



Clean Sheet: From prison to employment: January 2024 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).

January 2024 Update:

TTECF in prison....

On 18 January Craig & Sue from TTECF had the privilege of attending one of Clean Sheet's workshops inside HMP Fosse Way, Leicester.

HMP Fosse Way is a Category C prison with a planned capacity of 1,930 male inmates and cost £286 million to construct. It's operated by Serco, under a ten-year contract, and received its first prisoners on Monday 29 May 2023; at January 2024 there are just over 1,350 prisoners on site.

One of the key challenges ex prisoners face when they're looking for work is how to talk to a prospective employer about their conviction, and to do it well. The workshop on 18 January addressed this issue of "disclosure" and was led by Clean Sheet's CEO Samantha Graham along with Clean Sheet co-facilitator Phil. It comprised a combination of presentations and discussion which will lead to one to one sessions with each prisoner to craft their own personal disclosure statement.

Eleven (11) men attended the session from across a variety of backgrounds and life experiences. It became evident - from what the men shared - that some have multiple convictions whilst for others this is their first experience of prison. All of them shared about the work they undertook prior to their conviction and their hopes for employment post release. All the delegates engaged enthusiastically in the workshop and were clearly learning valuable insights into why, when, what and how to engage in their disclosure. The key message was **building trust with a prospective employer** by taking them on a journey from prior to the actions leading to their conviction through to the transformation of their life via the positive steps they have taken. The intention is that by disclosing well these men will be heard, they will **build trust and never need to look over their shoulder again**.

Craig & Sue's discussions with the attendees revealed that they had found the workshop hugely valuable. One attendee said that it had been the most valuable session he'd attended in the three years he's been in prison. Another explained how much he regretted the impact his conviction was having on his two young sons, the steps he is taking to turn his life around and his commitment to getting back to being a positive influence within his family. As we listened to the delegates telling their stories - without any reference to their conviction - we were both struck by how life's challenges can take any of us down a variety of different paths.

Through the work that Samantha and her team at Clean Sheet are doing we were able to see first hand the transformation that they are helping to make in the lives of those who've made wrong life choices in the face of challenges in their lives. Throughout our short time in HMP Fosse Way we saw the way that Samantha and her team are building positive relationships across the their stakeholder community including modelling respect and kindness to the prisoners and staff.

If you'd like to help: Clean Sheet and Sixty-One (<https://www.sixty-one.org/>) - another of TTECF's Partner Charities - are always on the lookout for organisations who are willing to consider employing ex-prisoners or who could sponsor someone's job search journey. If your organisation, or one that you know of, may be willing to give an ex-prisoner a second chance, then please reach out to them or via us at TTECF.

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>).