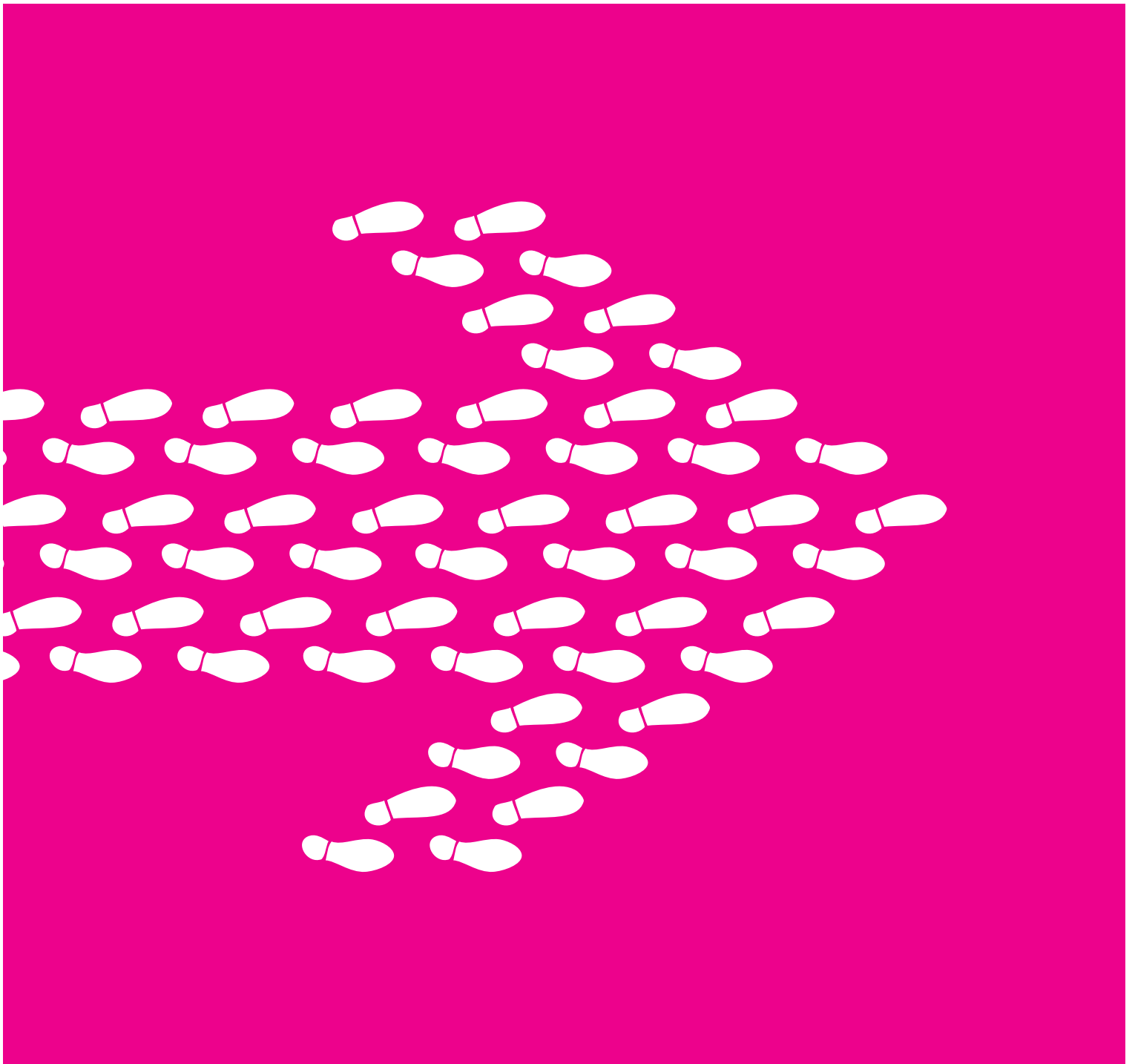
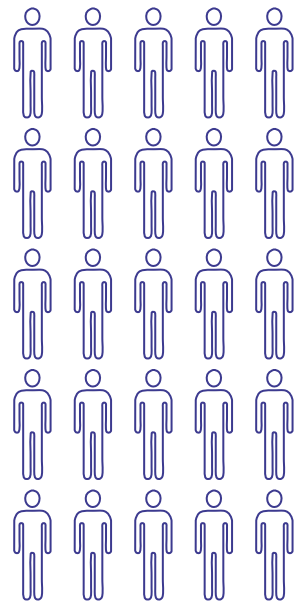


