



Clean Slate Cymru: Best Practice Guide



Executive Summary

The CITB funded BAM Nuttall Clean Slate Cymru project aimed to delineate clear pathways for ex-offenders into construction employment. One of the outputs of the project is this Best Practice Guide. It aims to capture existing best practice and describe innovative aspects of pilot projects undertaken as part of the project. The Best Practice Guide firstly explores why construction companies should support ex-offenders into construction employment. Secondly, some examples of how the construction industry has supported ex-offenders into construction. Thirdly, some innovative best practice is discussed.

Why Support Ex-offenders into Construction Employment?

It makes sense to support ex-offenders it creates social value and will enable construction companies to demonstrate to clients and communities they are achieving social value. Benefits for ex-offenders are clear construction employment can give them an opportunity to build a better life. Reoffending rates are also greatly influenced by whether a person finds work or not. Employment is often quoted as the most important factor in helping to reduce reoffending.¹ However, there are also business benefits of exploring an untapped source of talent. With, construction companies in Wales having difficulty finding suitably skilled staff this can have a negative impact on projects including delayed project delivery and wage inflation.² With existing and upcoming skill shortages there are some motivated candidates in prisons and communities who could be a valuable site asset.

How can Construction Companies Support Ex-offenders into Construction Employment?

Existing best practice is discussed. ISG worked in partnership with homeless charity The Wallich to provide work placements they provide a case study explaining how this has resulted in a valuable site asset. Network Rail's track course at Cardiff prison helps to meet an urgent skills needs of track workers. The Network Rail course is a good example of vocational training being designed to match the needs of the local labour market as well as the needs and interests of offenders. As well as providing work placements and supporting training to meet the local labour market needs there are other ways for construction companies to support ex-offenders. Industry led information, advice and guidance (IAG) and employability support can add value to existing training in prisons and communities.

Innovative Best Practice Supporting Ex-offenders into Construction Employment

One of the objectives of the Clean Slate Cymru project was to run or commission pilot projects to innovate new and effective approaches to support ex-offenders into construction employment. The HMP Parc Progression Pop-up aimed to give residents a sense of hope that there were opportunities available to them in the construction industry and some practical steps they could take to get there. Cardiff and Vale College's Work Ready Pathway to a Construction Apprenticeship aimed to get participants, from HMP Cardiff, to consider a construction apprenticeship on release. The Down to Earth Project trained women with convictions in sustainable construction techniques. Down to earth addressed the underrepresentation of women in industry and a skills shortage in sustainable construction techniques. TAG Train and Grow trained young people in the basic skills they would need on a typical work placement in partnership with a Youth Offending Team (YOT). What TAG Train and Grow did well was include YOT workers in the training so they had the confidence and knowledge to continue to support young people with construction training.

¹ NACRO (no date). Recruiting Safely & Fairly a Practical Guide to Employing Ex-offenders. London: NACRO.

² CITB (2016). Construction Industry Insights: Construction Skills Network 2016: 2020, Available at: https://www.citb.co.uk/documents/research/csn%202016-2020/csn_national_2016.pdf

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Introduction

The Clean Slate Cymru Best Practice Guide explores best practice examples of the construction industry engaging with ex-offenders. It also contains best practice created as part of the Clean Slate Cymru project. This guidance has been developed alongside the Clean Slate Cymru Toolkit. The Toolkit contains advice for construction employers on working with ex-offenders including engagement, interventions, employment and signposting. The best practice guide aims to provide construction employers in Wales with examples of effective best practice when training, supporting and employing ex-offenders.

This Best Practice Guide outlines examples of good practice undertaken as part of the Clean Slate Cymru project. The project worked with the construction industry in Wales from January 2017 until December 2018. The project aimed to establish relationships between construction employers, the third sector and offender management services. Some of the construction companies involved in the project have provided employment and work experience opportunities, while others have provided construction or employability training to improve the employment prospects of ex-offenders. This guide also provides examples of innovative practice undertaken by the construction industry such as the Network Rail course at HMP Cardiff and construction company ISG giving people with convictions opportunities on site in partnership with The Wallich.

Why Should Construction Companies Support Ex-offenders into Construction Employment?

There are examples in this Best Practice Guide of employer led initiatives such as the Network Rail course at HMP Cardiff that meets an urgent skills shortage for track workers. Or ISG supporting an ex-offender into employment in partnership with The Wallich BOSS project. Below are some of the reasons why the construction industry should support ex-offenders to progress into construction employment.

- Ten million people, over 20%³ of the working age population are recorded as having a criminal record on the Police National Computer. With looming skills-shortages it is not the right time to exclude one fifth of the population.
- Construction companies in Wales are having difficulty finding suitably skilled staff this can have a negative impact on projects including delayed project delivery and wage inflation.⁴
- Only 26.5%⁵ of prisoners enter employment on release meaning there is a huge untapped pool of talent that industry could benefit from. Although 90% of ex-offenders will have never set foot in a prison⁶.
- Reoffending rates are greatly influenced by whether a person finds work or not. Employment is often quoted as the most important factor in helping to reduce reoffending.⁷
- There are economic benefits of supporting ex-offenders into employment for the criminal justice system and tax payer. Reoffending costs the UK up to £13 billion a year⁸. This is in addition to the social and economic costs caused by preventing otherwise suitably skilled, qualified, experienced and motivated applicants being able to gain employment.
- Supporting ex-offenders also creates wider social impact it gives them a real opportunity to change their lives for the better and build a better future.
- Working with ex-offenders can help achieve social value and demonstrate to clients and communities you are giving something back to the community.

