



Chair of Trustees

January 2025

SWITCHBACK


Charity People
BOARD & LEADERSHIP

Welcome

Are you passionate about helping young Londoners leaving prison and supporting them to build a stable life they can be proud of? Do you believe we should and can reform the justice system so that everyone has the opportunity to live a stable and rewarding life as an active member of a just society? And are you looking for a way that you can make a difference?

If so, you may well be the person we're looking for to guide Switchback on the next exciting stage of our journey. We're ambitious to do even more to support the young men we work with, our Trainees. We also want to contribute to strengthening the resettlement landscape through sharing our 16 years of learning with communities and organisations across the country. And we want to change both national policy and public perception through growing our influencing work in pursuit of increased social and racial justice. We're now looking for a new Chair of the Board of Trustees who can help us turn these ambitions into reality.

As the next Chair of Switchback, you'd be working with a diverse Board of Trustees and staff team who bring both a range of lived and learned experience and expertise and a strong appetite for pushing

us to be bolder in all aspects of our work. You will bring a personal passion for our mission, a belief in the inherent dignity and value of people regardless of their background or previous life trajectory, and a proven ability to provide good governance and strategic oversight. Working closely with our CEO, you'll be committed to nurturing a culture of high support, high challenge throughout the whole organisation, from the Board to our relationship with Trainees. And you will be an effective advocate for our work, helping us open the right doors to influence for lasting systems and culture change in the justice system. If this sounds like you, and you can commit around 2 days per month, we'd love to hear from you.

Please read on for more information and details about how to apply.



Olivia Gillan
Deputy Chair



Sian Williams
CEO



“Seeing my Switchback Mentor in prison meant I already knew her once I got out. She understands me and understands the journey I’m taking. If I was doing it by myself things would have gone off track by now.”

Daniel, Switchback Trainee

An Introduction to Switchback

Switchback was established in 2008 on the basis that it's often not the lack of opportunity, but rather a lack of confidence, knowledge and continuity of support that prevents young men leaving prison from overcoming challenges and realising their options.

Since then, we've helped hundreds of young men, our Trainees, returning to London from prison to build stable, rewarding lives they can be proud of. We provide intensive 1-2-1 support and real work training delivered with a team of professional Switchback Mentors who help Trainees make choices that reinforce their initial commitment to take control of their life. In 2024, we supported a total of 721 young prison leavers, with 67 young men engaging as Switchback Trainees on our intensive 12-week mentoring programme.

Our pioneering approach works: in stark contrast to the national average - which sees nearly half of prison leavers back inside within a year - our data suggests only around 9% of

Switchback Trainees reoffend, while over half move into long-term work. Last year, 68% of Switchback Trainees reached our benchmark of Real, Lasting Change: a fundamental shift in mindset and lifestyle.

This year we will publish our next strategic plan, focussed on growing our impact. We want to scale our frontline work to reach even more young Londoners and share our model with others across the UK who seek to offer relational support to those caught up in the justice system. In partnership with Switchback's Experts by Experience Board, we want to build a powerful and credible evidence base for effective relational resettlement policy and practice. To achieve these aims, we will need to grow our frontline delivery and influencing capacity and expand our partnerships so we can directly and indirectly shape an enabling environment which supports even more people to break free from the criminal justice system and live life differently.

Our Ambition, Purpose & Values

Our Ambition

Switchback's ambition is that everyone has the opportunity to a stable and rewarding life as an active member of society.

Our Purpose

Switchback's purpose is to enable young men to find a way out of the justice system and build a stable, rewarding life they can be proud of.

Our Values

We always aim to be:

- **Human** - keeping Trainees at the heart of everything we do. We build trust, confidence and independence in all areas of a Trainee's life.
- **Authentic** - rolling with the ups and downs of real life. We prize integrity and honesty. We don't sell a dream; we're realistic about what it means to genuinely start over and the huge courage needed to change. We provide a space to learn from mistakes.
- **Committed** - Our commitment to Trainees is consistent and continuous, and for as long as it takes. We reject quick fixes. We do what we say we're going to do and coach our Trainees to do the same.
- **Ambitious** - with high expectations. We assume strengths, resources and abilities in Trainees. We don't do things for people - we challenge and encourage our Trainees to take control.
- **Pioneering** - we challenge Trainees and ourselves to move outside our comfort zones and we encourage adventure to learn and grow. As a charity we constantly seek to reflect and improve.

