
- Trauma-informed practice
- Trust-based relationships
- Sustained connection
- Role modelling
- Multi-agency collaboration
- Sense of purpose
- Positive expressions of masculinity

LONG TERM OUTCOMES

Reduced reoffending

A Positive Future Identity

Greater stability in key life areas:

Employment & Education

Mental & Physical Health

Accommodation

Finance

Drugs & Alcohol Misuse

MEDIUM TERM OUTCOMES

Increased self-regulation

Improved interpersonal relationships

Increased resilience

Increased agency & self-efficacy

Increased self-esteem

Increased sense of belonging & community



RUGBY ACADEMY INSIGHTS

Over the past year, we have seen remarkable success in our Rugby Academy. **78 Participants** from **six courses** across four institutions have successfully completed the course. The institutions are: HMP Dovegate (three courses), HMP Lowdham Grange (one course), HMP Sudbury (one course) and HMPYOI Werrington (one course).

71 participants earned either a **Level 1, Level 2 or Level 3 Sports Leaders** qualification.

Beyond our structured courses, we delivered **enrichment activities** at HMYOI Werrington and HMYOI Feltham and various **taster sessions and reunion sessions** at HMP Isis and HMP Dovegate. These additional efforts enabled us to engage with another **226 participants** in custody.



EXCELLENT

Our participants rated our programme “excellent” according to the Net Promoter Score

94%

of participants
are now more
physically
active

89%

of participants
have been
supported to
have better
relationships

96%

of participants
have increased
their resilience

97%

of participants
have increased
their empathy

99%

of participants
have increased
their self-
esteem

95%

of participants
have increased
their autonomy
and control

GLORY STORY

T first crossed paths with 3Pillars Project during a Rugby Academy programme he joined in 2023. As part of the course, 3PP gifted each participant a copy of Redemption by John McAvoy - an incredible story of transformation. For T, the book hit home. It was more than a story - it was a spark. He connected deeply with McAvoy's journey and saw, for the first time in a long while, the possibility of change rooted in his own strength.

Determined to test himself, T began training harder, setting ambitious goals for himself in the gym. What started as inspiration soon became obsession - not with proving others wrong, but with proving to himself that he could do something extraordinary.

Later, while still in custody, T made the decision to go after a massive challenge: the British record for 100,000 metres on the SkiErg. Over hours of relentless effort, through physical pain and mental barriers, T kept going. In a prison gym, he achieved something remarkable - he broke the record.

It was a feat of endurance, resilience, and pure determination. T's achievement stands as a powerful example of what's possible when sport becomes more than a game - it becomes a catalyst for redemption.

FIT FOR FUTURE ACADEMY



The FFF Academy is continuing to grow and currently offers pre and post-release support, tailored mentoring and practical guidance to graduates of our Rugby Academy. It also includes opportunities such as our Assistant Coach & Mentor programme and ongoing access to the 3Pillars community through events and experiences that promote adventure, connection and belonging.

ASSISTANT COACH & MENTOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

“
I'm learning valuable and transferrable skills from these sessions. It's what I look forward to most every week. I soak up all the knowledge and then share it with the younger lads back on the wing, they're always excited to hear what I have learned in the sessions.
- **ACAM Participant**

Our ACAM programme enables graduates of our Rugby Academy to enhance their coaching skills and leadership abilities.

9 individuals are currently engaged in the programme - working towards their Level 2 and Level 3 Sports Leaders qualifications.

Monthly sessions further their growth through Stoicism workshops and coach development sessions.

POST-RELEASE SUPPORT

8 men are receiving pre-release support focussed on thorough preparation across all resettlement pathways. We address common gaps in prison resettlement processes to ensure participants are as prepared as possible for their return to the community.

10 men are receiving post-release support across key stability areas: accommodation, finance, ID, education, employment, substance misuse, and service engagement. They also receive mentoring, emotional and family support. We take a multi-agency approach and work closely with probation.

“
3Pillars see beyond what I can see. You have a vision of where I can be and that gives me confidence. You feel that I can be whatever I want to be. So grateful to have you in my corner. 3Pillars never forgot me. 3Pillars are more than a charity, they are family. Even my friends did not stand by me like 3Pillars; it's really deep!
- **Fit For Future Participant**





STAND OUT MOMENTS



I broke 100,000m SkiErg British record. 7hrs 1min. After reading Redemption by John McAvoy that I was gifted by 3Pillars, it gave me the urge to do something similar

— Gym Orderly at HMP Sudbury



Mini Olympics

We celebrated the Paris Olympics by running our own mini version in Feltham, Werrington and Dovegate. There were some impressive results and healthy competition.



Independent Sentencing Review

Our CEO, Mike Crofts, was part of the Independent Sentencing Review Roundtable: Advocating for a Criminal Justice System that makes us all safer.



