

Impact Report 2025

building new connections for a brighter future

**get out
and stay
out**



New Connections supports prisoners and ex-offenders with addiction and mental health challenges who are preparing for Parole or release after long periods of imprisonment. Our work focuses on the critical period before and after release, helping individuals develop practical plans to manage addiction, rebuild stability, and successfully transition back into the community.

In the months leading up to a Parole Board hearing, we work closely with individuals to prepare realistic and sustainable plans for recovery and resettlement. Following release, we continue to provide tailored support in the community, helping people navigate the practical challenges of reintegration while maintaining progress in their recovery.

In 2025, our strategic priority was to strengthen the post-release element of our work. We have invested time in building new partnerships, developing our networks, and exploring funding opportunities that will allow us to expand and sustain this vital support. A key development during the year has been the design of a peer mentor programme, which will be piloted in 2026. By drawing on the insight and experience of people with lived experience of the criminal justice system, the programme will add an important layer of support for individuals as they rebuild their lives in the community.



Edward Baillie,
Founder & Director

Since founding New Connections in 2018, I have been continually inspired by the resilience of the individuals we support and the commitment of those who work alongside us. Following our transition to a Community Interest Company (CIC) at the end of 2023, the organisation has continued to grow and strengthen its foundations. We now have a team of five staff and, in 2025, welcomed our second cohort of placement students from Leeds Trinity University. They work alongside our staff and our dedicated volunteers with lived experience, many of whom join us through Working Chance.

Together, this combination of professional expertise and lived experience allows us to deliver informed, compassionate, and practical support to those who need it most. We remain committed to investing in the training and development of our team to ensure we continue to provide the highest quality support.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to our partners, funders, volunteers, and supporters whose belief in our work makes this possible. With recent developments allowing IPP licences to be revoked after two years, there is a renewed opportunity to help individuals break the cycle of release and recall. With your continued support, New Connections will continue working to ensure that more people leaving prison have the opportunity to rebuild their lives, realise their potential, and remain safely and successfully in the community.

Our Mission

New Connections believes that everyone has the right and the ability to fulfil their potential. Those dreams and that potential are harder to achieve while an individual is still in the grasp of addiction, depression, crime and imprisonment. Our aim is to help prisoners find their way to living a life in the community, contributing and managing the triggers that have affected them in the past. Becoming individuals capable of making the transformational change necessary to live very different lives.

Our Values

Equality: We strongly believe in equality for both our clients and staff. Our non-discriminatory approach respects all backgrounds, ethnicities, genders, and neurodiversities, and we endeavour to provide support that encompasses this, both to clients and staff.

Open Communication: Open communication is essential, both between us and our clients, as well as with their support teams (COM/POM/Psychologists, etc.), and within our organisation. This fosters stronger relationships and ensures our work has the maximum possible impact.

Collaborative approach: Our approach has always been collaborative, allowing us to work effectively with all available services to support our clients. By adopting a multi-disciplinary approach, we ensure that clients receive the best possible support. This method is also crucial for securing funding and expanding our network, enabling partners to share knowledge and enhance the support available to clients.

Active Listening: We prioritise active listening both internally and externally. Within our team, this means giving staff the opportunity to be heard, contribute ideas, and provide feedback on what's working and where additional support is needed. When engaging with clients, active listening ensures they feel truly 'heard' and respected, which is crucial for the effectiveness of our work.

Supporting change and growth: Our aim with our clients is to help them grow and change, for this they need a lot of support. This involves fostering an environment of trust, empathy, and accountability, where individuals are encouraged to confront their past actions and work towards rehabilitation. For those working with them, this requires patience, commitment, and a collaborative approach to helping prisoners develop the skills and mindset needed for successful reintegration into society.

Personal development: for our clients and staff is essential for fostering self-awareness, resilience, and growth, creating an environment where both individuals and staff can continually improve and contribute to successful rehabilitation and reintegration.