People at Switchback

Our Staff Team

The Switchback team is made up of 27 staff members, led by CEO, Sian Williams. She is supported by a Leadership Team comprised of a Director of Finance and Operations, a Head of Delivery, a Head of Influencing, a Head of Fundraising and Impact and a Head of Philanthropy and Development. 12.5 people are involved in working directly with our Trainees, either as Mentors or Delivery Managers.

Our Trustees

Our Trustees come from a range of backgrounds in the charity, public and private sectors. Some have lengthy experience of being charity Trustees, some are newer to Board membership. Further details on our Trustees can be found [here](#).

Since 2020 our Board has also included one of Switchback's own Experts by Experience (EBE) members, a current or former Switchback Trainee, in the voluntary role of EBE Board Adviser.

EDI at Switchback

Nine in ten Switchback Trainees are from an ethnic minority background, so it is vital that our team is representative of the

men we support, that our influencing work closely challenges the structural reasons underpinning the overrepresentation of ethnic minority communities in the justice system, and that our organisational culture proactively includes and supports all forms of diversity.

By strengthening our inclusive recruitment process further, we have succeeded in increasing the diversity in our Board and Leadership Team, and now have a higher level of lived experience and diversity across our leadership. We have also worked on addressing the additional challenges of entering the workforce for those with lived experience, recognising that our team are working in an environment that exposes them to secondary trauma. Our induction and staff support and training offer have been enhanced to better reflect these challenges. Our internal EDI Advisory Group, currently being formed from volunteers from across our team, will advise on our policies and practices as well as on our analysis of demographic data on our Trainees.

Our latest diversity snapshot data can be viewed [here](#) and our diversity and inclusion policy can be read [here](#).





Our Financial Position

Switchback has grown its income consistently in the last few years and is in a secure financial position, regularly breaking even or delivering a financial surplus.

£'000s	2020	2021	2022	2023
Income	756	915	1,151	1,220
Expenditure	613	860	1,151	1,217
Surplus	143	55	0	3
Total Funds (Restricted and Unrestricted)	929	984	984	987

Income is drawn from an increasingly diverse mix of sources - made up of grants from Trusts and Foundations, statutory funding, and donations from corporates and individual donors.

The charity's financial unrestricted reserves have been consistently in line with its prudent policy of holding between 4-6 months of the following year's budgeted expenditure.

Further information can be found [here](#) in our 2023 Annual report and accounts.

About the Role

The Chair of Switchback is appointed by the charity's board of trustees to lead the Board in fulfilling its purpose. As well as undertaking the role of a trustee, the Chair's role at Switchback will include a focus on the following areas:

Governance and Strategy

- Lead the organisation in partnership with the Chief Executive in support of Switchback's mission, vision and values.
- Chair effective and inclusive board meetings, facilitating discussions to which everyone can contribute and ensuring well-evidenced, considered decision-making to advance the purpose and values of the organisation. Maintain oversight of board sub-committees.
- Ensure the organisation adheres to good governance protocols, the Charity Governance Code and charity law, and manages risk appropriately as well as any potential conflicts of interest.
- Support Switchback to implement our new strategy to grow our reach and impact, supporting the Chief Executive to seize the right opportunities for sustainable growth.
- Support Switchback as we develop our EDI strategy and be a champion for EDI on the board.
- Provide sound financial oversight and ensure high standards of financial management.

- Act with integrity, upholding and modelling the organisation's values and creating a culture that supports Switchback's charitable purpose.

Leadership of the Board of Trustees

- Build and lead a diverse and inclusive board team where all trustees are clear about their roles and the skills, knowledge and experiences of each member are well used.
- Create the environment for a high performing board team, nurturing productive relationships with and between individual board members and reviewing trustees' and the board's performance.

Guidance and Support to the Chief Executive

- Develop and maintain a positive and productive working relationship with the Chief Executive, staying in regular contact and acting as a sounding board to discuss strategic or staffing issues, coaching, supporting and challenging as necessary.
- Support the development of the Chief Executive including co-ordinating an annual appraisal.

Advocacy and Fundraising

- Be an ambassador for Switchback and, on occasion, represent Switchback externally.
- Support fundraising activity and be willing to use connections to advance Switchback's aims.



