



EMPLOYER GUIDE



BARRIER BUSTING

Employers sometimes believe that ex-offenders lack soft skills, such as honesty or reliability. These perceptions are challenged by employers' actual experience.

“Ex-offenders are unreliable employees”

Only 23 employers in the total sample of 474 respondents report negative experiences when employing an ex-offender

“Ex-offenders won't get on with the rest of my staff members”

134 organisations record positive experiences with ex-offenders, and 86% say that they settle into work well with colleagues (86%) and perform well (82%).

“If my customers find out we employ people with convictions, they will take their business elsewhere”

65% of those organisations that had promoted employing ex-offenders say it had delivered a positive impact on their corporate reputation.

“People never change”

Employment is the single most important factor in preventing reoffending. Given the opportunity, many people with convictions go on to live happy and fulfilling lives contributing to their communities.

“I am sure it's illegal to employ someone with a conviction”

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 was introduced to ensure that people with convictions who have not reoffended for a period of time since the date of their conviction are not discriminated against when applying for jobs. The Act enables ex-offenders to 'wipe the slate clean' of their criminal record, except for the most serious offences, after a specified time (i.e. the conviction becomes 'spent'). The Act defines time periods after which different types of convictions become spent. **It also makes it illegal for employers to discriminate against an ex-offender on the grounds of a spent conviction.** There are a small number of roles which are exempt from this legislation. In such cases all convictions must be disclosed. Otherwise it is very often up to the discretion of the employer whether or not to employ a person with current convictions.

“Surely I am increasing the risk to my organisation”

You run a greater risk by unknowingly recruiting a person with a conviction. It's the ones you don't yet know about who could cause concern. By using a transparent process you will make it safe for candidates to disclose their criminal record. Ensuring a full and frank exchange of information leads to informed decisions and professional risk reduction.



FROM PRISON TO EMPLOYMENT

A THREE STEP PATHWAY



CLEAN SHEET WAYS TO WORK®
A unique preparation for the world of work

FINANCIAL BENEFITS

“90% of the offenders I meet are desperate to get back into employment. They work up to 70 hours a week, they want to be at work, they want opportunities and they won’t let you down. Would you employ an offender? I would encourage you to.”

Elizabeth Campton-Sturridge, Construction Consultant, Tempforce.

INCREASED RETENTION

The average cost of recruiting and training a new employee is estimated at £5,000.

People with Convictions are less likely to leave, saving you money on recruiting and training new employees.

Increased retention rates can demonstrably secure cost reductions.

The effect of increasing staff retention:

- ✓ Reduced spend on recruitment and training of new staff
- ✓ Less money lost from the decrease in productivity that would come from the loss of an experienced member
- ✓ Increased efficiency

DECREASED ABSENTEEISM

Days lost through absence carries a financial cost and other team members are burdened with extra work. Ex-offenders can be reliable and committed.

The positive impact of decreasing absenteeism:

- ✓ Increased productivity
- ✓ Increased performance results
- ✓ Reduce the costs of recruiting inexperienced or temporary staff

“By employing offenders . . . we have gained some valuable permanent team members who have already demonstrated their enthusiasm . . . They are committed members of staff who are proving to be a real asset. The business benefits have far outweighed the risks.” *Davina Tanner, General Manager, Chapelfield Shopping Centre*

INCREASED EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

High performance is the key to efficiency savings with fewer but more engaged employees.

- ✓ A 5% improvement in employee engagement can add 2% to sales.
- ✓ Business units in the top half of employee engagement do better than the bottom half by 86% in customer metrics, 70% in productivity, 70% in reducing employee turnover, 44% in profitability. (Source: Gallup)

“They work harder than others to prove that they are reliable.”

“They’re grateful for the opportunity to get out and give 110%.”

“Colleagues without an offence don’t seem as keen.”

“Somebody may have made a mistake and they’re trying to prove themselves.”

The positive impact of increasing engagement:

- ✓ Increased business performance results
- ✓ It maximises the impact of training and prolongs its effectiveness

Employers who participated in the The Right Step Project reported that ex-offenders had a positive and proactive approach to work, were willing to attempt new tasks and developed good working relationships with colleagues and managers.

“I find that the staff we’ve recruited from prisons are among the best colleagues we’ve got. We see this as a great way of not only helping people but of getting people to work for us. Only a handful of UK companies are actively seeking to recruit offenders. You can take the opportunity that the others are missing.” *James Timpson, CEO, Timpson Group.*

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

In tough times, your reputation as a forward thinking and progressive employer can help your business stand out from the crowd. You can show that your organisation takes Corporate Social Responsibility seriously. Demonstrating a commitment to making your employees truly representative of the local community can distinguish you from competitors. Amongst the relatively low number of employers who do promote the fact that they employ ex-offenders, almost two-thirds report that it has a positive impact on their corporate reputation. *CIPD, Employing ex-offenders to capture talent, May 2007*

ENHANCED REPUTATION

"We have won a number of accolades for our commitment to corporate social responsibility including: the EDP Business Award for Community Impact; the Business in the Community Awards for the East of England Most Innovative New Programme and National Award for Excellence - Employability Award 2010; and Tricia Fuller, our Group HR Director, was appointed The Prince's Ambassador for the East of England in 2008." *Peter Hawes, Managing Director, Norse Commercial Services*

65% of those who did employ ex-offenders say it impacted positively on their corporate reputation.