Reducing Re-offending through Employment Guide

Practical steps and examples for businesses





This Guide has been developed by Business in the Community (BITC) with the support of business members of the Reducing Re-offending through Employment Network. The Network was established in 2012 by Alliance Boots (now Walgreens Boots Alliance in the UK) to increase the opportunities available for ex-offenders to move into sustainable employment within its supply chain and beyond.

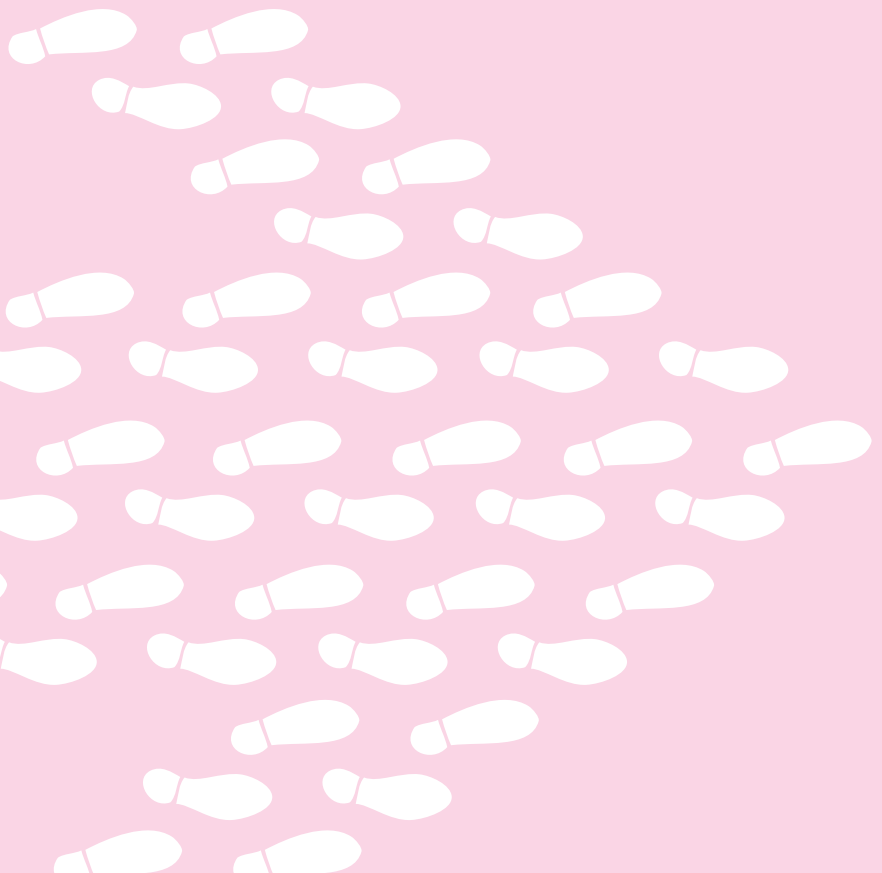
Further information about the Network and this Guide is available at www.bitc.org.uk/RRNetwork