The Challenge

The rate at which IPP and life-sentence prisoners are being released and recalled is a national problem. Across recent data, 787 prisoners on IPP or life sentences were re-released after recall, and a further 697 were released from custody for the first time from indeterminate sentences, giving a combined total of 1,484 individuals who require ongoing support.

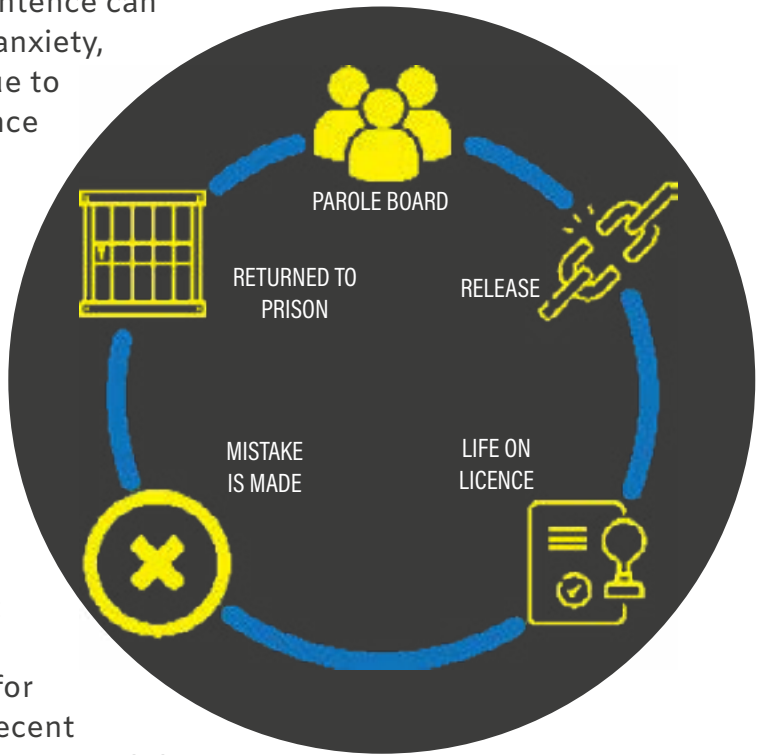
For this reason, we are now focusing on Post-Release support as much as possible. There is currently insufficient support for IPP/Lifers in the community, leaving many vulnerable to challenges such as addiction, substance misuse, and complex life issues. Working with IPP prisoners and lifers who have substance misuse issues presents a unique challenge, as the interplay between trauma, addiction, and the indeterminate nature of their sentences can make effective rehabilitation difficult.

In 2024, legislation was passed allowing those with an IPP licence to apply for it to be terminated after two years in the community, which increases the importance of our work in supporting individuals to reach this goal.

Psychological impact of the IPP sentence and life on license

The psychological impact of the IPP sentence can be profound, often causing long-term anxiety, uncertainty, and a sense of injustice due to the indeterminate nature of the sentence and lack of clear release criteria. For prisoners, the fear of being trapped in the system without a defined path to release can lead to feelings of hopelessness and despair, negatively affecting mental health and rehabilitation progress.

Life on licence, while offering a chance for reintegration, can also be a source of ongoing stress. The constant supervision and potential for recall, combined with high rates of re-recall (for example, over 787 re-releases across recent quarters), can hinder personal development and the sense of stability necessary for successful community reintegration.



"I felt a very high level of support by New Connections pre-parole and was very happy with the care and support I was given. I felt Emma Darwin was very kind and caring and I found it very easy to talk with where I sometimes struggle."

I felt it is a good service which I feel it can help a lot of people going forward I want to thank you for your help and support."

R, client

Our Connections

Over the past year, our company has been able to foster growth by establishing stronger connections between us and prisons/probation as well as new relationships with lawyers and law firms. By building collaborative relationships with both lawyers and HMPPS we can help to provide the needed wraparound support our clients require.



