



Institute  
of **Hospitality**

## Management Guide



## Employing Ex Offenders

Making the right choice

## Employing ex-offenders: making the right choice

### Introduction

Recruiting qualified, experienced personnel in the hospitality industry is an ongoing challenge for many hospitality businesses and competition for well-qualified employees can be fierce. However, there is a potentially untapped resource for hospitality managers: ex-offenders.

According to Nacro, the crime reduction charity, more than 11 million people in the UK have a criminal record and some may already be in your employment. So, who makes up this population of ex-offenders? Consider the following key statistics:

- 68% of all sentences handed down by courts are fines.
- Only 7.9% of offenders are given immediate custodial sentences.
- 72% of employers who had knowingly employed someone with a criminal record said they were equally or more trustworthy than other staff.

Source: Business in the Community

For businesses, hiring an ex-offender can satisfy a number of different needs including financial, moral and societal. It can even assist a company in meeting its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. The benefits for the individual can be even greater.



### Why employ ex-offenders?

#### Resolving skills shortages

Over half of organisations in England and Wales, say they have struggled to fill a position due to skills shortages in the past year. Working with prisons to offer employment opportunities makes good business sense, as well as helping prisoners and ex-offenders get their lives back on track.

#### Reducing recruitment costs

The CIPD has calculated that filling the average non-managerial vacancy costs around £2,000. Work inclusion initiatives, such as opening recruitment up to ex-offenders, can help reduce those overheads, saving organisations substantial sums.

#### Increasing staff retention

81% of businesses that employ ex-offenders say they have helped their business. Evidence from employers such as Marks & Spencer shows that the higher value placed on having a job, with the desire to stay out of prison, often means ex-offenders have higher levels of loyalty and retention, which keeps institutional knowledge within your business.

#### Reducing staff absence

The biggest concern of employers around hiring ex-offenders is a worry that they may not be honest and trustworthy. However, over half of employers of ex-offenders would positively rate their attendance at work, being motivated and reliable.

#### Making a difference

Over two fifths of employers say hiring ex-offenders has helped their company become socially responsible. Actively hiring former prisoners is proven to reduce reoffending. Most offenders want the opportunity to turn their backs on crime and having a job helps them get their lives back on track.

### Are there any drawbacks?

There are some matters to consider when determining whether an ex-offender is suitable for a vacancy in your business.

Luckily, a number of resources exist in the UK - and in many countries – to help businesses make the right decision.

Usually, these resources and programmes can be located through a country’s Ministry of Justice or the national or regional prison system.

The Further Resources section lists a few organisations available to assist with hiring ex-offenders.

On the right hand column you’ll see some questions for consideration when accessing the resources:

- How does my business integrate a new employee and ex-offender into the work force?
- Are there certain offences which would preclude an ex-offender from working in my business?
- What if a loss occurs in the business as a result of an ex-offender?
- Where can I find a policy to support hiring ex-offenders?
- What is my “duty of care” and other legal requirements for employing ex-offenders?

These questions and more can be answered by many of the organisations below, whose aim is to assist ex-offenders with gaining suitable employment. Institute members can also access the ‘Criminal record disclosures’ section of their BusinessHR benefit (see Further Resources) for comprehensive step-by-step online guidance.



### A case in point - The Clink Charity

The Clink Charity trains serving prisoners in four restaurants in prisons towards gaining their accredited City & Guilds qualifications and supports graduates into full time employment and accommodation upon release from prison. An added benefit of the charity's work is to help fill a skills shortage in one of Britain's fastest-growing industries, hospitality.

Chris Moore FIH, The Clink Charity's Chief Executive, says, "Many of the prisoners that graduate from The Clink started out as someone who didn't believe in their own ability and had very little self-confidence. Our Five Step Integrated Programme in partnership with Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service gives them a comprehensive understanding of how a hospitality-based business functions through work experience in a professional environment." Chris confirms that the participants gain valuable skills that will help them find employment upon release and break the cycle of crime. The reoffending rate of prisoners is reduced whilst also helping the hospitality industry close its skills gap.

The Clink's participants are taught skills such as cooking, front of house service, butchery, barista skills and baking – all services that are valuable to the British economy and unique crafts when done properly.

Upon release, each graduate of The Clink is mentored by a dedicated support worker who helps them reintegrate back into society by finding full time employment and accommodation. The support worker will help a graduate for up to six to twelve months to ensure they stay on track, but realistically, when anyone gets in touch, they will be offered support. This costs the charity about £2,000 per prisoner – a dramatic reduction in cost compared to another year in prison, if they were to reoffend.

Chris acknowledges that the most challenging part of the programme is changing employer perceptions and showing that ex-offenders can benefit the business. Someone who has recently been released from prison and wants to change their life for the better needs the industry to look past their mistakes and take them for what they are now – a skilled professional.