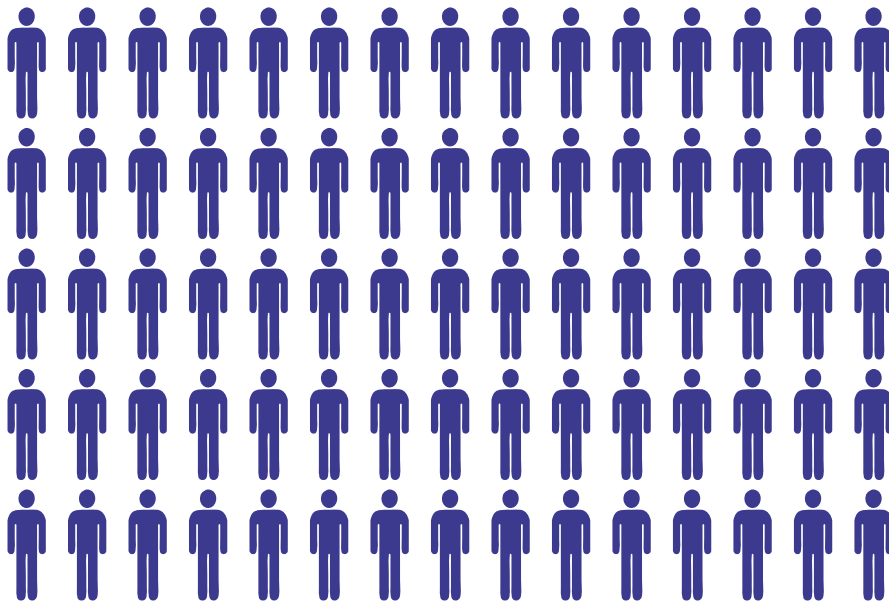
With thanks to the following Network members who have contributed to this Guide: Alliance Boots (now Walgreens Boots Alliance in the UK), Aramark, GI Group, Integral, Interserve Support Services, JM Scully, Ricoh, True Story and Veolia.

Thanks in particular to True Story and Ricoh for their generous pro bono support for the design and print of the Guide.

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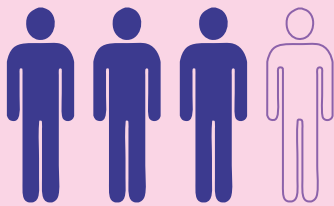
of employers discriminate against a job applicant because of a conviction

Supporting ex-offenders

By supporting ex-offenders with employment, businesses can make a real difference to a challenging and costly social issue

"It would have been so easy to go back to my old life. Having a job was the key factor for me to keep on track. I could stay focused on work, preventing me from distraction and going back to the people I knew before. If I didn't have this job, I don't know what I'd be doing now. Chances are I would have gone back to prison."

Ex-offender, in employment since 2011



Three quarters of offenders in prisons do not have paid employment to go to on release

Ex-offenders can have a wide range of criminal convictions, with sentences ranging from a court fine to time in prison

- Over 1 million offenders were convicted in UK courts in the year ending June 2014
- The prison population stands at almost 86,000

Whatever the offence, employment is crucial to allow people to move on from their past and contribute to society. And businesses benefit from valuable, diverse employees from their local community.

The Reducing Re-offending Network has identified four key pathways through which businesses can make a significant impact and improve the lives of people with criminal convictions.

£11 billion

spent on re-offending costs in the UK per year

This guide supports businesses to follow these pathways, setting out actions, considerations and examples for each:

Removing barriers

reviewing recruitment policies and practices

Improving employability

increasing ex-offenders' skills and experience

Offering jobs

building a pipeline of candidates to employ directly and/or within supply chain

Widening impact

sharing best practice and encouraging behaviour change

Businesses need not follow these pathways in order. Depending on your business priorities and interest, you can start with any or all of these options.

Case Study

Strong senior buy-in leads to long-term commitment

In 2011, Marco Pagni, Chief Legal Counsel & Chief Administrative Officer at Alliance Boots (now Walgreens Boots Alliance in the UK), led a group of business leaders on a Business in the Community 'Seeing is Believing' visit to HMP High Down in Surrey.

