Employment opportunities for people with criminal records

Employer research portfolio | 20 November 2026

This portfolio looks at where adults with non-violent, non-sexual convictions can get an interview or find paid work, including people who have never been in custody. It starts with routes relevant to England and gives extra attention to Lancashire.

Sodexo publishes a conditional interview guarantee. The other entries describe past hiring or give a specific application route. A company-wide promise covering every conviction in scope remains unverified.

Sodexo UK and Ireland

Starting Fresh guarantees an interview to applicants who disclose a conviction, meet the job criteria and pass the required screening. Sodexo reports hires in food services and facilities management. Check the vacancy and ask recruitment how the Starting Fresh process applies to that site.

Interview policy | Recruitment process

Kier

Making Ground accepts registrations from prison leavers and people with unspent convictions. Kier lists permanent roles, supply-chain opportunities and temporary contracts. Use its nationwide registration form for employment. Check local availability and whether the role has any screening requirements.

Register for Making Ground | Programme details

Timpson

The Timpson Foundation recruits people with convictions and describes prison training and employment after release. Its Foundation page links to vacancies. Ask about direct applications from the community and interview eligibility for the branch or role.

Timpson Foundation and vacancies

Greene King

Releasing Potential has placed prison leavers into hospitality jobs. Greene King describes training in food preparation, customer service, barista work and housekeeping. Browse vacancies or ask a prison employment lead about the programme. Only A Pavement Away also lists eligibility for its referral route.

Hiring record | Careers | Referral criteria

Lancashire leads and employer questions

Recycling Lives Services

The company describes recycling work on day release through its partnership with Onward Lives. Ask the company or its partner which Preston-area opportunities are currently available for people already in the community and whether they lead to paid jobs.

Recycling Lives Services partnership

Helmrig and Multipave

Onward Lives reports that Helmrig employs prison leavers and that people trained on a construction pilot with Multipave at HMP Kirkham secured jobs on release. Ask Onward Lives about current vacancies, paid roles and routes for applicants already in the community.

Onward Lives employer partnerships

Booths and HMP Kirkham

HMP Kirkham's Independent Monitoring Board reported that Booths made more than 30 job offers to people at the prison through the day-release employment partnership. Ask the Kirkham Employment Hub about current day-release referrals. For jobs in the community, check Booths' careers site for shop and warehouse vacancies and ask recruitment whether there is a route after release.

Kirkham monitoring report | Booths careers

Retail and logistics leads

GOV.UK reports that Co-op, Iceland, Greggs and DHL took part in prison recruitment events in 2023. A 2025 update also names Greggs and Iceland in the wider hiring initiative. Check each employer's current local route and interview policy before listing it as an opportunity.

2023 recruitment events | 2025 hiring initiative

Questions to send to employers

- Do you consider applicants with non-violent, non-sexual convictions, including applicants with unspent convictions or those who have never been in prison?
- Do you guarantee an interview for eligible applicants or shortlist through your usual process? What criteria must applicants meet?
- Which sites offer paid roles? Can someone apply directly, or do they need a referral?
- When do you ask about convictions, and which jobs have specific checks or restrictions? May we publish your reply and application link?

Ban the Box removes the criminal-record question from the initial application stage. The employer may ask later. Check the disclosure guidance for the role before applying.

Ban the Box employer list | GOV.UK disclosure guidance

Construction routes with evidence of work

Start with construction, rail, highways, utilities and public building projects. Check both the main contractor and the businesses that supply labour or deliver trades such as groundworks, civils and site logistics.

Wates and its subcontractors

Wates reports that 19 people were offered employment opportunities through Employer Connect sessions at HMP Onley. Of those, 16 started work. It says the initiative is expanding across other Ministry of Justice Alliance projects. Ask a prison employment lead or Wates' project social value team about upcoming sessions and referrals after release.

Wates programme and outcomes

EKFB and the HS2 supply chain

HS2 documents a prison leaver who started as a groundworker with delivery partner EKFB in March 2025. Search the HS2 supply-chain jobs board by location and employer. Ask the listed recruiter about role requirements and routes for people applying from the community.

HS2 jobs and skills report | HS2 supply-chain jobs

Morgan Sindall Construction and Blue Water Recruitment

Morgan Sindall reports that a prison leaver started labouring on its Willows High School project in Cardiff after a referral through Blue Water Recruitment. Ask the agency or the contractor's project social value team where this referral route operates today. The published example is in Wales.

