


IDEASSENCE

ANNUAL REPORT

2023





**“ IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR
HAVING MY ESSENCE WORKER
AND THE TEAM IN MY LIFE,
I WOULD SAY,
HAND ON HEART,
I WOULDN'T BE HERE. ”**

Excerpt from a testimonial one of our beneficiaries shared this year at an ID fundraiser.
Quote anonymised to not include Essence Worker's name.



ID ESSENCE

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Introduction

Mission and vision

At ID Essence, it is our vision that every young adult in a women's prison can have access to a consistent, dedicated worker to support them throughout their time in prison and beyond. We exist to try and make this vision a reality. We provide relational education, mentoring and emotional & practical support for young adults* both in and after prison, journeying with each individual for as long as they need.



ID Essence is the Young Adults' Project of Imago Dei. Imago Dei is committed to equipping women in prison to unlock and live in their God given potential, set free from their past and knowing their true identity.

Imago Dei

The term Imago Dei is Latin for "The Image of God". At Imago Dei, we believe that God created everyone in his image and gave every person on earth unique gifts, talents, skills and purpose.

The ID Essence team is still made up of four members:

The Team

Project Manager:	Joanna Hobson
Community Team Lead:	Tennika Montague
Prison Team Lead:	Keziah Poultney
Prison & Community Worker:	Kelie Kita