Whilst helping prisoners to regain control of their life, The Clink Charity offers hospitality employers the chance to acquire a new team member who is trained and qualified to an exceptional standard. Employing an ex-offender also offers companies a good opportunity to build and improve their CSR by making a positive contribution to society.

Finding suitable employment opportunities for the graduates is crucial to the success of The Clink Charity so hospitality businesses that are interested in offering an ex-offender a position and a second chance in life should contact Chris Moore, chief executive of The Clink Charity by emailing: [chrismoore@theclinkcharity.org](mailto:chrismoore@theclinkcharity.org). For more information about the charity and its prisoner training initiatives please visit: [www.theclinkcharity.org](http://www.theclinkcharity.org).

This reissued management guide includes important updates to the employment of ex-offenders and was created with the assistance of The Clink Charity and Nacro, the crime reduction charity. It supersedes the management guide dated 2009 from the Institute of Hospitality and the Apex Charitable Trust regarding the employment of ex-offenders.



## Further Resources Guidance & advice

The Institute of Hospitality - offers its members FREE online information and a selection of HR resources via our HR Support area. In addition, Our A-Z listing offers links to practical guidance with employing an ex-offender including criminal record disclosures, pre-employment checks and related employment matters.

Apex Charitable Trust – the Apex Trust [www.apextrust.com](http://www.apextrust.com) operates ex-offender support services in Merseyside, England.

Apex Scotland, a separate organisation from the Apex Trust, offers preventative, offender and ex-offender services in Scotland.

[www.apexscotland.org.uk](http://www.apexscotland.org.uk)

Business in the Community

[www.bitc.org.uk](http://www.bitc.org.uk)

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) - Pre-employment checks [www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/emp-law/recruitment/pre-employment-checks-guide](http://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/emp-law/recruitment/pre-employment-checks-guide)

Ministry of Justice [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/her-majestys-prison-and-probation-service](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/her-majestys-prison-and-probation-service)

The Clink Charity [theclinkcharity.org/theclink-charity/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Employing-Ex-Offenders-2019.pdf](http://theclinkcharity.org/theclink-charity/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Employing-Ex-Offenders-2019.pdf)

Recruiting safely and fairly guide

[www.nacro.org.uk/resettlement-advice-service/support-for-employers/recruiting-safely-and-fairly-guide-a-practical-guide-to-employing-ex-offenders](http://www.nacro.org.uk/resettlement-advice-service/support-for-employers/recruiting-safely-and-fairly-guide-a-practical-guide-to-employing-ex-offenders)

Business in the Community:

Ban the Box campaign and resource bank for employers: [www.bitc.org.uk/programmes/ban-box](http://www.bitc.org.uk/programmes/ban-box)

[www.bitc.org.uk/programmes/ban-box/resource-bank](http://www.bitc.org.uk/programmes/ban-box/resource-bank)

Disclosure and Barring Service – replacing the Criminal Records Bureau, DBS helps identify candidates who may be unsuitable to work with children or other vulnerable members of society. DBS helpline: 03000 200 190.

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service)

Employer and applicant guidance on the recruitment process and filtering:

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/338933/Filtering\\_guide\\_v2.3.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/338933/Filtering_guide_v2.3.pdf)

Free sample DBS sample policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders for use by businesses in the recruitment of ex-offenders (English and Welsh): [www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-sample-policy-on-the-recruitment-of-ex-offenders](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-sample-policy-on-the-recruitment-of-ex-offenders)

Nacro, the crime reduction charity - Nacro provides a dedicated Resettlement Advice Service which offers free, expert advice and operational support to organisations on how to interpret and manage criminal record information relating to applicants or existing staff, apprentices or volunteers. Nacro's legal officers offer training to organisations on a range of topics including implementing safer recruitment policies and procedures, gathering relevant information to inform risk assessment processes, understanding the relevant legislation and how to avoid potential legal pitfalls.

Tel: 0845 600 3194

Email: [employeradvice@nacro.org.uk](mailto:employeradvice@nacro.org.uk)

Website: [www.nacro.org.uk](http://www.nacro.org.uk)

Ministry of Justice - incorporates the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) to reduce re-offending and to partner with employers. [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/national-offender-management-service](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/national-offender-management-service)

The Clink Charity - the charity aims to reduce reoffending rates by working with HM Prison Service to train and rehabilitate prisoners. The Clink Restaurants provide hospitality training and the charity engages with hospitality industry employers to place ex-prisoners on internships or in permanent employment.

Businesses can enquire about employing graduates of the programme by emailing Chris Moore at: [chrismoore@theclinkcharity.org](mailto:chrismoore@theclinkcharity.org). [www.theclinkcharity.org](http://www.theclinkcharity.org).

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