

Job Description

Job title: Switchback Mentor

Location: London (Spitalfields, E1), some travel required

Reporting to: Head of Delivery

Salary: £26,750 – £28,950

Hours: Full-time: 35 hours a week

Contract: Permanent

Benefits: 25 days holiday plus bank holidays, rising with service to max of 30 days.
Holiday buy-back available after 2 years' service (up to 10 days holiday).
Pension scheme: 3% salary sacrifice is met by a 5% contribution from Switchback.
Strong commitment to employee development including generous training budget and reflective practice.
Flexible working policy.
Family-friendly benefits
Employee referral bonus scheme.
Great location, a stone's throw from Spitalfields Market, Brick Lane & Shoreditch.

Application deadline: 10am, Monday 6 April 2020

Interviews: Week commencing 20 April 2020

Start date: Immediate

How to apply: Please apply by uploading your CV (2-page max) along with your 1 page (max) cover letter outlining why you are a good fit for this role with clear reference to the person specification via the Charity Job website (<https://www.charityjob.co.uk/recruiter/switchback/21074>). Please note incomplete applications will not be considered. Please refer to the Being A Switchback Mentor document for more information.

We also encourage you to complete the recruitment analysis form which will be separated from your application and treated as confidential, a link to this form can be found here: <https://forms.gle/QNfp8E3aHsf7Wirw8>

Before commencing in role, you must have been cleared by prison vetting which will be arranged by Switchback unless you are already in possession of the appropriate vetting.

Switchback is committed to diversity in all that it does and strongly encourages applications from every part of the communities we serve, particularly people from BAME backgrounds and those with lived experience of the criminal justice system. All appointments are made on merit.

Job overview

Are you passionate about working 1-to-1 with people from marginalised communities? Would you relish the chance to build relationships with young prison-leavers as part of an award-winning small charity in East London?

Becoming a **Switchback Mentor** is a unique opportunity to build transformative relationships with young prison-leavers, supporting Switchback Trainees to find a way out of the justice system and build a stable, rewarding life. You will go into prisons to directly engage young men and continue that intensive support after release with a small caseload in the community. You will receive sector-leading training, professional development and supervision from a cutting-edge resettlement charity recognised by the Longford Prize as “a beacon of hope at a time of chaos”.

About Switchback

Switchback is an award-winning charity helping young Londoners to find a way out of the justice system and build a stable, rewarding life they can be proud of. We provide intensive one-to-one support on both sides of the prison gate alongside real-work training after release, supporting 18-30 year-old men (Switchback Trainees) to make real, lasting change. Read more about our model at www.switchback.org.uk.

Switchback’s long-term approach means that Switchback Trainees are five times less likely to reoffend than other prison-leavers. Building on 12 years of impact, Switchback is growing fast and setting our sights higher than ever, aiming to reach even more prison-leavers while inspiring change across the system. To do so we need more amazing people to become Switchback Mentors supporting young men through-the-gate. That’s where you come in.

About the role

As a Switchback Mentor you will generate your own small caseload in prison and must be willing to become the most important person in each Trainee’s life whilst also working towards that no longer being the case. After release, a Switchback Mentor is in touch with a Trainee daily; anything from a quick chat to several hours talking through a single issue. One of these meetings every week is an Action Planning session. A Switchback Mentor helps a Trainee learn how to make the right choices, be reliable, get the help he needs and work towards his goals.

All Switchback Mentors are supported by a comprehensive in-house and external supervision programme, group supervision and training. You will take ownership of building positive, motivational relationships with young, male prison-leavers and maintain them through the prison gate and into being a Switchback Trainee. Most importantly, you will do this in a way that is true to Switchback’s key values of keeping Trainees at the heart of everything we do, having high expectations of the young men we support and being authentic in all our interactions.

About you

You’ll be an enthusiastic individual, brilliant at working with people and keen for the chance to be autonomous, with support. You will be able to expect the unexpected, be energetic and have a good sense of self-awareness. With a commitment to learning and furthering your own development, you will also have great attention to detail and a desire for accuracy and consistency. Keen to work in a small team, you will be excited about the chance to be part of a cutting-edge charity enabling some of London’s most marginalised young people to make real, lasting change in their lives.

Switchback’s Values

1. **Human.** Keeping Trainees at the heart of everything we do.
2. **Authentic.** Rolling with the ups and downs of real life.
3. **Committed.** Taking the long way around.

4. **Ambitious.** Having high expectations.
5. **Pioneering.** Pushing into our stretch zone.