The experience was a transformational one for both Marco and the business delegates, and sparked a passion within Marco to explore how Alliance Boots could leverage its own employment potential and that of its suppliers to break down barriers to work for ex-offenders.

Following the visit, Marco engaged with Alliance Boots directors from HR and Procurement in the UK, inviting them to attend prison visits to explore how they could

support an active approach to employing ex-offenders within the business.

The support that Marco secured from across the business led to Alliance Boots creating a Network of companies, primarily from its supply chain, that were committed to increasing the employment of ex-offenders within their own businesses, as well as on the contracts it held with Alliance Boots. It led also to Alliance Boots creating partnerships with prisons and social enterprises to offer employment opportunities to ex-offenders as well as being one of the earliest companies to sign up to the Ban the Box campaign.

www.bitc.org.uk/banthebox

“Employment is crucial to allow people to move on from their past and contribute to society.”

Whichever pathway you choose, there are some common recipes for success

Every employer has a role to play, regardless of their sector. However, the criminal justice system is complex, so it's important that you take the time to understand how your business can play a part.

Before starting the process, you'll need to manage both internal and external stakeholders.

01

Gain internal buy in

Experiences from members of the Network show that strong senior commitment to the issue, backed up by support from the HR Director, is key to success.

Nothing is more effective than a 'Seeing is Believing' (BITC programme of visits for senior leaders) or a visit to a prison, allowing people to meet ex-offenders and understand for themselves the value that they can bring to the business.

02

Decide how to communicate your commitment

It's important that businesses are open about their approach to employing ex-offenders, to encourage people with convictions to apply for roles and ensure that other companies follow your lead.

Think through how you're going to communicate your activity in advance so that you can be prepared to respond to any questions your stakeholders may have.

03

Agree your success measures

What are you trying to achieve and how will you measure it?

Improved skills? Evaluate your impact through your partners and directly with the people you're supporting.

Employment? Where possible, track numbers of people you're taking on, how they're performing, and core HR measures like retention and absence to build a picture of impact and boost the business case for your activity.



Removing barriers

Mainstream recruitment practices often exclude ex-offenders from employment opportunities

Businesses should review their recruitment policies and practices to offer a fair opportunity for ex-offenders to compete for their roles.

This can be achieved by adopting Ban the Box - removing the criminal record tick box from application forms and asking about criminal convictions later in the recruitment process. This should be underpinned by a clear policy on the employment of ex-offenders and training and support for staff to make an appropriate case-by-case assessment of candidates' suitability.

Does your business...

- Ask about convictions at the first application stage?
- Operate blanket exclusions for ex-offenders?
- Expect hiring managers or HR to understand and respond to disclosure of convictions without training?

If so, you are probably excluding people with convictions from roles that they may be otherwise qualified and capable of doing.

10 million people in the UK have a criminal record – a significant proportion of the country's workforce



The steps to take:

01 Understand your existing recruitment processes

When do you currently ask about criminal convictions in your recruitment process? Do you have a policy in place highlighting how hiring managers or HR colleagues are expected to assess criminal convictions during the recruitment process?

By considering the details of your existing processes, you can ensure that all deliberate and inadvertent barriers are removed.

02 Take into account the relevant regulations or legal/contractual considerations

Legislation in the UK defines the length of time for which employers can take a candidate's criminal conviction into consideration during recruitment. It also designates the information that can be gathered from a candidate, and therefore the questions that can be asked. In addition, every business will have different regulatory and contractual pressures.

“When we were asked to sign up to Ban the Box, it was fairly simple because we have always judged all our candidates on ability, skills, attitude and capability. It’s what that person can do for you and for the business that is important and if they are the right person, I don’t believe that their past should be judged in that way.”

Howard King, Projects Director, JM Scully

1 in 5
UK adults
has a criminal
conviction

Case Study

Interserve Support Services & Ban the Box

Interserve only asks about criminal convictions where there is a legal or contractual requirement to do so – this takes place after the initial application stage. In these circumstances, Interserve’s recruiters, trained in legal requirements and understanding disclosure, assess the relevance of the applicant’s convictions against the specific requirements and conditions of the role. HR Business Partners complete a full risk assessment and seek legal advice where necessary.