WORKING WITH
80+
PRISONS



WORKING WITH
250+
PRISONERS



WORKING WITH
100+
LAWYERS



86
NEW CLIENTS

In the past year, we've developed new relationships with post-release support providers, including mentors, therapists, and training programs, to ensure individuals have the resources needed for successful reintegration. These partnerships have allowed us to offer comprehensive support that addresses both the emotional and practical needs of those transitioning back into society.



"I'm really impressed with your service, others have promised the world and not delivered but you have been really great, I'd definitely recommend to other people"

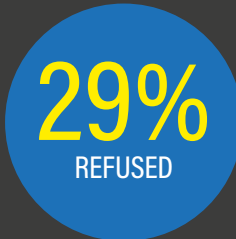


J, client

2025 Numbers

In 2025, we continued to achieve strong outcomes at Parole Board hearings, supporting individuals to secure release or recategorisation through targeted advocacy and close collaboration with legal professionals, probation officers, and post-release services. Our reports clearly evidence progress and readiness for release, contributing to more favourable decisions—even within an increasingly challenging context where overall refusal rates remain high.

PAROLE BOARD HEARINGS RESULTS



* we have attended 33 Parole Board hearings, 2 of which we are still awaiting the outcome

NATIONAL RESULTS



ENGLAND & WALES
2024/25

Our success rate this year is 62%. While lower than 74% in 2024, it remains significantly above the national average of 25.5%. The gap between our outcomes and the national average has widened compared to last year (74% vs. 42%), reinforcing the impact of our work on improving release rates at Parole Board hearings. We remain committed to building on this progress and further strengthening our outcomes.

POST RELEASE



In 2025, despite receiving very little funding for post-release work, we still supported 73 clients (47 new clients) through expanding our post-release team and utilising donations, funding, and volunteer hours to provide care plans and ongoing support. Looking ahead to 2026, we aim to significantly boost our funding to build on this progress and further enhance the support we offer to individuals post-release and be able to offer fuller support countrywide.



Dean's Story

In this year's Impact Report, we spoke with our colleague Dean Louis about his journey and the perspective he brings through his lived experience of an IPP sentence and addiction. Dean uses his experience to support others navigating similar challenges. In this interview, he reflects on the changes he has seen over the past year, the impact of the new IPP licence termination laws, his role in developing the organisation's peer mentorship scheme, and his hopes for the future of New Connections and the people it supports.

Personal Highlights & Achievements - 2025

One of the most impactful events for me in 2025 has been seeing clients benefit from the new IPP licence termination laws and the visible shift in hope this has brought. Watching individuals move from uncertainty to genuinely believing in a future beyond their sentence has been both professionally and personally rewarding.

I have also found great satisfaction in supporting clients who have reintegrated successfully into the community, helping them build stability, maintain progress, and create meaningful lives after release. In 2025, I was particularly proud to help establish the first New Connections Peer Mentorship Scheme, creating a structure where lived experience can guide and support others.

A significant development for me this year has been stepping into the role of Peer Mentor Supervisor, allowing me to oversee the mentorship scheme and ensure both mentors and mentees receive the guidance they need. Combined with my evolving role within NC, this has strengthened my contribution to the organisation and made witnessing clients achieve licence termination one of the most meaningful highlights of the year.

Challenges & Learning

My biggest challenge in 2025 has been stepping back when supporting clients who relapse and are not yet ready to address their behaviour, knowing recall is almost certain. This has been difficult but reinforced the importance of maintaining professional boundaries while providing consistent guidance and care.

Clients have also faced challenges when released, often for the first time, into AP or CAS3 accommodation where other residents may be involved in criminality or drug use. Staying safe and avoiding negative influences during this period has been difficult, as has finding suitable move-on accommodation. At New Connections, we actively support clients in securing stable housing before and after release, whether through residential rehabilitation, abstinence-based housing, or supported accommodation. We take a proactive approach, contacting providers, advocating for placements, and assisting with referrals to ensure clients are supported throughout this complex process.