Candidate Profile

We are looking for someone who is:

- An experienced trustee who can provide effective governance while we continue to grow our impact. This might come from being a trustee for a larger charity/organisation than Switchback or as the Chair of a smaller organisation.
- Passionate about our purpose to transform the experience and perception of people on release, for individual Trainees and society in general. You have a strong belief in the dignity and potential of our Trainees and share our aim that everyone caught up in the justice system has both the chance and the support to build a stable, rewarding life they can be proud of.
- Someone who understands the lives and experiences of our Trainees and the implications they have for our work and governance. Ideally, you will have your own connection to the justice sector, whether that's through your professional or personal life.
- As ambitious for Switchback as we are and who will challenge us to be even bolder, bringing experience and insight to support us to scale our reach and impact. You will be committed to Switchback's aim of achieving change not just at an individual level by working directly with Trainees, but at a systemic level by collaborating with others and influencing key decision makers.
- Able to balance managing risk against innovation. Switchback manages a particular kind of risk in our justice sector frontline work so an understanding of how that affects our decision-making and ability to act is crucial.

- An experienced people manager. You will have demonstrable experience of successful values-based leadership, ideally leading an organisation through change.
- Well-connected to people and organisations who can support us to grow our reach and impact. You will be committed to using your own knowledge, experience and networks to help us scale.
- Experienced in collaborating and building partnerships. You will have a strong belief in the value of working with others and be able to help Switchback to navigate the challenges.
- Someone who values others' views, opinions and experiences (including lived experience) and is willing to adapt your thinking in response to new evidence or insight. You will have a strong commitment to EDI values and principles.

We know that we are asking for a lot so we would value your honest assessment about where your strengths lie, and where your development areas are.

Switchback is an inclusive organisation that strives to reflect London's diversity in our appointments. We particularly welcome applications from:

- People with lived experience of London's many and varied communities.
- Personal or family experience of the criminal justice system.

Additional Details

Time Commitment

Being Chair of Switchback requires a time commitment of circa 2 days per month on average. Whilst that's the norm, you will also need some level of flexibility to be able to react to major incidents or support the Chief Executive through key periods of organisational development such as new strategy development.

The Chair is appointed for an initial three-year term with the option of renewal for up to a further 2 terms. The normal maximum term for all trustees (including the Chair) is six years, with the option for up to an additional three years where that is required for effective, sustainable governance.

Remuneration

The role of Chair is not paid but we're always happy to pay reasonable travel and childcare expenses to enable you to attend board meetings or other Switchback commitments.