When a risk assessment results in a job offer, criminal conviction disclosure information is not shared with the line manager (unless a specific requirement exists to share it). If a risk assessment results in an application being declined, feedback is given to the applicant by a trained manager or a member of HR.

Interserve has developed data management systems that ensure information shared by any of their employees is only shared with individuals who have a business need to know.

Case Study

Veolia & Ban the Box

With approximately 18,000 vacancies across the business each year, Veolia needs diverse recruitment pipelines to fill its roles. Since 2012, the company has been offering employment opportunities to prisoners upon release. As Rachel Jones, Resourcing Manager, explains: “We made the choice to give people a chance. We needed to do this to be a truly responsible business.”

Signing up to Ban the Box shows the business commitment to supporting rehabilitation through their mainstream recruitment too. Now, Veolia does not ask about criminal convictions formally during the recruitment process except for roles subject to enhanced DBS checks. If a candidate chooses to disclose a conviction, hiring managers are equipped to understand and manage positive disclosure. The Resourcing Team provides training and supporting documents for hiring and contract managers, which explains their accountability for the company’s commitment to Ban the Box, as well as providing advice on how to manage disclosure when it arises.

03 Decide on the right recruitment process for you

You could ask when you’ve chosen whom you’d like to interview, at interview, after you’ve selected the most suitable candidate, or after a conditional job offer. The later you leave the disclosure process, the more likely you are to first consider whether the candidate is the right one for you.

Whenever you decide, you should ask about criminal convictions in a positive way that allows the applicant to explain or contextualize their criminal record and helps you to assess whether the conviction is relevant to, or poses a risk, in the role.

04 Embed Ban the Box

Ban the Box is not about relaxing the security or risk management required through your recruitment process. Training and information for HR and other stakeholders can ensure that your chosen recruitment process is understood by all and criminal convictions are considered in an appropriate and informed way by your employees. You may also need to explore how you manage recruitment agencies and supply chain contacts to embed Ban the Box through their practices too.

Find out more and access support www.bitc.org.uk/banthebox

Building successful partnerships

If you choose to improve the employability of, or offer jobs to ex-offenders, you'll need to build a partnership that works for your business

Charities, social enterprises and prisons are all keen to work with employers and can offer different types of partnership.

It's important to think about the partners that are local to you, the type of engagement you're looking for and to find out about their track record of working with businesses.

Finding the right partner

"It's vital to find the right partner to help you find and support people who, for various reasons, are finding it hard to get into work, particularly if it's something that's new to your organisation."

Jayne Mayled, Managing Director, True Story

Jayne provided her top tips for building successful partnerships to support ex-offenders:

01 Welcome potential partners into your business so that they can understand your culture, style of working and business need. Then they have the best chance of helping you.

02 Think about the opportunities you have available and the kinds of candidates or volunteering opportunities you're looking for.

Jayne's top tips

03 Be clear about what level of engagement and support you're likely to need and spend time with your potential partner to work out whether they can provide it.

04 Recognise that you need positive and committed HR and line management support in your business to give your partnership the best chance of working.

“Welcome potential partners into your business so that they can understand your culture, style of working and business need.”

THINK
about the opportunities available

There are a number of different types of partners that offer different activities:

Prison	Types of activity available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release on Temporary License (ROTL) • Employability workshops • Opportunities to interview prisoners for jobs on release 	How to get started: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search for your local prison on the Ministry of Justice website • Call the prison and ask to speak to the Resettlement team
Charity	Types of activity available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work placement and employment programmes • Job matching services • Training and employability skills development 	How to get started: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search the Clinks' partnership finder for charities in your area • Visit bitc.org.uk/readyforwork to see if BITC's employment programme runs in your location • If you are a BITC member, ask your Corporate Adviser for advice
Social Enterprise	Types of activity available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply chain offer, where companies can indirectly employ ex-offenders through procurement 	How to get started: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search the Social Enterprise UK directory for relevant social enterprises in your area
Welfare to Work Provider	Types of activity available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work placement and employment programmes • Training and employability skills development • Links to Jobcentre Plus recruitment 	How to get started: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact your local Jobcentre Plus to find out about programmes in your area

Note: Not all prisons offer ROTL for employment. ROTL is most commonly available in lower security prisons (Cat D or Open) but can be found in others too.