Morgan Sindall and agency case study

Amey and its suppliers

Amey describes ringfenced roles across its own business and supply chain as part of its Rehabilitation Alliance. The initial focus included young people, women and adults aged 18 to 25. Ask Amey about current locations, eligibility and referral routes.

Amey Rehabilitation Alliance | Amey careers

Kier's Making Ground registration is on page 1. Helmrig and Multipave are Lancashire leads on page 2.

Finding work through public construction projects

Willmott Dixon Interiors

Willmott Dixon Interiors describes supporting a participant on release on temporary licence. Ask its social value team about paid vacancies and entry from the community.

Willmott Dixon Interiors case study

Galliford Try

The Considerate Constructors Scheme recognises an initiative delivering employment and development opportunities for prison leavers. Ask Galliford Try which projects participate and how an applicant can access current paid roles.

Considerate Constructors Scheme award

How to search in Lancashire and the North West

1. Find recent public contract awards. Start with Lancashire, West Lancashire, Liverpool City Region and Greater Manchester. Search for highways maintenance, rail works, school rebuilding, NHS estates, housing repairs and retrofit.
2. Use the award notice to identify the contractor and project. Ask the project's social value or employment and skills team which subcontractors and agencies recruit for the site. The North West Construction Hub records Morgan Sindall's Liverpool City Council work at Paddington Village as one example of how to trace a contract.
3. Check the contractor, subcontractor and agency vacancy pages and the government Find a Job service. Record the actual employer, location, pay, hours, entry requirements (such as a CSCS card) and whether a direct application or referral is needed.
4. Confirm what the employer offers for the specific role. Record whether it is paid employment, a paid apprenticeship, a placement, training or a recruitment event. Ask whether the same route is open to people with convictions who have never been in custody.

Central government procurement guidance includes employment and skills measures where relevant. The contract award identifies who won the work. The contractor or hiring partner can confirm who is recruiting and what checks apply.

Find a Tender | Public contract social value guidance | Find a Job

Liverpool framework example | New Futures Network recruitment campaigns

HGV driving, warehousing and recovery services

These routes cover paid driving and warehouse work, alongside recovery roles where personal experience may be valued. Check which kind of lived experience the vacancy asks for. Recovery from substance use and experience of the criminal justice system can be separate criteria.

HGV driving and apprenticeships

Tempus Novo reports a Class 1 HGV apprenticeship for a serving prisoner in partnership with GXO and HMP Hatfield. Ask Tempus Novo or GXO about current intakes and routes for people already in the community. Check the licence and Driver CPC requirements in the vacancy. Vocational licence entitlement can be affected by driver-conduct decisions.

GXO apprenticeship example | HGV qualifications | Driver conduct decisions

Warehouse and distribution roles

Tempus Novo documents a warehouse worker who started at GXO Sherburn on temporary release. Check GXO vacancies and ask Tempus Novo which sites take referrals. Search for roles in warehouse operations, goods-in, picking and packing or dispatch around Skelmersdale, Wigan, St Helens and Warrington. DHL remains a recruitment-event lead on page 2.

GXO warehouse example | GXO careers

The Forward Trust

Its trainee programme describes a permanent paid Peer Support Worker route for people with lived experience. Check the careers page and individual advert for the experience required, location and application route.

Peer support and trainee routes | Careers

Emerging Futures

Emerging Futures explicitly encourages applications from people with lived experience of the criminal justice system and says decisions depend on the offence and its relevance to the role. Check its jobs page for paid recovery, wellbeing and housing support roles.

Published recruitment wording

Change Grow Live and Turning Point

Both advertise paid recovery roles. Change Grow Live also describes a separate volunteer peer mentor route. Check each paid vacancy for which experience is essential or desirable and what checks apply.

Change Grow Live careers | Turning Point vacancies

Ask employers which local sites are hiring, whether they accept direct applications, what screening applies and whether successful applicants receive a paid job, apprenticeship or volunteer placement.

National employer search

Sources checked 20 November 2026. The research covers employers and recruitment programmes relevant to adults with non-violent, non-sexual convictions. A past hire or programme shows a route worth checking. Ask about current sites, vacancies, referrals and role-specific screening, including whether applicants without a custodial sentence can use the same route.

Hospitality, food production and retail

Pret A Manger

The Rising Stars programme offers a route into work for people facing barriers including a criminal record. GOV.UK documents past recruitment through the programme. Pret lists risingstars@pret.com for enquiries.