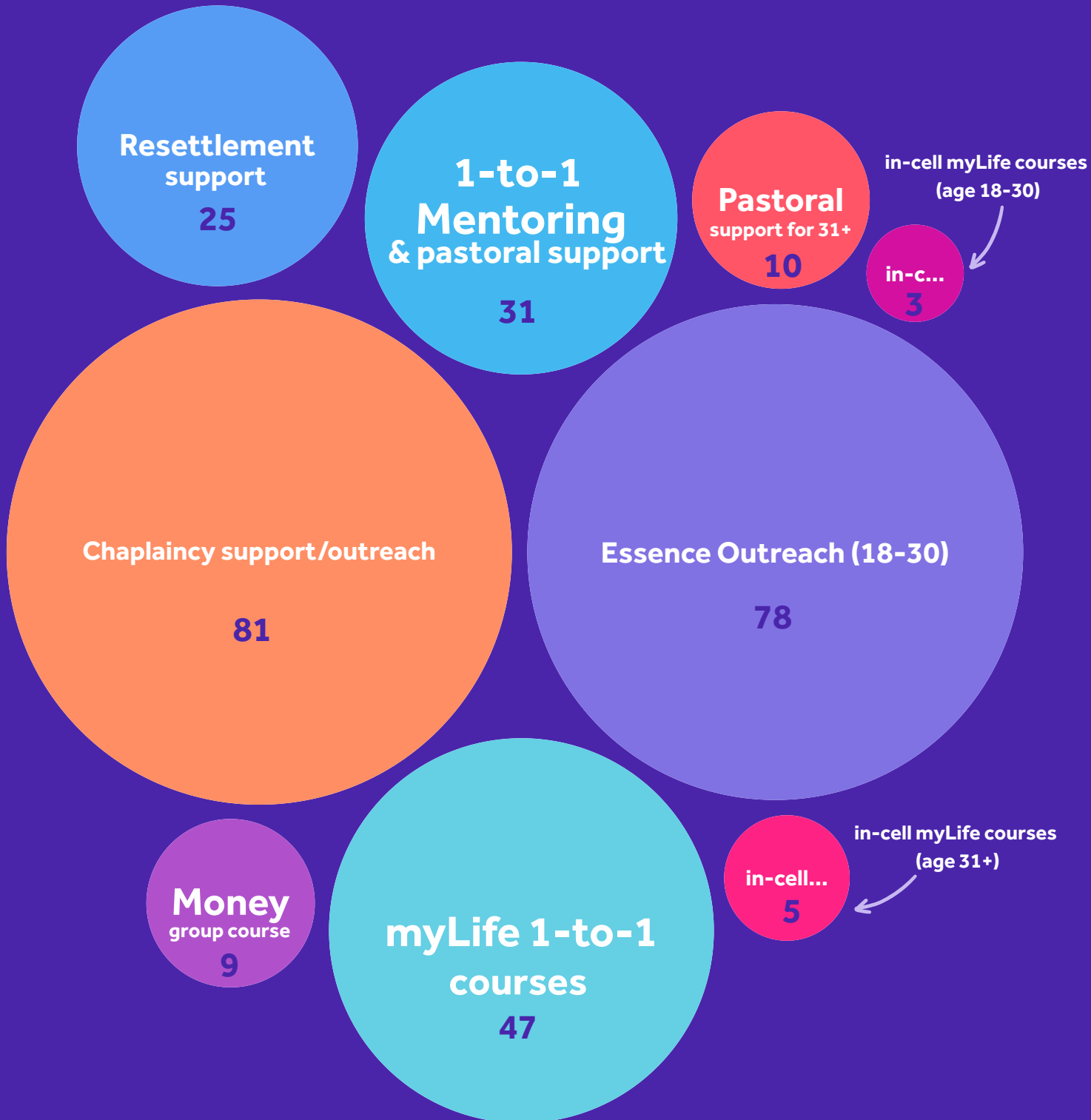
*A note on language

You may notice throughout this report that our language has changed to become more gender neutral. This is because some of the people we support in prison and the community are trans men and non-binary individuals. We seek to reflect this in the language we use to refer to our beneficiaries. We still only work in female prisons, but we will work with any young adult who is held there - whatever their gender.



IN PRISON - Summary in Numbers

This year in HMP Downview, we engaged with a total of 162 individuals through the activities below. The circles below show each activity the team delivered by the ID Essence team and the number of people who engaged with each. Some people are represented more than once as they engaged with more than one activity during the year.





Bloom

“ YOU TREAT US AS HUMANS ”

Quote from an End of Year Survey carried out with our prison beneficiaries.



IN PRISON

1-to-1 Work



The 1-to-1 support we provide young adults in prison remains the foundation of who we are and what we do. We continue to provide as many young adults in HMP Downview as we can with a dedicated Essence Worker, to journey alongside them throughout their time in prison and beyond. This year, we have supported 59 young adults through our 1-to-1 support. This usually involves one or a combination of myLife courses on topics such as Managing Emotions & Relating to Others; ongoing pastoral & mentoring support; and resettlement support in the run up to release.

Outreach

Due to our small team, we don't have capacity to work intensively with every young adult in the prison (yet!). So part of our work also involves engaging with young adults through outreach or one-off interactions. Through this aspect of our work we hope to be a friendly face in an, often hostile, environment. We let young adults know we are here for them if they need a chat or ad hoc support on their landing. 78 young adults benefited from these types of interactions with us this year - many of whom then went on to engage with our more intensive 1-to-1 work.



Money course



The team delivered a final two small group money courses at the start of 2023. Nine women participated in these courses. We have taken a pause on running these moving forward so that we can focus our efforts on our young adult specific interventions and explore developing new courses for 18-25 year olds.

Reward & Recognition

The ID Essence team were recognised by the prison this year as part of their 'Reward & Recognition' scheme. The team received a letter of recognition and thanks from the Prison Governor, for going 'above and beyond' in our support of the young adults in HMP Downview.



IN PRISON - CASE STUDY

Below is a quote from Latoyah*, who wrote down some thoughts about her experience of engaging with ID Essence in prison. Latoyah is currently working through the Managing Emotions course from the myLife series.



Engaging with Essence is beneficial in many ways. I am developing a better understanding of my thoughts and feelings, as well as exploring my core values and identity.

Through discussing and reflecting upon fundamental aspects of my life I feel greater accountability. I have noticed that I am better at making decisions – keeping myself and others safe.

I look forward to sessions with my Essence Worker every week. I feel respected, valued and validated. I am comfortable expressing myself; each session is a safe space. My Essence Worker and I go from chatting about make-up/nails, fashion, food and my family, to deeper things such as emotions, trauma, conflicts etc., and I like how these are separate but all important.