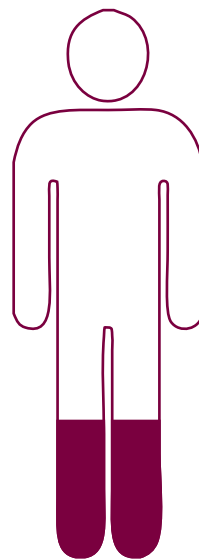
Improving employability

Ex-offenders may lack the up-to-date skills and confidence for work, particularly following a prison sentence

Businesses can improve the employability of ex-offenders, increasing the chances that participants will develop the right skills for roles in their businesses and move into employment. This can be achieved by creating partnerships to deliver volunteer-led training, workshops and work placements.

"I needed my work placement in order to get a job. It was by giving me a shot that I got a chance to prove myself and show how well I can do. I would do it all over again."

Ready for Work participant who found employment after his work placement



In 2013/14 just

25%

of prisoners entered employment on release from prison

The steps to take:

01 Agree scope of activity suitable for your business and partner organisation

Options include delivering training workshops, inviting people into the business to learn about the company and the different roles available, or offering paid or unpaid work placements.

Think about how and when you're going to deliver this and what you need from your partner organisation in terms of candidate preparation, promotion of activity or facilities and resources.

02 Engage employee volunteers throughout

Engaging employees in delivering training, buddying people on work placements, getting involved with mock interviews or CV and employability workshops is a great way of developing staff, particularly non-managers.

Involve them from the outset, in planning and setting objectives as well as delivering the activity.

“Think about what you can offer and what you need.”

INVOLVE
employees
from the
outset

Case Study

Integral & Manchester College

Building maintenance company, Integral, approached Manchester College after hearing from Greggs about the successful partnership they had developed with the College to support serving prisoners to develop their skills and find employment post-release.

Integral worked with their local Manchester College contact to develop a tailored 4-week placement programme in administration within their Birchwood Branch office, structured to give participants real-life work experience and skills to help them in their transition into employment after release from prison. The College's role was to match suitable candidates with the placements, seeking referrals from within the prison and through the local probation service.

HR Director Martin Forbes speaks well of their experience so far. The business is committed to the success of the programme and hopes to roll this out nationally once they have built a strong track record of success in the Birchwood Branch.

Integral will also explore the possibility of developing placements for operational positions within Facilities Management and Building Services.

Case Study

GI Group

GI Group is an agency supplier for Boots UK. The company supplies manpower, mainly to warehouses and wanted to increase the positive impact they could make through their work.

GI Group now has a partnership with HMP Sudbury. The company delivers presentations about the roles they have available and also conducts interviews in the prison. If successful, the inmates can work for the company on day release, attending up to six shifts a week.

If they are released from prison whilst working for GI Group, the company will continue to employ them as long as they are able to attend. As a result, the inmate has work on release and the company has skilled employees for their jobs.

The programme's success has enabled GI Group to think more creatively about solutions for meeting their skills gaps. They can also use it to encourage other clients to rethink employing ex-offenders.

03 Facilitate two-way feedback

Ensure you have thought about how you're going to collect feedback from both volunteers and participants. Feedback will help you understand whether you've met your objectives and where there may be room for improvement.

04 Create links to job vacancies within your business where possible

Building employability skills and experiences is fantastic, but it shouldn't happen in isolation.

Employability activity is more effective if links with vacancies in your business or supply chain are considered before the activity takes place and the right connections with HR or recruitment agencies are made at the time.