REDUCING REOFFENDING – SAVING THE NATION MONEY

"The National Audit Office has estimated that the social and economic costs of re-offending by those released from short sentences alone are between £7-£10 billion a year. "Almost half of all adult offenders released from custody re-offend within a year. But evidence shows that having a job has been proven to reduce re-offending by 25-33%."

Reoffending costs the UK around £13 billion per year, with each reoffending former prisoner potentially costing the criminal justice system an average of £65,000.

Reoffending rates are greatly influenced by whether a person finds work or not.

Employment can be the most important factor in reducing reoffending rates. Each year, in England and Wales, approximately 66,000 ex-offenders will return to society. At least three-quarters of them will be unemployed and almost two-thirds will reoffend within two years.

Common sense tells us that:

- ✓ a stable job is a critical part of an offender's journey back into society.
- ✓ employment provides independence, status, earning power, a structured routine, social contact and a sense of purpose and direction.
- ✓ helping ex-offenders into employment has a significant and lasting impact on the level and costs of crime and begins to tackle the social exclusion prevalent in the reoffending community.

OFFERING A CLEAN SHEET

When you put your faith in a person with convictions you give them a renewed sense of self respect.

Employment restores dignity and offers an opportunity to provide for themselves and their family, decreasing dependency on benefits and social housing.

Sustainable employment makes people less likely to relapse into old patterns of destructive behaviour.

"Many of the offenders completing their sentence and ex-offenders we employ are loyal and have a lot of drive. They are motivated and will take every opportunity that is offered to them to change their lives. Giving someone a second chance at this point in their life will be paid back ten-fold in hard work and reliability. This process also brings diversity into the workplace and enables other employees to see the values by which their employers and the company they work for live by. This can be a very positive experience for all involved," *Alison Itani, HR Director for Wiltan*

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND INCLUSION

"We'll definitely continue with work placements for ex-offenders and we would consider employing ex-offenders as part of our diversity strategy. It's business need as well as a social need. If someone is capable and willing and wants a chance at employment, then we will look at the pros and cons and judge each person on their own merits," *Jusna Illah, Policy Co-ordinator, Intertrade Services Group.*

Ensure Legal Compliance

Implementing recruitment procedures that do not discriminate against people with convictions.

Improve recruitment cost-effectiveness

Work Inclusion initiatives can offer low cost, effective methods of recruiting from an untapped skill pool.

Resolve entry level skills shortages

Companies in key sectors still struggle to attract the right candidates for entry level vacancies.

Meet tender requirements

Commitment to supporting disadvantaged groups can strengthen bids for public sector contracts. There is an increasing expectation that successful bids for public sector contracts will include the provision of a social or community benefit.

Offer opportunities for employees to build skills and lead to greater employee satisfaction

Recruiting or offering placements to people with convictions provides the opportunity for nominated individuals in the existing workforce to act as buddies, coaches or mentors to the new recruits.

Demonstrate a commitment to diversity

Companies who are employing people with convictions report greater diversity amongst employees. This demonstrates a strong corporate commitment to inclusion.

"For businesses to succeed, especially in difficult times, they must recruit, retain and grow the most talented and skilled people possible. By giving everyone an equal chance to prove themselves, they give their business the best chance to succeed."

Patrick Clarke, Director, UK Power Networks





EMPLOYER AGREEMENT

1. Should a vacancy arise for a voluntary, trainee or full-time, temporary or permanent position, we will actively consider people with convictions.
2. People with convictions can disclose their criminal record in the knowledge that this will not automatically exclude them from the selection process.
3. We will review job applications on merit, testing for relevant skills and experience.
4. We agree to our provided contact details being kept in the secure members-only zone of the Clean Sheet website.
5. We can choose to give permission for Clean Sheet to use our organisation name on the Clean Sheet website or in any promotional material.

For more information contact us now

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BECOME A CLEAN SHEET EMPLOYER

As a Clean Sheet employer you will actively consider an application from a Clean Sheet member when you have a vacancy for a volunteer, trainee or employee.

This gives access to a huge hidden pool of talent.

Look beyond the stereotype and you will find a loyal, hard-working and fully engaged employee, who is just right for your organisation. Adding diversity to your workforce not only provides financial benefits, but also demonstrates Equal Opportunity in action and shows your commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility, significantly contributing to reducing reoffending.

Of those who have employed people with convictions:

87% consider them to be at least as productive

86% report that they have settled in well

82% say that they performed well

81% say they were reliable

47% say they stayed there for over 3 years

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