I enjoy our creative work together and I am really glad that I started Essence with my Essence Worker 😊"

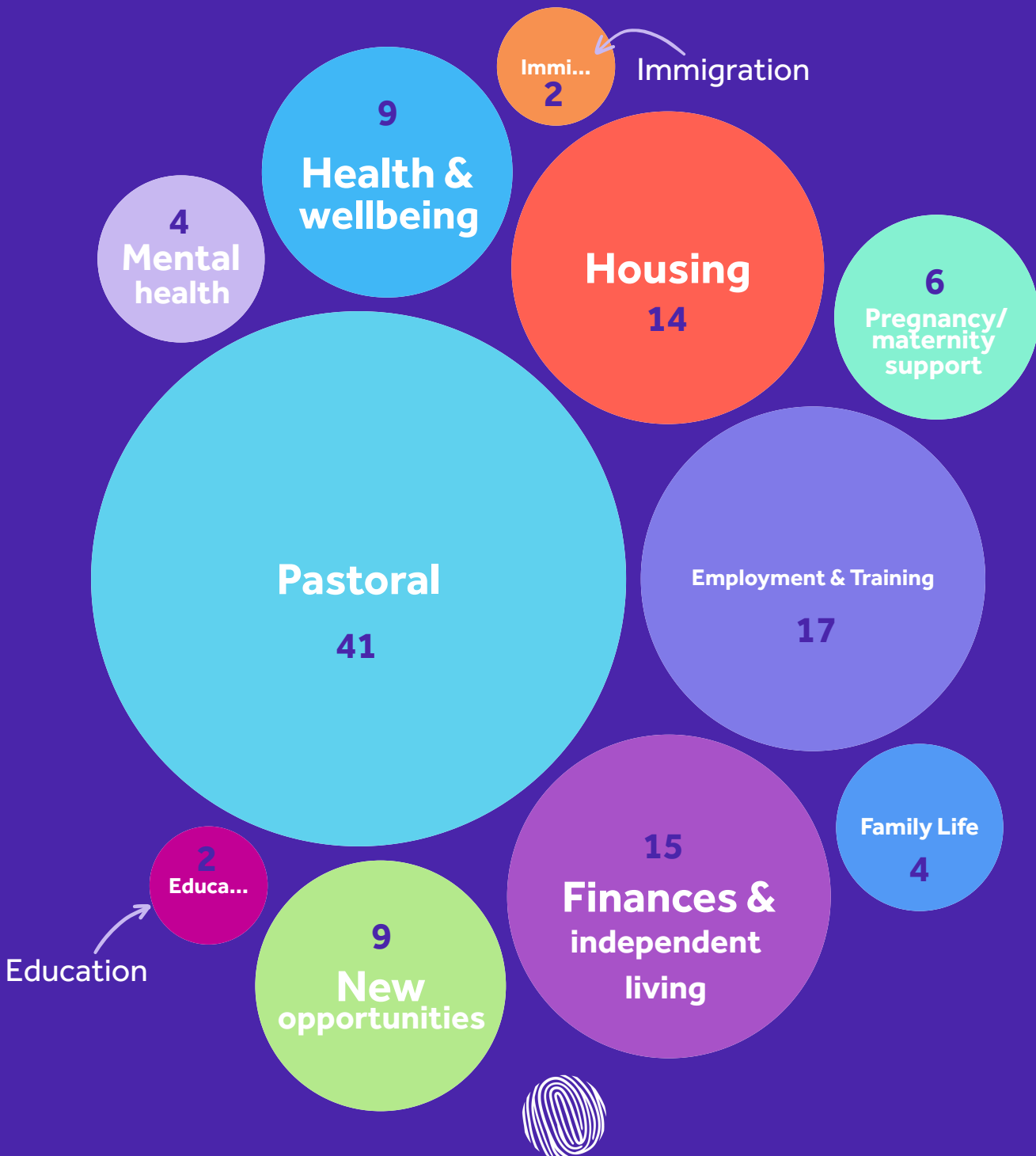


*not her real name. Name of Essence Worker has been anonymised in quote too.

IN THE COMMUNITY Summary in numbers

This year in the community we engaged with a total of 41 young adults through our resettlement support. 15 of these were young adults who were released from prison this year, 12 of whom are still actively engaging with the team.

Our resettlement support continues to be as holistic and responsive as possible - offering support in any way we can in whichever aspect of life each beneficiary feels they need it. Below is a breakdown of the different areas we provided support in this year. The white captions detail the type of support and the purple numbers indicate the number of people to receive support in this area.



“ FOR ME YOUR SERVICE IS THE
BEST SUPPORT I’VE GOT ”

Quote from survey carried out with our
community beneficiaries.