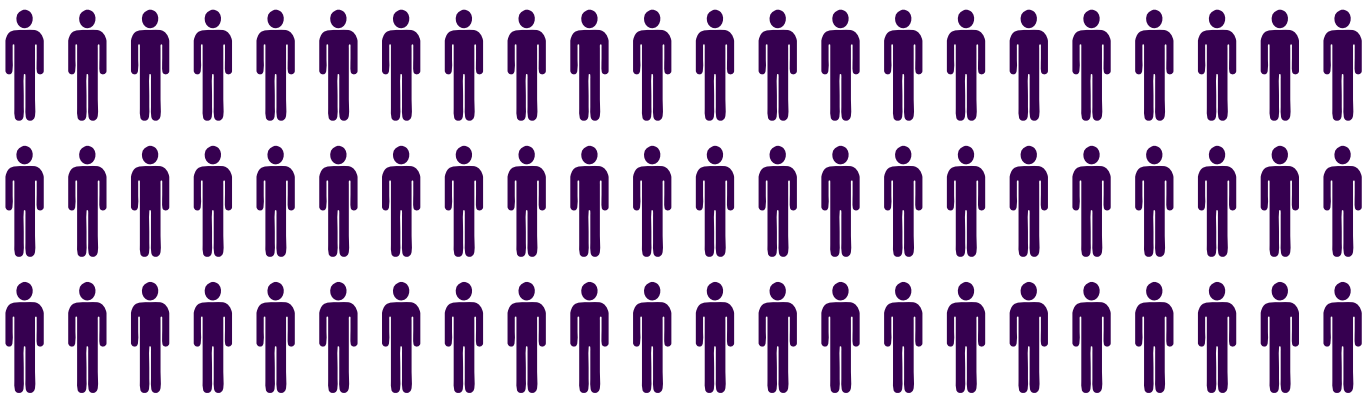
Offering jobs

Many ex-offenders have the right talent and motivation to be valuable employees, but need the opportunity to overcome the barrier of their criminal record

By offering employment opportunities in house or through their supply chain, businesses can significantly reduce the likelihood of re-offending amongst participants whilst opening up a pipeline of motivated and skilled employees.

This can be achieved by creating partnerships to access work-ready candidates for jobs.

The majority of offenders (97%) expressed a desire to stop offending. When asked which factors would be important in stopping them from re-offending in the future, 68% stressed the importance of 'having a job'.



The steps to take:

01

Identify the types, numbers and locations of roles on offer

Clearly defining the roles available will help your partner to identify the right candidates to suggest, as well as managing the expectations of the ex-offenders that they work with.

You may want to start by offering a small number of roles before scaling up once you are more comfortable with the process.

02

Agree processes with HR, recruitment agencies and partners

Some companies set up fast-track processes for people who have already successfully completed work placements.

Others may need to ensure that recruitment agencies are briefed about the company's commitment to offer employment to ex-offenders.

A clear process should be communicated to all parties, including those applying for the roles.

"I think that the contribution he'll make to our business will be of benefit to all of us."

Alliance Boots

68%
stressed the importance of 'having a job'

Case Study

Alliance Boots

In talking about one of the candidates who secured employment at Alliance Boots (now Walgreens Boots Alliance in the UK) on release from HMP Sudbury, HR Director Stephen Lehane says: "People often see this as, 'we're doing something for him', maybe even thinking we're doing him a favour. I don't see it like that. I think that the contribution he'll make to our business will be of benefit to all of us."



Case Study

Aramark

Aramark manages catering facilities in prisons and has a contractual requirement to provide basic training to the inmates who work in their kitchens. The company has become an accredited training provider with the City & Guilds and pays for inmates to undertake NVQs Level 1 and 2 in catering, cooking and customer care.

Where an inmate working for an Aramark kitchen shows potential and is close to being released, the Ministry of Justice Training and Resettlement Manager finds work for the inmate at an Aramark site close to where the inmate will settle on release and secures funding to pay for their first six months' salary.