Stories & Moments of Pride

One example that stands out is a client I have supported post-release who is serving an IPP sentence. After a long history of alcohol-related offending and several periods in custody, he relapsed following release and was recalled, later receiving an Extended Determinate Sentence (EDS). With structured support and a clear recovery plan, he has now remained sober for almost two years — the longest period of abstinence in his life — and is rebuilding his life while progressing towards licence termination. This reflects the real impact of sustained support combined with personal readiness for change.

Looking Ahead

In 2026, I hope New Connections can expand its support to reach more clients and secure the funding needed to strengthen post-release provision. The period immediately following release is crucial, and increasing capacity during this time would maximise the positive impact we can have. I am also hopeful that the mentorship scheme will continue to grow, allowing more clients to benefit from the guidance that lived experience brings.

Securing funding will be a key priority next year to ensure we can provide the support clients need most and continue making a meaningful difference. I am particularly excited to continue developing the mentorship scheme, a new role for me, and already see the positive impact it can have in helping mentees move forward in a productive and fulfilling way.



“
Seeing clients move from being defined by their sentence to having genuine freedom has been the most rewarding part of the year.
”

Dean Louis

Pre-Release Work

OMU Stories

New Connections has established strong working relationships with several Offender Management Unit (OMU) departments across a number of prisons.



At HMP Warren Hill, we are able to attend the OMU building and meet with multiple clients throughout the day. In addition, OMU staff facilitate video link appointments, which has made it significantly easier for us to maintain consistent contact.



At HMP Erlestoke, we have developed a positive relationship with the PR Hub, where we are similarly permitted to attend and see several clients during one visit. The PR Hub also coordinates video calls, enabling us to sustain a high level of support.



At HMP Ashfield, we have an arrangement whereby we are escorted to a designated room on the wing and are able to meet clients throughout the day; staff also assist with booking video calls, which supports ongoing engagement.



At HMP Aylesbury, we have built a constructive relationship and were invited to attend the open day for their new wing dedicated solely to IPP prisoners. HMP Aylesbury has also invited us to attend every other month to speak with residents on the IPP wing and has confirmed their support in facilitating face-to-face meetings through the OMU, as well as arranging video calls.

These partnerships enable us to maintain meaningful and consistent contact with the individuals we support.

What it is like working with us

“

I have worked with new connections for some years where I refer clients to them that are approaching parole and have drug and alcohol misuse

They are an organisation that are bespoke but offer a firm footing for progression they provide a thorough release support plan for the parole board and offer give evidence at hearings

The team are professional and offer good sound support even after release

”

My Story

I am 42 years old and when I was 27 I was sentenced to an IPP sentence I was a shell of myself and I needed to rapidly change my ways and my thoughts.

Throughout the years I had in prison I bettered myself to become a man that I loved again and began to trust again starting to rebuild my life up, I got released in 2020 and I spent 18 months in the community, where there was a very different picture due to the covid pandemic, lockdown and no support.

I then got recalled to prison due to me relapsing and not being able to behave in the manner I was expected to. I spent a further 2.5 years trying to get released I had to take another hard look at my life again and really understand that substances were again a part of that.

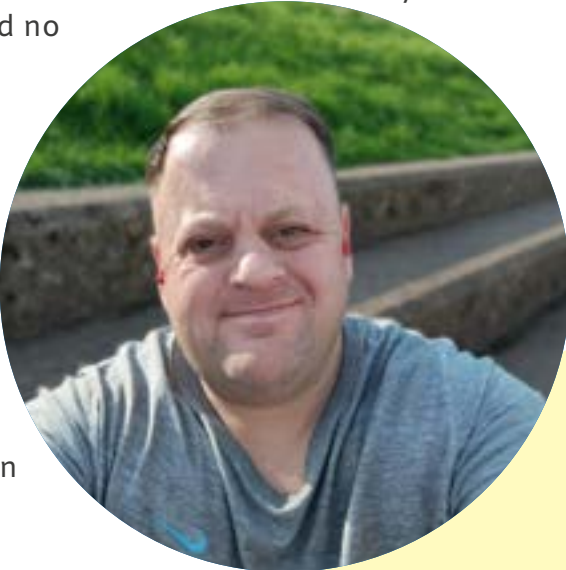
I had a real chance of turning this into my lifelong ambition to remain abstinence I started attending NA a 12 step programme, where I fully understood my addiction and how to be aware of my triggers.