IN THE COMMUNITY

Our community support work continues to be shaped by our commitment to being holistic, responsive to each individual's unique needs, and for the long-term - there is no limit to the length of time someone can engage with our services.



Practical Support

This year we have continued to provide our vital blend of both practical and pastoral support to our community caseload. This year the main areas of practical need for our beneficiaries were housing and finances.

SOME EXAMPLES OF SUPPORT WE HAVE PROVIDED THIS YEAR:

- Secured financial grants for 7 individuals, from our fantastic partners at the Church Homeless Charity and others to go towards necessities such as food, clothes & household items.
- Introduced a new 'moving house' aspect to our service. Our Community Team Lead hired a van for two beneficiaries and helped them to move house - both of whom were in desperate need of this support.
- Secured a new work experience placement with a film company for a beneficiary interested in pursuing a career in the film industry.
- Provided support for 6 women on our caseload who are either pregnant or who have recently had babies. (We will be exploring ways we can expand and grow this support next year).
- Met two women at the gate on the day of their release and accompanied them throughout that first day of freedom.

Pastoral Support



Pastoral support continues to be the bedrock of all our services in the community. Every woman on our caseload has received pastoral support from the team this year. Either in the form of face-to-face meet ups (often over lunch or a hot drink), having a listening ear at the end of the phone, receiving an encouraging text message from their Essence Worker or receiving one of our release parcels, Christmas presents & birthday parcels. The impact of these gestures seems to be huge. This is reflected in the messages of thanks we receive regularly in response.

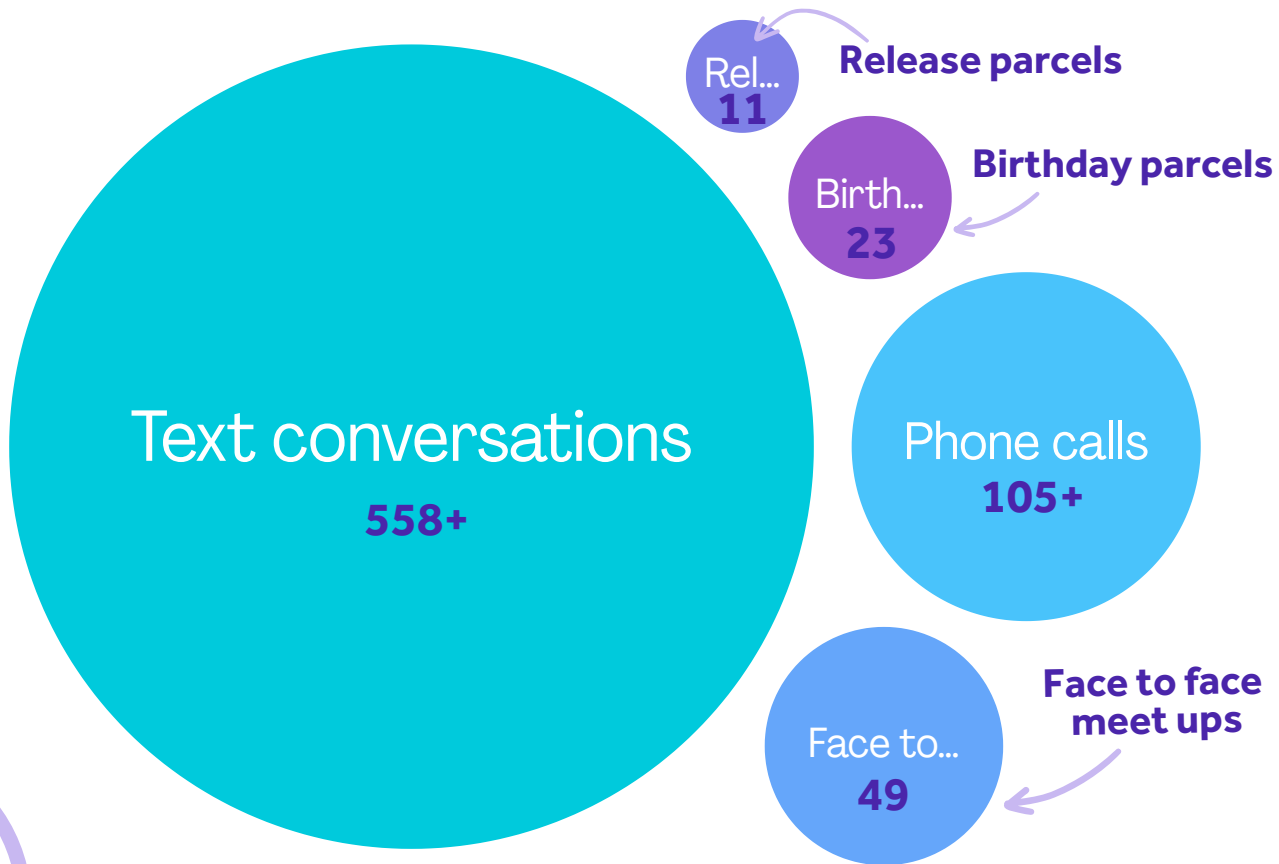
I only know two beautiful souls that would send me presents every year without failing Tysm for being there for me and supporting me through thick and thin you guys have been amazing I pray for you both always may you both be blessed thank you will open on my bday 🥹