Responsibilities

- Build and look after your own caseload. You will meet about 100 prisoners a year, engaging a minimum of 10-12 onto the Switchback programme and successfully supporting at least 60% of caseload to 'F'-Switchback's measure of real, lasting change
- Build and maintain relationships with individuals, statutory organisations and employers connected with Trainees including prisons, probation, family, local authorities, training partners etc.
- Actively embody and promote Switchback's culture and methodology (internally and externally)

Person specification

Experience

- Minimum 1 years' experience of working face-to-face with young people with multiple needs
- Experience of working with people from a diverse range of backgrounds
- Awareness of, and positive ways of addressing issues affecting young people (e.g. drugs, violence and mental health issues)
- Experience of working in confidential situations
- Experience of assessing risk

Skills

- Ability to empower challenging young people to fulfil their potential
- Proven ability to establish and maintain positive, professional and motivational relationships
- Basic counselling skills including excellent listening skills
- Ability to give impartial, productive advice and guidance that focuses on the strengths and needs of the individual
- Good understanding of boundaries and confidentiality
- Proven ability to work well within a team and a professional approach to fostering strong external contacts
- Good verbal and written English
- Able to receive and act on feedback, and be willing to give feedback in a constructive way
- Effective administration and accurate record keeping skills (paper and computerised)
- Good IT skills and willingness to learn and use Switchback's databases

Professional attributes

- Commitment to Switchback's values
- Passionate about Switchback's ambition and purpose
- Happy working with people from a range of backgrounds
- Able to understand and respect the need for the best interests of our Trainees to always come first
- Resilience with a proven ability to deal with setbacks and frustrations
- Intuitive, resourceful and able to problem solve
- Able to effectively deal with changing priorities and unpredictability
- Able to be assertive when appropriate and empathetically support others towards solutions

- Have a sense of adventure
- Able to positively communicate you understand the difficulties and challenges another person might face

Job description

Face-to-face Mentoring

- Maintain regular contact with potential Trainees by visiting prison on a weekly basis and building a caseload of trainees to work with through the gate.
- Develop Switchback Mentor/ Trainee relationships and start planning for release with potential Trainees
- Meet Trainees at least once per week on release from prison for one-to-one time to:
 - Help set goals in their Action Plans
 - Offer advice and support on practical matters
 - Review Action Plans, issues and achievements
 - Offer informal counseling, ongoing motivation and encouragement using core counselling skills
 - Challenge attitudes and behavior as part of commitment to change
- Build safe, bounded relationships with Trainees and potential trainees, contributing to the targets for delivery in the Strategic Plan
- Proactively plan the building of a caseload: understanding the Trainee journey, manage selection lists, manage engaging with and preparing suitable candidates for engagement with Switchback, keeping track of caseload numbers
- Be in ad-hoc contact as necessary/requested to help Trainees deal with particular challenges
- Facilitate regular group work and horizon-broadening 'Switchback New Experiences'
- Keep clear paper records for each Trainee
- Update Trainee Database and Contacts Database on a regular basis and upload information accurately

Advocacy

- Liaise between training partners and Trainees
- Support Trainees through work placements and into permanent employment
- Refer Trainees on to other projects, professionals and specialist provision where appropriate

Outreach

- Build and maintain relationships with prison, probation and statutory staff. Motivate them to make referrals to Switchback. Ensure they have a good understanding of what we do
- Gather and record information about the situation of each potential Trainee from Prison Service, the prisoner himself and other people connected to him
- Maintain regular contact with potential Trainees and start planning for release with potential Trainees
- Arrange regular prison visits and make good preparations to ensure efficient use of time
- Adopt appropriate style, tone and clarity in external communications

Other

- Ensure the accurate inputting of data into Switchback systems, and that reports, data and anecdotal information are given in a timely manner to the Policy, Impact & Communications and Fundraising teams
- Commit to Switchback's programme of supervision and training
- Support fundraising and marketing activities
- Demonstrate an understanding of the Switchback culture and method of working and commitment to the use of the Switchback Mentor handbook
- Understand, support and contribute to the Switchback strategic plan
- Contribute to building knowledge of criminal justice system through team meetings and debriefings
- Lead and/or support other Switchback Mentors on external trips, and seek out new opportunities and adventures for the team and Trainees

- Involvement in developing and delivering training of other groups in Switchback methodology
- Engage fully with regular one-to-ones with the line manager
- Carry out other duties as required.