I had a change in probation officers and I got introduced to New Connections whilst in custody we began to talk about my addiction at great length and we put together a robust plan for release.

I finally got release from prison in 2024 and started to rebuild my life attending regular weekly meetings of NA,AA,CA and with a ever growing supportive network of people in my life who only wanted my to succeed I was introduced to Emma form New connections she as fantastic, she was guiding through a very challenging time but with her help and support I was able to navigate though these times.

In 2025 I was told by my probation that I was able to get my IPP licence revoked due to all of my hard-work I was extremly happy for this amazing news and I had finally achived what I was longing for.

I am currently still working my 12 step program and 4 years clean and sober I am also starting a mentoring program with new connections as i feel that I am able to give hope and support to other people who where in my situation.



I was finally released in 2024, started rebuilding my life with support, and in 2025 I was able to get my IPP licence revoked.

E, Client

South Central Pilot

At the beginning of 2025, we launched a South Central pilot program focused on post-release support for individuals reintegrating into the community. The pilot followed six clients who had recently been released into the South Central area, providing them with tailored assistance to address challenges they face after leaving custody. Our approach focused on supporting clients with their addiction and substance use issues, helping them secure stable housing, and offering guidance on engaging in meaningful free-time activities. Additionally, we worked closely with external partners, such as Arukah, to ensure clients had access to specialized services and ongoing support.

The pilot program emphasizes a holistic approach to rehabilitation, recognizing that successful reintegration requires attention to multiple aspects of a client's life. By combining practical assistance with emotional and social support, we aim to reduce the risk of recidivism and help clients establish a more stable, productive lifestyle. Each client's progress was monitored closely, allowing the team to adapt interventions to individual needs and track the effectiveness of the support provided.

The additional funding secured for this initiative allows us to allocate more time and resources to each client, enhancing the quality and intensity of post-release support. With these resources, we hope to expand the program and engage in further pilot schemes in the future, extending the reach and impact of our services. This continued development will enable us to refine best practices, support more individuals, and contribute to long-term positive outcomes in the South Central area.



Working with the next generation of professionals

Working with Students from Leeds Trinity University and the University of Liverpool

We are proud to collaborate with students from Leeds Trinity University and the University of Liverpool, offering opportunities across placements, volunteering, and structured programmes such as Learning to Work. These experiences enable students to gain hands-on skills, contribute to meaningful projects, and build confidence in real-world professional environments.

One student reflected on their experience through the Professional Learning Through Work (PLTW) module:

“When undertaking my PLTW module, I approached the organisation, New Connections, with whom I had been working for the last year. I had already been given opportunities with them to undertake small projects focused on my interest in the reintegration of ex-offenders. Together with my employer, Christina, we discussed ideas for a pilot study I could create to show which support systems or factors were instrumental in reducing the likelihood that our clients would be recalled to prison. Embarking on this solo project forced me to demonstrate innovation and creativity, use various web-based tools, and engage with professionals to gather information, all of which I believe will be useful skills in my future career. The Collaborative Work-Based Learning Project (CWBLP) has allowed me to make a meaningful contribution to an organisation whose goals align with my own, and New Connections supported me in every way.”

This feedback highlights how placements and volunteering provide students with genuine responsibility, encourage independent thinking, and create opportunities to make a meaningful contribution.



Looking Ahead

Expanding Opportunities and Research Collaboration

Building on this strong foundation, we are excited to expand our work with students in the coming years.