14:55



ID ESSENCE COMMUNITY OUTPUTS



New things

Here are 3 new things we have done this year at ID Essence:

- 1 Took part in an Imago Dei fundraising dinner for prospective sponsors. Five of our community beneficiaries were able to attend as guests, two of whom shared as a part of the evening about the difference ID Essence has made in their lives.
- 2 Started engaging in 6 months of training with our friends at Sister System in their Quality Mentoring Framework.
- 3 Moved into a new office in East London (after searching high and wide for a London office for a long time). We are very grateful to one of our partner charities who has made room for us in their office building!



IN THE COMMUNITY - CASE STUDY

“

I started engaging with essence when I was in prison I was reluctant at first didn't really want to engage but as the weeks went by I started to feel more comfortable and engaged more and it made a difference in the work.

I received a lot of support from essence wether it to be with the course I was doing or just a general chit chat.

I'm now out in the community [and] still am doing my course because I want to finish it because I want to be able to say I finished it. I also have weekly to fortnightly calls even if it's just a check in. The support I get from essence has helped me through a lot, engaging with the course and essence has changed my views on a lot of things and made me understand myself a little better also.

They are a very hard working team and I would recommend to anyone 😊

”

Words by Kieran* - one of our community beneficiaries. He and his ID Essence Worker have the record for the furthest distance travelled for a face to face meet up as he lives in a city 2.5 hr train ride away from London!

*not his real name



HOPES FOR 2024 AND BEYOND

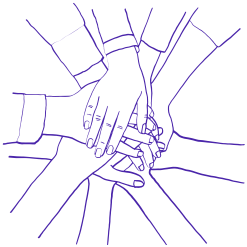
Beneficiary Involvement

Increasing our beneficiary involvement is a priority for next year. We want to involve our beneficiaries more in shaping the work we do at ID Essence. In 2024 we want to establish a paid Consultancy Board made up of our beneficiaries as our first step in this area.



Growing our Community Network

We are always on the look out for new community partners, to join us in the work of supporting people after prison and to increase the opportunities on offer for them. In 2024 we want to continue to grow our network of charity and corporate partners to ensure we can provide the best support and opportunities possible for our beneficiaries.



Improving Outcomes & Data Monitoring

In 2024 we will be reviewing our data and outcomes monitoring practices. We will then adapt and improve them to ensure we are capturing the impact ID Essence are having as best as possible.



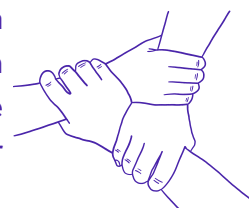
New Innovations

We want to continue to adapt and innovate to find new ways to support young adults after prison. One new initiative we hope to start in 2024 is 'Essence Evenings' for our community beneficiaries to come together and enjoy a social evening together with the team around different activities to encourage relaxation and wellbeing. We will also be looking to develop new activities and interventions to deliver in the prison, guided by input from our beneficiaries there.



Expand into an additional prison

We believe every young adult in women's prisons should have access to a dedicated support worker to journey with them through their time in prison and beyond. Because of this vision, it has long been an aspiration to be offering our services in more than one prison. Maybe 2024 will be the year that this hope becomes a reality...