97%
of offenders expressed a desire to stop offending

Selecting the right candidate

03

You have committed to build a pipeline of candidates, but will still need to ensure the suitability of the candidate for the role. Many partners will offer a number of candidates for each role so that you can assess and select the right person.

A clear job specification will help, as will training for recruiting managers to ensure they adequately assess the risk and relevance of the candidate's convictions.

04

Ensure level of in-work support available is appropriate

The transition into work can be difficult for people who have experienced the criminal justice system and, in many cases, been out of work for some time.

Buddying systems for new staff or flexibility and support for new recruits to resolve issues related to housing or probation can be helpful. Check with your partners whether they will continue to provide support for the individual if they need it.

Widening Impact

Once you have taken action, your expertise is valuable

Businesses can widen impact by sharing best practice and inspiring changes in behaviour amongst other businesses. And if you're just starting out, joining others to hear how they have overcome challenges and achieved success can be vital.

This can be achieved by joining the business-led Reducing Re-offending through Employment Network and by sharing your business' commitment to this issue with your own networks.

March 2012

In March 2012, Alliance Boots (now Walgreen Boots Alliance in the UK) wrote to key infrastructure suppliers highlighting the challenges facing ex-offenders trying to find work and giving them the green light to employ ex-offenders on the contracts that they held with the company.

The steps to take:

01 Join the Network

However advanced or embedded your activity in this area, you can learn from and share with other companies.

Network members commit to attend quarterly events and meetings to explore new activity and share progress, support other members, collectively measure and report on progress, and participate in wider activity identified at Network meetings where relevant.

02 Encourage your clients and suppliers to get involved

Your clients and suppliers are directly connected to your business – encouraging them to get involved will increase the impact of your activity.

Talk to your contacts about your programmes or partnerships, present this topic at your supplier conference or invite them along to a Network event.

“Going into the prison was an eye-opener: I found the enthusiasm of the individuals very engaging.”

Ricoh

86,000
is the current
prison
population

Case Study

Ricoh

In February 2014, Phil Keoghan, Chief Executive of Ricoh, attended a Seeing is Believing visit to HMP Brixton on the invitation of Marco Pagni of Alliance Boots, a key client of Ricoh's.

Phil said of the visit: “I found the Seeing is Believing visit extremely moving. Seeing the individuals on the day and hearing from them, first hand, about their experiences provided for a real touch with reality. Going into the prison was an eye-opener: I found the enthusiasm of the individuals very engaging. The visit inspired me to ensure that, going forward, Ricoh can help improve outcomes for the individuals we met and others in their situation.”

Ricoh has since created a relationship with charity, Working Chance, to offer employability and work opportunities to female ex-offenders. The company has also signed up to Ban the Box, changing its recruitment practices to offer a fairer experience to ex-offenders, and is establishing partnerships with local prisons to offer Release on Temporary Licence opportunities and skills development workshops to serving prisoners.

1,000,000

offenders were convicted in UK courts in the year ending June 2014

03 Encourage other businesses to get involved

Other businesses in your sector or location may be interested in getting involved. Inviting them to hear about what your business is doing and why it could lead to greater partnership opportunities with other businesses, as well as increased opportunities for people with criminal convictions.

04 Share your story and best practice examples

Sharing case studies and examples of how you have overcome challenges in your business can help others to do the same. Speaking at events, publishing a case study online or speaking to media can all inspire other businesses to take action.

Business in the Community can offer you opportunities to share your story with a business audience.

Find out more and access support. Contact 020 7566 6611 to discuss joining the Network and other ways to get involved

Contact us

Business in the Community offers bespoke support to businesses, as well as opportunities to network, share and learn from best practice examples.

Contact the team to discuss the support your business needs.

Email: Banthebox@bitc.org.uk

Telephone: 020 7566 6611

For more information visit www.bitc.org.uk/RRNetwork



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