Pret Rising Stars

COOK

The RAW Talent Programme helps people find work after prison or when they face other barriers to employment. Ask about current food production, retail or other roles and which sites accept applications.

COOK RAW Talent

Redemption Roasters

Coffee training can lead to work in its shops or with employment partners. GOV.UK documents hires in a London coffee shop. Check the programme page for the training and placement route.

Redemption Roasters social impact

Marston’s

The Ministry of Justice documented Marston’s Excel programme and its training academy at HMP Liverpool, which offered a route into hospitality jobs on release. Confirm current intake with Marston’s or a prison employment lead.

Ministry of Justice case study

Benugo

The Clink announced a pathway into hospitality employment for HMP Brixton graduates, scheduled to begin in September 2026. Ask The Clink about referral and eligibility.

Benugo and The Clink partnership

Halfords

A government case study documents a prison academy graduate working in customer service and bike repair at Halfords. Check current vacancies and ask whether the academy or a referral route is available.

Government employer case studies

Construction, professional services and charity roles

O’Neill & Brennan

The Ministry of Justice reported in 2023 that the construction recruiter and subcontractor had helped about 180 prison leavers into employment over two years. Ask its social value team about local site roles and current referrals.

New Futures Network employer profile

Allied Access

The construction employer describes recruiting through the Future Skills programme. Ask about current scaffolding or site roles and the qualifications or referral needed.

Government Future Skills case study

KPMG UK

The Ministry of Justice documents prison leavers hired into permanent roles, mainly in technology, through its New Futures pilot. Confirm whether recruitment through the pilot is currently open.

Ministry of Justice case study

Beam

Government guidance documents a Future Skills graduate employed by Beam after custody. The programme supported training for case and support work. Ask about current vacancies and eligibility.

Government Future Skills case study

St Giles Trust

Its careers site describes lived experience as central to its work and lists vacancies. Check each paid role for qualifying experience and checks.

St Giles vacancies

B&Q and Oliver Bonas

The Ministry of Justice named both in its 2023 retail and logistics recruitment campaign. These are employer leads for follow-up on current sites and policies. Co-op, Iceland, Greggs and DHL are already listed on page 2.

Government recruitment campaign

Regional employers and referral routes

Scotland

Freedom Bakery in Glasgow publishes training and employment opportunities for people in the prison system. Check its team page for applications. Apex Scotland provides employment and disclosure support.

Freedom Bakery careers | Apex Scotland support

Wales

Morgan Sindall and Blue Water Recruitment's Cardiff example is on page 3. Conwy Employment Hub also documents helping a prison leaver qualify as an HGV driver and secure full-time haulage work. The case study does not name the employer.

Conwy HGV case study | Business Wales employer guidance

Northern Ireland

NIACRO SkillSET works with people with convictions in custody and in the community. It is an employment support route. Ask the team which local employers are currently recruiting and whether someone can self-refer.

NIACRO SkillSET

Rail training and construction referrals

The Ministry of Justice described a job guarantee on release for the HMP Highpoint rail programme. Confirm current eligibility with the prison. Bounce Back offers construction training and employer links.

Highpoint rail programme | Bounce Back construction route

Finding more employers

Working Chance helps women with convictions find work and access vacancies through its employer partners. Only A Pavement Away connects prison leavers to hospitality employers through a referral partner. New Futures Network publishes employer case studies and sector campaigns for England and Wales.

Working Chance | Only A Pavement Away | New Futures Network case studies

Ask each employer which site is hiring, whether it considers unspent convictions for that role, and whether recruitment starts with a direct application, referral or interview. Record the reply and date before sharing it.

Railway jobs during custody and after release

Rail contractors and labour suppliers have documented routes into track work and apprenticeships. Ask about paid work, apprenticeships and work experience when checking what each programme offers.

RMF Group

A prison education review describes RMF interviewing people at HMP Hewell for its rail engineering academy, providing work experience during Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) and offering work on release to almost all those who completed the programme. RMF currently lists railway engineering training in custody and points to its Fresh Start jobs board and Resource Solutions labour supply team for work after release. Ask RMF which prisons and sites are taking referrals.

Hewell academy review | RMF training and post-release routes

McGinley and MSS Infrastructure

MSS Infrastructure publishes a Birmingham case study of a Level 2 Rail Engineering Operative apprentice who heard about the opportunity through a McGinley session in prison. Ask its apprenticeship team about current locations, eligibility and applications from the community.