Big Give campaign

In December we took part in The Christmas Challenge - the UK's biggest collaborative fundraising campaign and hosted fitness classes run by our graduates and a dinner for our wonderful supporters.



Team training - Choice Theory

Our team took part in the Intensive Workshop, exploring how Choice Theory supports our human centred approach by helping individuals in prison take ownership of their own change. True to 3Pillars style, we put theory into practice with a double kayak challenge on the River Trent, navigating resistance, collaboration and the occasional splash.



The Grocers' Dinner

We were honoured to be chosen as one of the charities supported at the Grocers Hall annual fundraising dinner. A powerful evening that celebrated second chances and the impact of our work with young people. A standout moment was hearing Sikiru share his journey from prison to 3Pillars, reminding us all of the power of change and community.



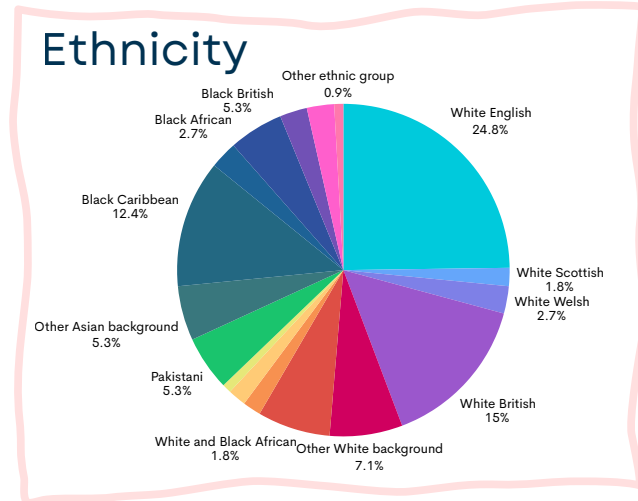
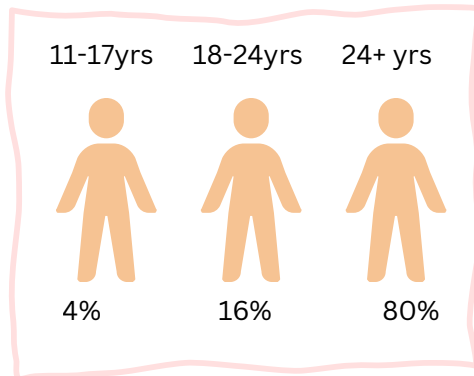
Edale Skyline Challenge

In June 2025, a team of apprentices, supporters and 3PP employees successfully completed the challenging 22 mile Edale Skyline walk, demonstrating resilience, teamwork, and solidarity with the young people we support in rebuilding their lives.



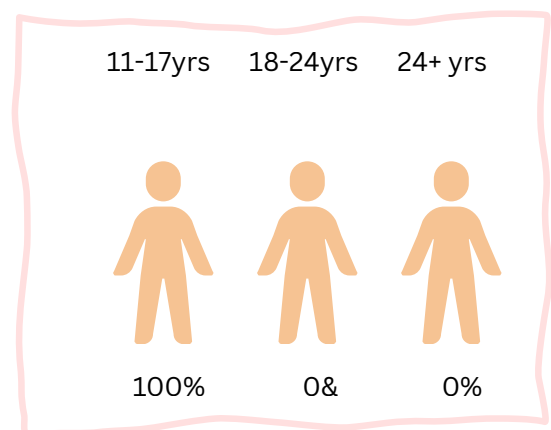
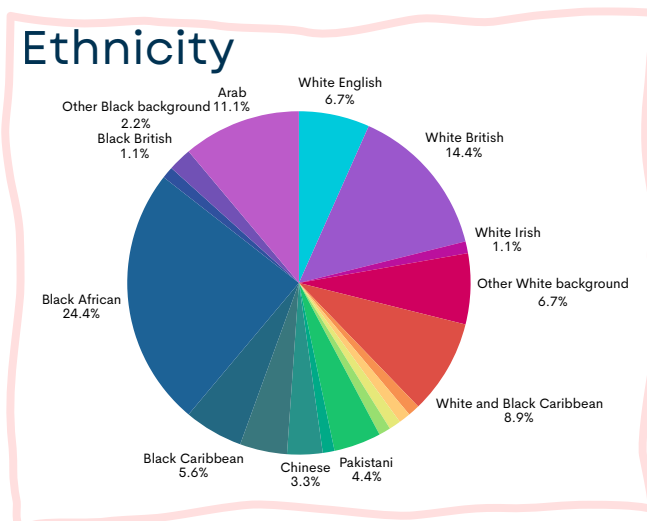
UNDERSTANDING WHO ENGAGES WITH US

WITHIN OUR RUGBY ACADEMY



This year, the majority of participants across our Rugby Academy programmes have been from White backgrounds, followed by those from Black backgrounds. Our work has been primarily based in adult prisons, particularly at HMP Dovegate, where this trend is most evident. While earlier cohorts were largely White English, we've seen an increase in diversity over time, including greater representation from mixed heritage backgrounds.

WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY PROGRAMME



Our participant group is highly diverse, with the majority identifying as Black African, followed by White British and Arab backgrounds. All participants are aged between 11 and 17, reflecting our strong connection with young people in the community. This diversity speaks to the inclusive nature of our programme and its ability to engage and support young people from a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

SPOTLIGHT ON OUR NEW TRUSTEES



**TANIA
NADARAJAH**

Tania joins 3Pillars as a trustee after being involved with fundraising efforts since 2018. She was first introduced to the charity through her position as Women's Chair at Battersea Ironsides. Having witnessed the positive impact sport, and rugby in particular, had on those around her, she was keen to get involved. Tania is a natural problem solver having worked in consulting, investment banking and the start up space - she now works in Risk at one of the "big four". She is looking forward to contributing to 3Pillars through advocacy, planning and fundraising.

Phil joins 3Pillars as a Trustee and brings with him over 30 years' experience in Sports programming, development and strategy design, gained whilst working in senior leadership roles at several Local Authorities and Higher Education institutions.

Phil is also the founder and CEO of Includable Consultancy, which is a market leader in the provision of Leadership, Culture Change, Sports strategy and EDI programmes, workshops and interventions.

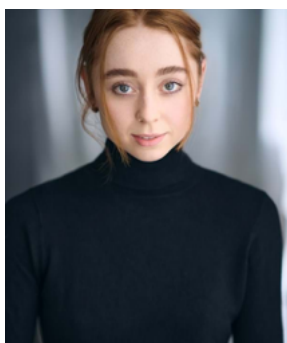


**PHIL
NEWMAN**



OUR TEAM

We are thrilled to have such a dedicated and talented team, driving us toward exceptional achievements and making a profound difference in the communities we serve. Their commitment and expertise are at the heart of our success.





WHERE WE WORK

HMYOI Werrington

Wildcats arena

HMP Sudbury

HMP Lowdham Grange

HMP Dovegate

 **Prison**

 **Community**

HMP/YOI Isis

YOI Feltham

Black Prince Trust

Our work spans several key areas: we deliver the GAMEPLAN programme in prisons, providing structured support that combines rugby, mentoring, and personal development. In local communities across the Midlands and London, we partner with various organisations to extend our impact, helping young people and vulnerable individuals develop life skills and build positive futures. By focusing our efforts where they are needed most, we aim to make a meaningful difference in both custodial and community settings.

YEAR IN REVIEW

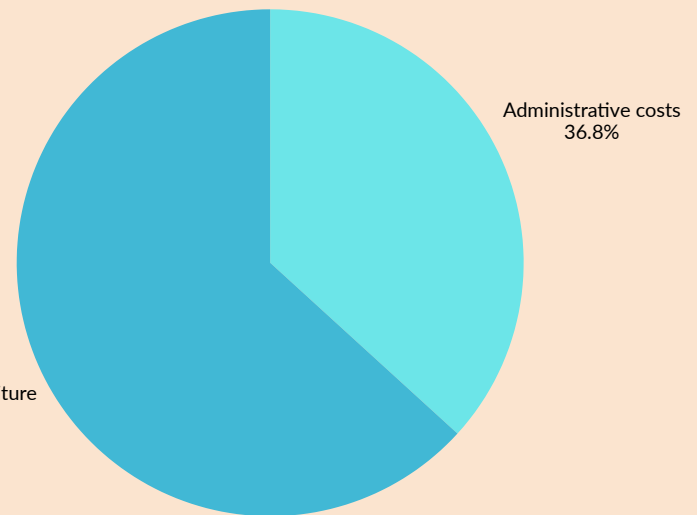
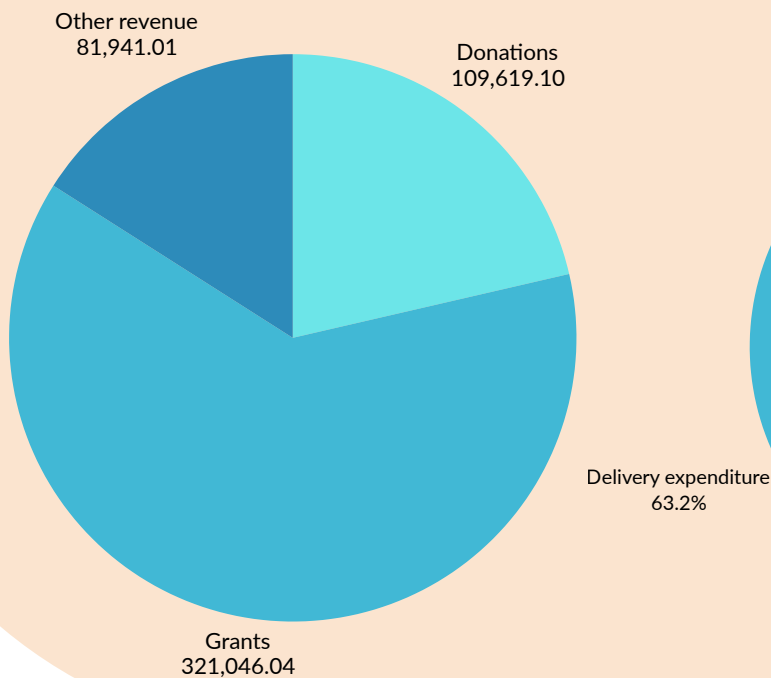