We will be developing a research project with a master's student, from the London School of Economics (LSE). This research will focus on understanding the impact of our post-release support, identifying where outcomes are strongest, and highlighting areas where services may be lacking or could be strengthened. It will also support deeper analysis of our work, helping us to evidence impact more effectively and inform future funding bids and strategic development.

In addition, we are launching sandwich year placements from September 2026, offering students a year-long, immersive experience within the organisation. These students will:

- Support core staff with day-to-day tasks and service delivery
- Gain valuable experience by shadowing calls and client interactions
- Assist with ongoing research into post-release support
- Contribute to projects that strengthen our understanding of client outcomes

We currently have three placements secured with students from; Loughborough University, University of Portsmouth and The University of Kent.

These initiatives demonstrate our ongoing commitment to supporting student development, strengthening links with higher education institutions, and investing in the next generation of professionals. We look forward to growing these partnerships and creating even more opportunities in the future.



Thank You!

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all our staff, partners, and clients for their time, energy, and dedication in helping us support IPP and lifer prisoners with substance misuse issues. Your commitment to this challenging work has been fundamental to our growth and progress, and we are proud of what we've achieved together.

In 2025, we invested significant time and effort into developing key initiatives, including our peer mentor program and research project, both of which we hope to launch in 2026. We also made substantial progress on a new project to support SO's both in and out of custody, which we aim to complete and implement next year.

Looking ahead, we are excited to welcome the sandwich-year students who have applied to work with us in the 2026/27 academic year, bringing fresh ideas, energy, and valuable contributions to our work.

We deeply appreciate the collaboration, feedback, and commitment of our partners and colleagues, which help us grow and adapt to meet the complex needs of those we serve. Most importantly, we are thankful to our clients for their bravery in choosing to work with us, striving for change, and rebuilding their lives. Every milestone—release, one month post-release, three months post-release, or a year post-release—is a testament to your courage and a reminder of the meaningful difference we can make together.

Thank you to everyone who plays a part in this journey—your dedication, support, and belief in our mission are what make our work possible.

newconnections.org.uk

Plan for the Future

Looking ahead, we aim to build on our recent successes and expand our impact:

- **Digital Engagement:** Our GoFundMe page is now live, and we are hopeful for a successful campaign to continue supporting our programs.
- **Fundraising Initiatives:** We have pursued multiple funding opportunities, including smaller grants, and applied to Comic Relief to secure larger-scale support.
- **Student Engagement:** In 2025, over 35 sandwich-year students applied to work with us, reflecting strong interest from the next generation in contributing to our initiatives.
- **Innovation & Pilots:** Having registered on dynamic frameworks, we are preparing further pilot schemes for our peer mentor program, expanding support and development for service users.
- **Service User Feedback:** A heavy focus on feedback from service users continues to guide improvements across all areas of our work, ensuring our programs remain relevant and effective.
- **Partnerships:** We are partnering with a provider of education and support to help service users access the job market or volunteering opportunities, enhancing their personal growth and independence.

These steps will ensure our organization continues to evolve, adapt, and deliver meaningful outcomes for the communities we serve.

“
Thank you so much! I’m so glad to have found NC and helped my partner with this extra support. We are both so grateful for everything you’re doing.

”
Clients Partner

Who we are

New Connections is an organisation which provides support for prisoners and ex-offenders with addiction and mental health challenges who are preparing for Parole or release after a substantial period of imprisonment.

New Connections provides support and guidance in prison through individual and group sessions and the agreement of individual recovery plans to give the ex-offender the opportunity to recover from their addiction and change the direction of their life away from drugs and crime.

If you are interested in hearing more about our work, have any questions, or know someone who could benefit from our services, please contact us via our website.



71-75 Shelton Street
Covent Garden
London, WC2H 9JQ
info@newconnections.org.uk
0208 066 6828
newconnections.org.uk