2023



PHOTO WALL

1



2



3



4



5



6



7



1. At the ID Fundraiser - Jo with three of our fab beneficiaries

2. Selfie after a community support session over lunch together

3. One of our beneficiaries after a community meet up

4. Kez & Kellie showing off our letter of Reward & Recognition from the prison

5. At the ID Fundraiser - Kellie & Kez with two of our wonderful beneficiaries.

6. Tennika after speaking on the panel at a Black History Month event put on by Sister System

7. Jo and Kellie being 'Christmas elves', getting our ID Essence Christmas parcels ready to send out to those we support in the community.

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Demographic Breakdown

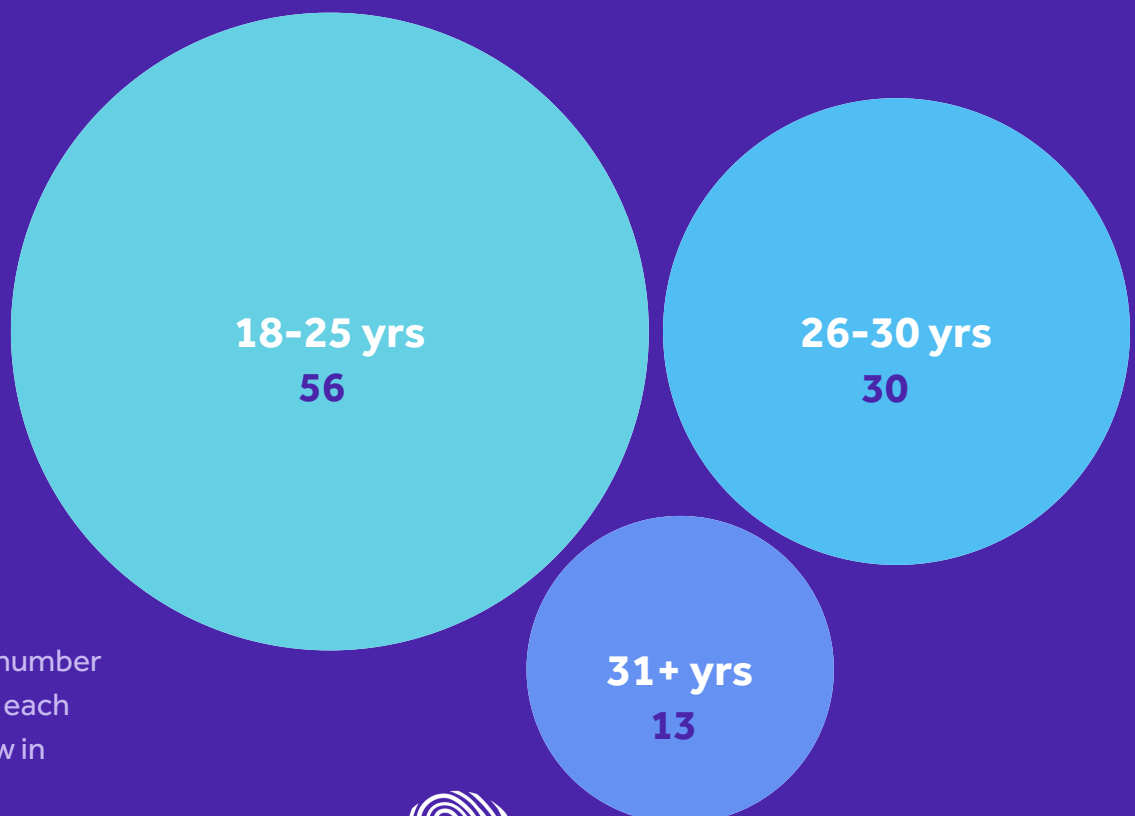
The primary reasons we report on these three demographic categories is so that we can monitor:

- How effectively we are maintaining our focus on our project's priority age groups of 18-25, then 26-30.
- Whether we are being true to our faith statement of "working with those from all faiths and none".
- The ethnicities of our beneficiaries so that we can ensure that the diversity of our caseload is representative of the prison population and no one is being excluded. We also use this information to inform future team recruitment so that we can work towards our staff team being more representative of our caseload.

In the figures below we have shown the demographic breakdown of our Primary Activity Caseload.