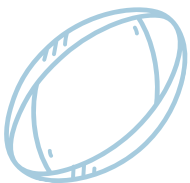
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Total Income 2024/25:
£512,606.15

Total Expenditure 2024/25:
£443,544.63



At the end of the financial year 2024/25, the total funds carried forward amounted to £69,061.52 consisting entirely of unrestricted funds, no restricted funds being carried forward. Total Reserves stand at £100,000



£1,482 funds the full **Rugby Academy** programme per apprentice.



£6,326 funds longterm support and the full **Fit for Future Academy** per apprentice.

Did you know...



YEAR IN REVIEW



WHAT OTHERS SAY ABOUT US



HMPPS

3Pillars has been fantastic in supporting my service user and myself. Not just in practical support such as sourcing employment and training opportunities and encouraging community integration but also in taking a vested interest in their clients, checking in on their wellbeing and encouraging positive engagement, which has also supported me in my ongoing risk management.

— Probation Officer

HMYOI Werrington

I can't actually believe these three lads have taken part in the whole thing, no question. You should see them on the landings. I've seen them in a totally different light, laughing and actually enjoying it.

— Officer

HMP Sudbury

This is beautiful, truly beautiful. I can't remember the last time I felt like this.

— Participant

HMP Sudbury

This has literally changed the outlook of many of these people. The amount of laughter, motivation, passion, teamwork that went on was phenomenal.

— Head of Education, skills and employment

HMPYOI Werrington

As a British Indian, I felt 3Pillars understood and respected my background. Their approach isn't a one size fits all, it's culturally sensitive, trauma-informed, and built on real relationships.

— Participant

HMP Dovegate

You all do amazing things, they need more of this. I know how much X has loved it, it's all he's talked about. It's been our best family day since he's been in prison.

— Participant's family member

HMP Dovegate

With what I have seen I believe this course would benefit any prisoner with the physical and mental health benefits and rehabilitation. The difference from week 1 to week 8 is a joy to watch

— Physical Education Instructor

HMP Lowdham Grange

The guest speaker with lived experience was really insightful, it gives you hope that you can move past things and that you can change your life for the better

— Participant

Fit for Future Academy

I feel like now I understand that 'this guy' might not live the way I live but right now we are both going through this battle together and I feel like that's what brings people closer together. That hike shows people that no matter where we come from, right here on this hike it's nothing but unity - I got a real sense of comfort from it.

— Participant

HMP Dovegate

What I enjoyed was learning a new skill, making new friends and improving my fitness and mindset. I've been in a hole lately and 3Pillars pulled me out!

— Participant



LOOKING AHEAD TO NEXT YEAR

Looking ahead, we are poised for a transformative year, building on our strong foundations to empower even more individuals. We are expanding our reach and deepening our impact, with a clear vision for growth in participant engagement, successful transitions, and leadership development. Our Rugby Academy will continue to be a cornerstone of our work in prisons, with an ambitious target of reaching over 100 participants annually.



Beyond these core programmes, we are also broadening our reach with enrichment days, delivering a total of 48 days across prisons and Youth Offending Institutions. We are expanding our post-release support to ensure sustained positive activity and community integration for participants. A major leap forward for us will be the piloting of our Fit for Future Academy residentials. This initiative is designed to provide intensive support & development and solidify a sense of community, ensuring participants are well-prepared for life beyond prison.

As we cast our gaze to 2026, we are incredibly excited to announce a monumental milestone: we will be celebrating our 10-year anniversary! A decade of transforming lives, building futures, and fostering leadership within our communities. This significant anniversary will be a moment to reflect on our achievements, celebrate the countless individuals we've had the privilege of supporting, and look forward to an even brighter future as we continue to expand our vital work.

YEAR IN REVIEW



THANK YOU



Billmeir Charitable Trust
Broxash Ltd
Cedar House
The Alchemy Foundation



2025 Edale Skyline Challenge Hikers



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