



Clean Sheet: From prison to employment: March 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).

March 2024 Update:

Being honest ... & doing it well

For those of you who read the January 2024 update you'll recall that we covered a visit by Craig & Sue from TTECF as part of a Clean Sheet workshop inside HMP Fosse Way, Leicester. (a Category C prison with a planned capacity of 1,930 male inmates)

Samatha Graham, CEO of Clean Sheet takes up the story:

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 - "disclosure" - and to do it well. Clean Sheet has been running a disclosure workshop inside the prison. The workshop covers key areas including: when and how to disclose; a framework for disclosing well; and, examples of good and bad disclosure. In the January workshop 11 men attended and feedback from the session was really positive. On average, people's confidence and skills in disclosing improved by 20%+ by the end of the workshop.

Feedback included:

- "[It] has greatly impacted my confidence and allowed me to see what skills to work on."
- "It has boosted my confidence."
- "Because it enlightened me to different techniques on disclosing my criminal background to employers."
- "I feel that it has helped. Because I didn't even know where to start. I have a little more understanding. But I think the one-to-one session[s] will help even more."
- "An insight to the challenges ahead of us. So I can prepare physically and mentally for challenges i.e. rejection."
- "Learnt to be more confident to talk about my conviction [at] job interviews."

- “I found it informative. It also gave me confidence to explore different approaches.”

The benefits of coaching:

Clean Sheet has also benefitted from coaching provided through TTECF. This has helped to develop Clean Sheet’s vision and positively grow their working culture.

Samantha Graham, CEO, said:

“The coaching has been invaluable. It has helped to stretch and grow me as leader and supported me to expand and grow our vision by quantifying this. I have been privileged to work with Glen who is incredibly insightful, holds great accountability and who isn’t afraid to challenge assumptions. I would highly recommend coaching through the TTECF due to the quality of coaching and the wisdom and insight that this has brought.”

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>).