The Primary Activity Caseload represents women we engaged with through our primary prison activities of 1-to-1 myLife course sessions, regular mentoring, pastoral support, resettlement preparation sessions and Essence outreach. These activities constitute the bulk of the work we do in prison. The religion and ethnicity categories used are those used by the prison.

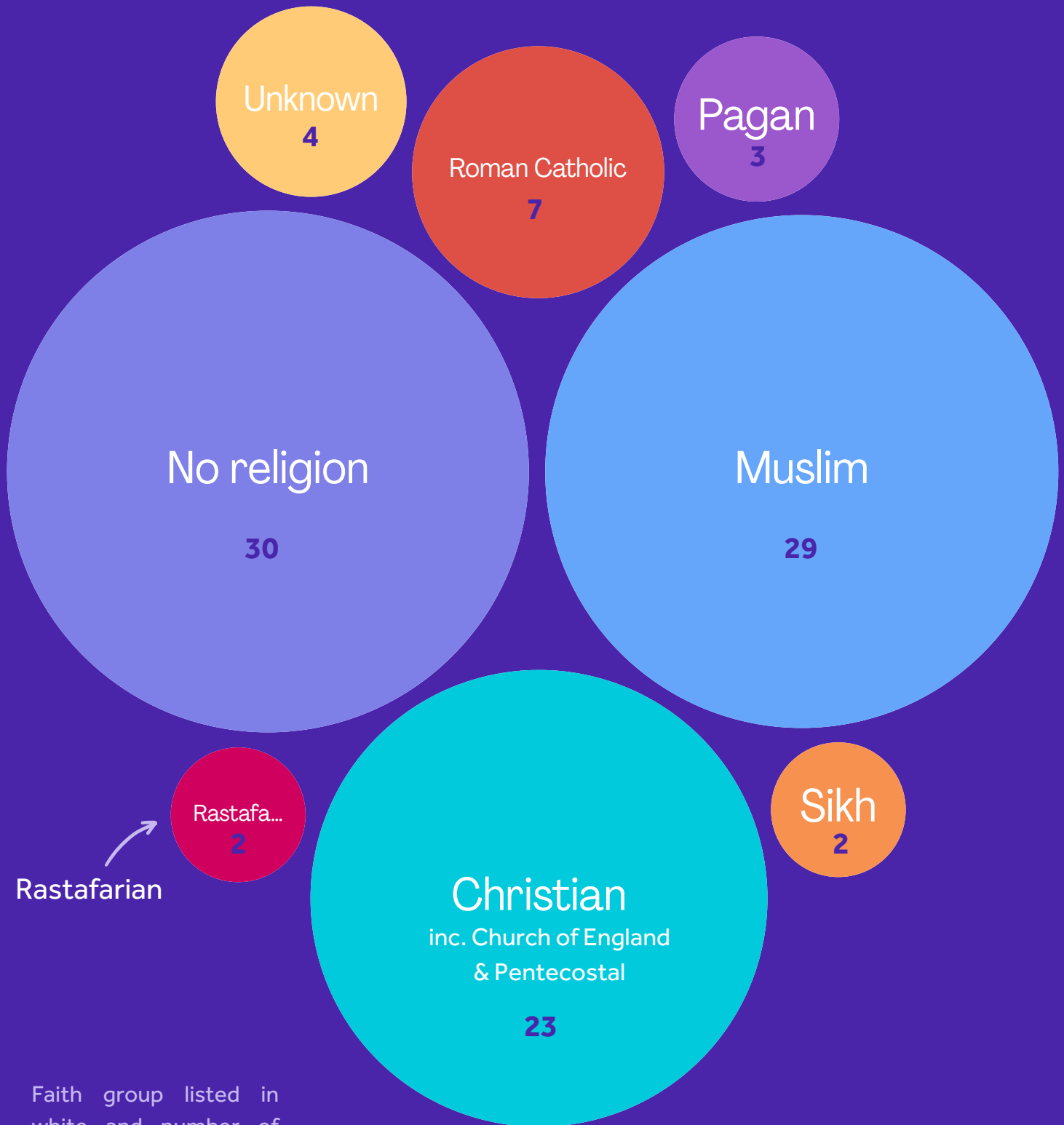
AGE



Age group and number engaged within each age group below in purple.