Our Commitment

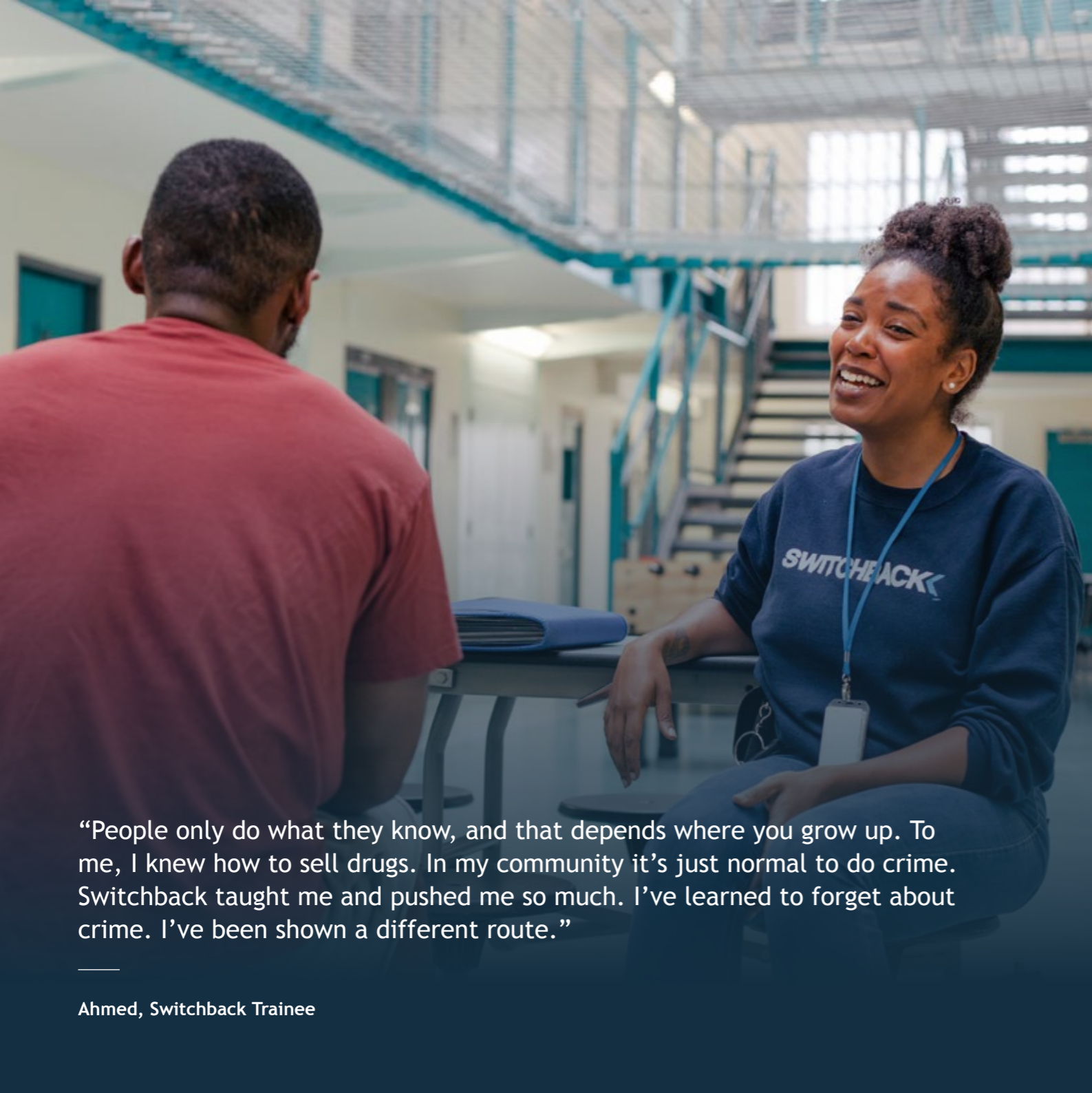
We will provide our new Chair with a tailored induction to ensure they are equipped to carry out their duties. This will include an introduction to the detail of the work that Switchback does and the Trainees we work with. We encourage all Trustees to shadow our Mentors on a day in prison, so they can see first-hand the frontline environment within which our Trainees first meet their Mentor.

We also plan for there to be a detailed handover with our current Chair, Duncan Shrubsole. We can show some flexibility around how long this handover will take, depending on the profile, experience and current commitments of the incoming Chair.



“When I first came into Switchback I’d feel so uncomfortable I could hardly speak. Switchback totally changed how I thought about myself. I’ve learned that it’s not about taking the fast route, taking the long route is more beneficial in the end. I’ve done so much more than I thought I could”

Elton, Fashion Student and former Switchback Trainee



“People only do what they know, and that depends where you grow up. To me, I knew how to sell drugs. In my community it’s just normal to do crime. Switchback taught me and pushed me so much. I’ve learned to forget about crime. I’ve been shown a different route.”

Ahmed, Switchback Trainee

How to Apply

Charity People Ltd is acting as a recruitment agency advisor to Switchback on this appointment. Interested candidates are invited to submit a CV and supporting statement addressing the following questions (500 words maximum per question) to seniorappointments@charitypeople.co.uk.

1. How do your skills, experience and personal qualities make you a good candidate for this role? What would you see as your development areas? Refer to the role description and candidate profile for inspiration.
2. What do you see as the key strategic risks and opportunities that Switchback faces in the next 3-5 years?

Closing Date:

5pm on 24th February 2025

First Stage Interviews:

Friday 28th March 2025

Informal Discussion with CEO:

Afternoon of Wednesday 2nd April 2025

Second Stage Interviews:

