



## **Prisoner healthcare peer mentoring programme scoops national award**

Spectrum Community Health CIC, a social enterprise that delivers specialist offender healthcare services, has scooped a prestigious [Our Health Heroes Award](#) for its breakthrough work in establishing peer mentoring programmes in 7 prisons across the North East.

Spectrum, which employs over 800 staff, beat out stiff competition to scoop the 'Best Healthcare Initiative in a Community or Criminal Justice Setting' prize, with judges commending them highly for their transformational impact on prisoner's lives.

With a growing body of evidence suggesting that peer-led programmes are more effective at reaching patients that require treatment in criminal justice settings, Spectrum decided to train inmates as healthcare ambassadors to strengthen the link between prisons and healthcare services. Peer mentor training is based on the National Care Certificate - a robust induction programme for support workers across health and social care settings - as well as specialist course content on Substance Misuse, Mental Health, Recovery and Long-Term Conditions. The programme was piloted at HMP Deerbolt in 2020 before it was rolled out to HMP Durham, HMP Northumberland, HMP Frankland, HMP Low Newton and HMP Kirkclevington Grange last year.

For peer mentors such as Callum, the opportunity to undertake recognised training and help his fellow inmates has given him renewed optimism for life after prison.

"Since I became a peer mentor I've gained confidence, knowledge and I've started to grow as an individual. When I was given the chance (to do this), I took it with open arms because I've always wanted to support others and gain some sort of benefit for myself." he said.

The programme is currently being prepared for CPD accreditation, which means that all those who complete the course will leave prison with accredited qualifications under their belt. Accepting the prize at an awards ceremony held at the Science Museum London, Spectrum's Interim Head of Healthcare Rachel Greaves said:

"I am truly honoured to accept this award on behalf of Spectrum Community Health CIC. Through cohesive collaboration with commissioners, mental health partners, recovery partners and HMPPS, we have established an ambitious and inspiring project that epitomises teamwork.

A special mention must go to the men and women in our care across our secure estates; it is their dedication and commitment to the programme which has ultimately ensured its success."

John Rogers, Chief Executive of [Skills for Health](#), which delivers Our Health Heroes Awards comments:

"A huge congratulations to Spectrum CIC. Without the wider healthcare workforce that Our Health Heroes Awards aims to recognise and celebrate our NHS would grind to a halt. Now more than ever, it is important to raise awareness of the valuable contribution that these inspirational teams and individuals make to the health of the nation and to thank them publicly for the sacrifices they make."