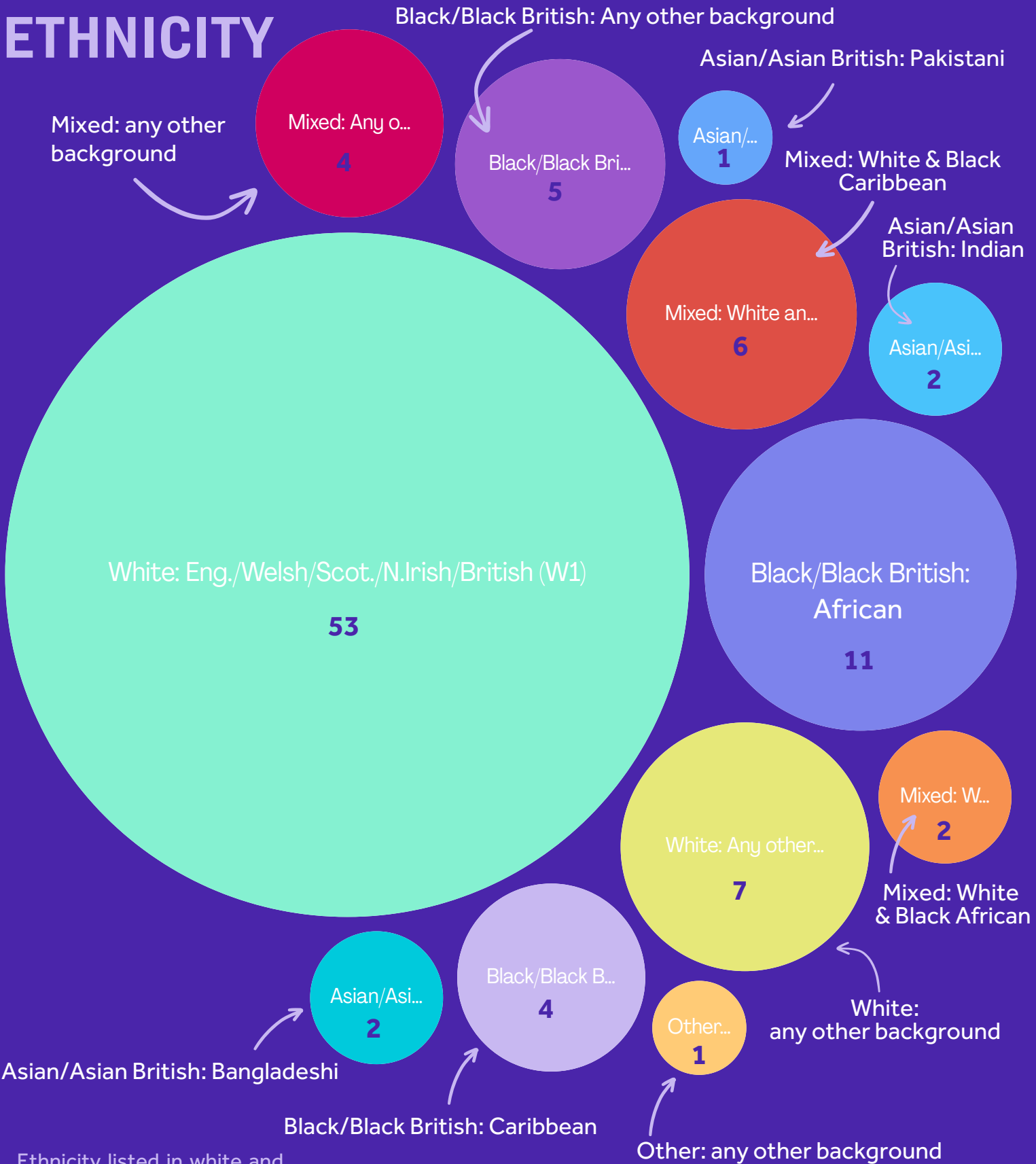
RELIGION



Faith group listed in white and number of people engaged within each faith group below in purple.



ETHNICITY



Ethnicity listed in white and number of people engaged from each ethnicity below in purple.





THANK YOU

To all our supporters.

In whatever way you support our work and the young adults in our care, thank you for journeying with us this year.

We couldn't do it without you!



