



Clean Sheet: From prison to employment: September 2023 Update

Context:

Clean Sheet is a registered charity with a simple purpose – to create social change by offering people with convictions the hope of a better future by finding real, sustainable employment.

Their vision is that people with convictions:

- have significant opportunities to secure employment; and
- reintegrate and impact positively on their communities and wider society.

Over the last five years, Clean Sheet has helped more than 1,100 Members (people with convictions) to find work. Members found work in a variety of industries including: care, construction, distribution, education, food, IT, manufacturing rail, retail and transport. Roles varied between entry level to management level roles.

Clean Sheet has a Directory of over 100 employers who have committed to assess someone based on their merit and their skill, rather than their conviction. Once a Member has secured a position the charity provides 12 months post-employment support.

As a result of Clean Sheet's support, people with convictions take positive steps to move forward with their lives and not go on to reoffend. Anecdotal evidence indicates that reoffending has reduced as a result of Members finding work. Many of the Members talk about the positive impact of work in terms of being able to provide for their families – one Member shared that finding work meant that he could provide for his three young children. During networking events former Members have shared about starting life afresh through finding work.

The Trusted Executive Charitable Foundation (TTECF) has been supporting Clean Sheet since July 2021 with grants totalling £26,000 (@Sep23).

September 2023 Update:

Working with corporate partners to provide a second chance:

Clean Sheet provides employment support to people with criminal convictions, supporting them for as long as it takes them to find work. For some, this support is transformational.

'Jimmy' had been with Clean Sheet for four years. The nature of his conviction meant that his employment options were more limited and the Covid pandemic (and lockdowns) also made finding work challenging. In late 2021, he secured some short-term labouring work whilst studying towards a degree but he was still looking for permanent work. We provided support with his CV, job suggestions and interview support through a mock interview skills session (run in partnership with a corporate partner). Jimmy finished his degree studies in June 2023 and then started work for an environmental company. He said:

"A warm thank you guys. For all the encouragement day out, day in. Clean Sheet has been fantastic. For four full years getting unbroken support. I [would] get a call when I was discouraged – that call helped me to get up. Thank you Gerry [Employment Team Adviser]. You did a wonderful job – remember Sam and other team members for [the] mock interview [skills session] – it gave the courage and confidence to attend this interview."

Fiona, another Clean Sheet Member ("end user"), also shared about her experience:

"What was amazing about Clean Sheet was that they didn't care about what category of prison you were in or what had been said about you – they would speak to you and link you with organisations that could support you. That was life-changing. When Clean Sheet was speaking to me, I didn't have any suspicion. They would ask me: 'How are you, how's the job search going? I've seen this and that role. Shall I send these to you?' You knew you had the support of people keeping you in mind. Clean Sheet showed what it actually meant to have a second chance. It was an organisation that said to me that I could use my experience to

help others. Clean Sheet showed me how I could be a help to others. There was nothing Clean Sheet could have done differently but I wish I had known about you sooner!”

The team at Clean Sheet are resourcing and caring for some of those with the least support around them. They have recognised the importance of building trust across a network of stakeholders - including working with corporate supporters - and are utilising a coaching approach with their Members in how to appropriately be honest and open; clearly they do this with humility and kindness; all of these aspects are part of “the Nine Habits of Trust” (<https://trustedexecutive.com/nine-habits-of-trust>).