Rail apprenticeship case study

HMP Highpoint Rail Centre of Excellence

The Ministry of Justice describes an employment guarantee on release through this specific rail training programme. Highpoint's monitoring report names Network Rail, City & Guilds and Keltbray Infrastructure Services as partners. Ask the Prison Employment Lead which contractors are currently recruiting and how places are allocated.

Ministry of Justice programme description | Highpoint monitoring report

Category D route and HMP Kirkham

If you're in an open prison, ask the employment or resettlement team which railway contractors currently take people on day release. Ask about pay, travel, shift times and whether there is a route into work after release. The prison must approve ROTL for the individual and placement. Kirkham is a local starting point for enquiries about its Custody to Work programme.

GOV.UK temporary release guidance | HMP Kirkham

For work after release, search for trainee track operative, rail engineering apprentice and track maintenance roles. Ask the recruiter which qualifications the role requires, whether training is paid and whether the employer accepts people with convictions who have never been in custody.

Willmott Dixon and council recycling jobs

Willmott Dixon Construction

Willmott Dixon describes a partnership with labour supplier O’Neill & Brennan and its social enterprise Evergreen. The Constructing Futures programme offers construction placements to people still serving on Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL). Ask O’Neill & Brennan’s social value team which projects are recruiting, who employs the worker, what the placement pays and whether work can continue after release.

Willmott Dixon construction partnership | O’Neill & Brennan route

Recycling Lives Services and Global Ardour Recycling

Onward Lives, the charity formerly known as Recycling Lives Charity, identifies Recycling Lives Services as a major Preston employer for people on day release and names Global Ardour Recycling as one of its largest local employment partners. Ask Onward Lives which Preston sites currently offer paid work on day release or after release and whether applicants already in the community can approach the employer directly.

Onward Lives employer partnerships | Recycling Lives Services programme

Preston City Council and Lancashire County Council

Preston City Council runs its refuse and recycling collections in-house. Its jobs site has a Waste Management category and email alerts. Lancashire County Council runs household waste recycling centres in Preston. Search its jobs site for recycling centre operative, waste operative and driver roles. Ask each recruiting team about its policy for the role.

Preston waste jobs | Who runs Preston services | Lancashire County Council jobs

West Lancashire Borough Council

The council publishes an agency route for refuse and recycling loaders and Clean and Green operatives. It names PLR Care and Assist Resourcing UK as preferred agencies. Check available shifts, pay and how the agency considers convictions for the specific job.

Council agency recruitment page

SUEZ and council recycling contracts

SUEZ documents day-release roles on waste sites and reports that 23 prison leavers had been offered permanent contracts through its Surrey programme by October 2021. This is evidence of hiring by a contractor delivering council services. Ask SUEZ which contracts or sites offer a similar route today.

SUEZ recruitment case study

Private housebuilders and housing developers

Vistry Group in Warrington

In August 2026, Vistry announced a Prisoners Building Homes pilot at its Warrington timber-frame factory for three participants to gain work experience. A Local Government Association briefing names HMP Thorn Cross as the prison partner for Vistry and Starship Group. Ask the prison employment team or Prisoners Building Homes about the next intake, pay and progression into jobs.

Vistry Warrington pilot | Local Government Association briefing

Barratt Homes and O'Neill & Brennan

New Futures Network names Barratt Homes as one of O'Neill & Brennan's partners in providing day-release and employment opportunities. Ask the labour supplier's social value team which Barratt sites take referrals and who employs the worker.

New Futures Network partnership profile

Modular housing employers

The Local Government Association identifies these project partnerships. Confirm current intake with Prisoners Building Homes or the relevant prison employment team.

Prisoners Building Homes partner map

- Reds10 partners with HMP Hatfield. ZED Pods and DragonHeart Homes partner with HMP North Sea Camp.
- The Hill Group and Agile Property & Homes partner with HMP Springhill. MMC Homebuilding partners with HMP Leyhill.
- RD Sips partners with HMP Prescoed. Boutique Modern partners with HMP Ford.
- Bristol Together is listed for post-release work, and Rollalong is linked to HMP Guy's Marsh.

Lendlease and other private developers

A 2018 industry case study documents a prison leaver taking a job with Lendlease. Check who now runs the project and whether a similar route is available today. For other developers, ask the site or social value team who supplies labour for groundwork, bricklaying, timber-frame assembly and site logistics.

Lendlease historical case study | Home Builders Federation recruitment guide

Check whether each opportunity is work experience, paid day release or a job after release. Ask whether people with convictions who have never been in custody can apply directly.