



If you attended our Lunch and Learn webinar on Employing ex-offenders with Peter Atherton from Community Led Initiatives, you've hopefully already picked up some useful guidance. Here's our summary of Peter's advice and key things to think about.

Background

According to www.gov.uk the annual economic and social cost of reoffending can be in excess of £18 billion. It also estimates that just 17% of offenders are in employment a year after release.

“Creating an environment within the community and giving a sense of belonging and something to lose greatly reduces the likelihood of reoffending.”

Spectrum of employer motivations

Peter's own research as part of his Cambridge Masters Degree in Criminology recognises a spectrum of employer's attitudes and actions in employing ex-offenders. Those who are active in doing so can be motivated by several factors including:

- Altruism - where they have been exposed to something in their childhood or environment and wanted to give something back to others.
- Legislation and alignment with social values – this can be a strong driver within the construction industries.

Managing the risks

Organisations and employers not actively engaged with the criminal justice system can have a false sense of risk, which may be holding them back from offering opportunities.

- Take a step back for language and ask yourself, if someone has admitted an offence, what is the risk of that for your organisation?
- Critically assess what it is you / the organisation feels nervous about and why, then ask what could be done to make you / them feel better about it?
- When considering offenders of a violent or sexual crime, engage in a conversation as there needs to be trust, set out expectations, and try to understand the context around the situation and whether it is likely to pose a genuine risk.
- Also think about the staff that you employ and whether there could be potential risks? Could these risks be managed?



The recruitment process

- Don't be too rigid in the process – if you're asking someone who has no work history to submit a CV or complete an application they will feel they have lost already.
- Opportunities to volunteer or work trial can also be a good way to get to know the person and their ability to do the job.

In work support

- Role modelling and buddying with someone within the job can make a huge difference, sharing experience and learning.
- Support them with readiness to work where possible and work-based skills which they may not already have.
- People are often coming from a place of trauma and may need handling a bit more sensitively.
- Giving 'breathing room' to the person and to yourselves.

The business benefits

- Loyalty – giving someone the opportunity and giving them something they value will often create very loyal members of staff.
- You will also be making an active contribution to making your communities safer.

Q&A's

Working in the community sector and dealing with vulnerable people and volunteers, how can you manage risk assessments, who needs to know what, and prejudices?

Part of the considerations has to be suitability for the role, could they pose a risk to anyone? You can also think about different types of roles which might present less risk.

Further support and resources

[Community Led Initiatives](#)

www.inclusivityworks.org



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