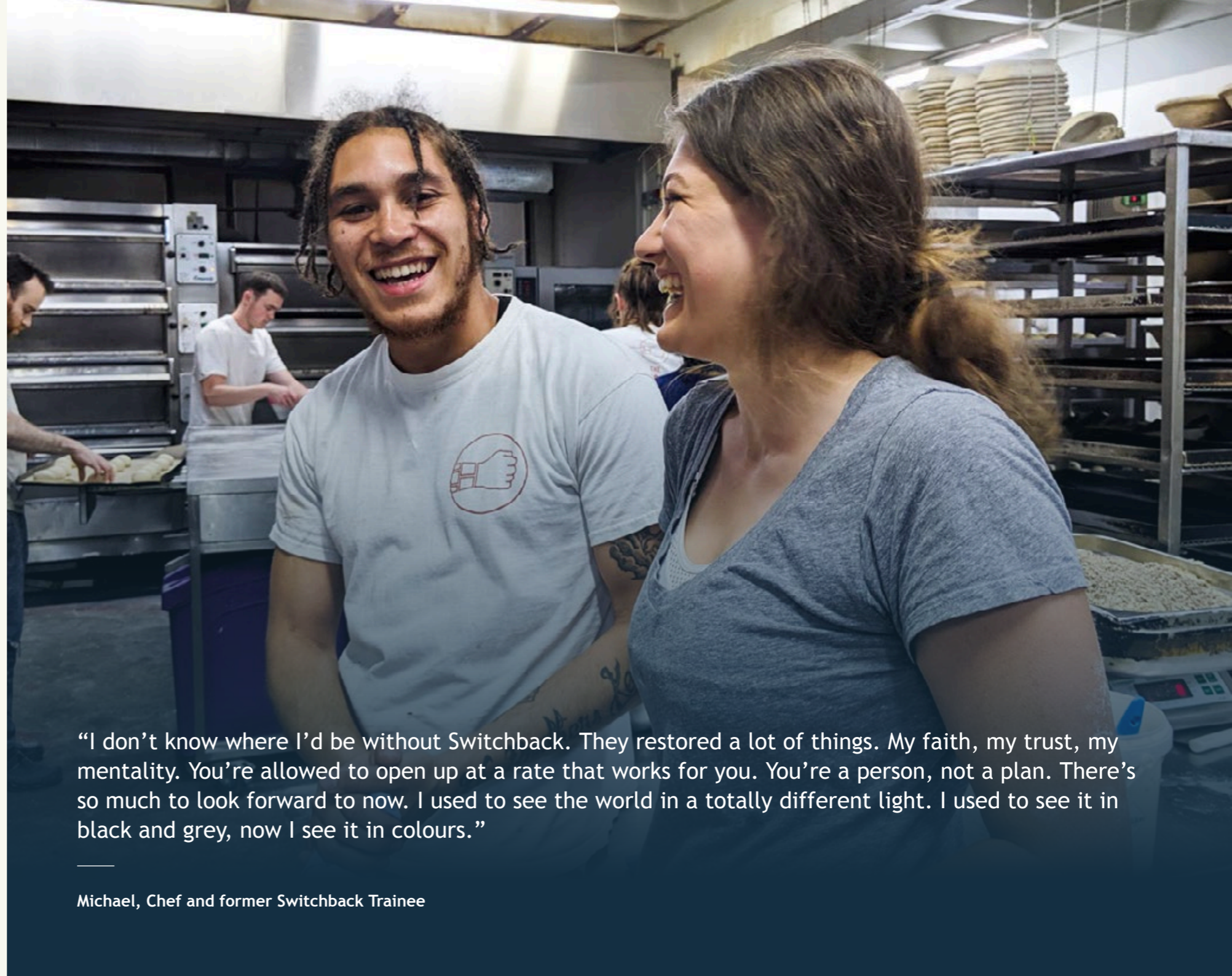
Wednesday 23rd April 2025

We want you to have every opportunity to demonstrate your skills, ability, and potential; please contact us if you require any assistance or adjustment so we can help make the application process work for you.

Charity People actively promote equality, diversity, and inclusion. We match charity needs with the skills and experience of candidates, irrespective of age, disability (including hidden disabilities), gender, gender identity or gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation. We do this because we know greater diversity will lead to even greater results for the charities with which we work.

Thank You

If you've read this far, thank you for your interest. Switchback is an organisation that transforms lives. It's a remarkable charity, doing remarkable work, with a remarkable team of all sorts of different people involved. We hope you might want to become one of them and we very much look forward to hearing from you.



“I don't know where I'd be without Switchback. They restored a lot of things. My faith, my trust, my mentality. You're allowed to open up at a rate that works for you. You're a person, not a plan. There's so much to look forward to now. I used to see the world in a totally different light. I used to see it in black and grey, now I see it in colours.”

Michael, Chef and former Switchback Trainee



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