³ Home Office (2014)

⁴ CITB (2016). Construction Industry Insights: Construction Skills Network 2016: 2020, Available at: https://www.citb.co.uk/documents/research/csn%202016-2020/csn_national_2016.pdf

⁵ House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee (2016). Support for ex-offenders: Fifth Report of Session 2016-17: London: House of Commons.

⁶ Unlock (no date). *10 things about criminal records: A guide for employability professionals supporting people into work*. Kent: Unlock and the Institute of Employability Professionals.

⁷ NACRO (no date). *Recruiting Safely & Fairly a Practical Guide to Employing Ex-offenders*. London: NACRO.

⁸ Home Office (2013)

Existing Best Practice

The Clean Slate Cymru project was a CITB funded BAM Nuttall project that aimed to delineate a clear pathway for ex-offenders into construction employment. There was existing best practice in this area. ISG worked with Cardiff based charity The Wallich to provide opportunities on site for ex-offenders. The Wallich BOSS (Building Opportunities Skills & Success) project provides employability and entrepreneurship training to ex-offenders and prisoners serving sentences in South Wales at Cardiff, Swansea, Parc, Usk and Prescoed prisons. The Wallich have helped support many of their clients into construction employment and helped them build a better future. There are also examples of construction industry led training in Welsh prisons. The Network Rail course at HMP Cardiff is a good example of an industry led initiative which meets the needs of the local labour market. There is an urgent skills shortage of train track workers in the UK and the course at HMP Cardiff helps meet this labour demand with 65% of course completers securing work in the rail industry upon release.

Recruiting Ex-offenders: Valuable Site Asset

ISG Recruiting Ex-offenders: Valuable Site Asset



Jamie⁹, an ex-offender, became a valuable member of a major site team after being referred from Cardiff based charity, The Wallich, who work to give vulnerable people the accommodation and support to live safer, happier, more independent lives and to become part of their communities. He successfully secured the role of site operative on a large central Cardiff project, being delivered by main contractor, ISG. Working daily with the site team and subcontractors, including his mentor, ISG construction manager, Jamie proved to be a vital part of the team.

Being an ex-offender is often a large barrier to securing employment, however Jamie had always aspired to secure a position in a practical role that would create stability and opportunity for professional and personal growth.

Committed to supporting Jamie's development his on-site mentor, an ISG construction manager, helped him to advance his construction knowledge as well as interpersonal skills to help him succeed on site, and in turn improve his employability.

ISG's regional director for UK Construction West, said: *"Having a regular place of work is vitally important, it can be a life changer. We will actively support career placements where possible; I am really proud that we were able to help Jamie and his peers and find great enjoyment in seeing him succeed."*

Learning a variety of skills on site, Jamie was one of only four people trained and approved on site to operate the Canti deck, a vital tool used to get materials on and off elevated site areas. Jamie commented; *"Learning these skills really makes me feel proud of myself and what I have achieved with the help of the team."*

⁹ Jamie's name has been changed to protect his identity

Network Rail Tackling Skills Shortages at HMP Cardiff

Network Rail: Tackling Skills Shortages

The Network Rail course at HMP Cardiff is a good example of an industry led initiative to meet the needs of the local labour market. There is an urgent shortage of train track workers in the UK¹⁰. Network Rail does not directly benefit from its course at HMP Cardiff, they see the benefits through sub-contractors who employ the track workers. Recent figures show that 65%¹¹ of the residents who participated in the rail course at HMP Cardiff were employed within the rail industry upon release.



Network Rail and HMP Cardiff have set up rail training facilities including a 100ft section of track and equipment for the residents to gain experience before release. The training is completed in a realistic environment on a real track alongside changing facilities and a classroom. Learners complete Personal Track Safety (PTS) training, practical skills training and classroom activities. There is also a focus on transferrable skills including interview skills, mock interviews, basic administration, Health & Safety training, ability to work with others in a work environment, employability and confidence building. The course lasts for ten weeks for 35 hours per week.

Student Selection Criteria

Residents at Cardiff Prison are selected based on the following criteria:

- They have less than two years to serve of their sentence.
- They have committed less serious crimes.
- They have to pass a drug and alcohol test to be eligible for the course.

What the Course Involves

The Network Rail sponsored course provides training on specific rail skills such as Personal Track safety (PTS) and employability skills such as CV workshops and interview skills so the residents they train are more likely to gain employment. Network Rail's HR department provides the men with employability skills sessions such as putting together a CV and interview skills.

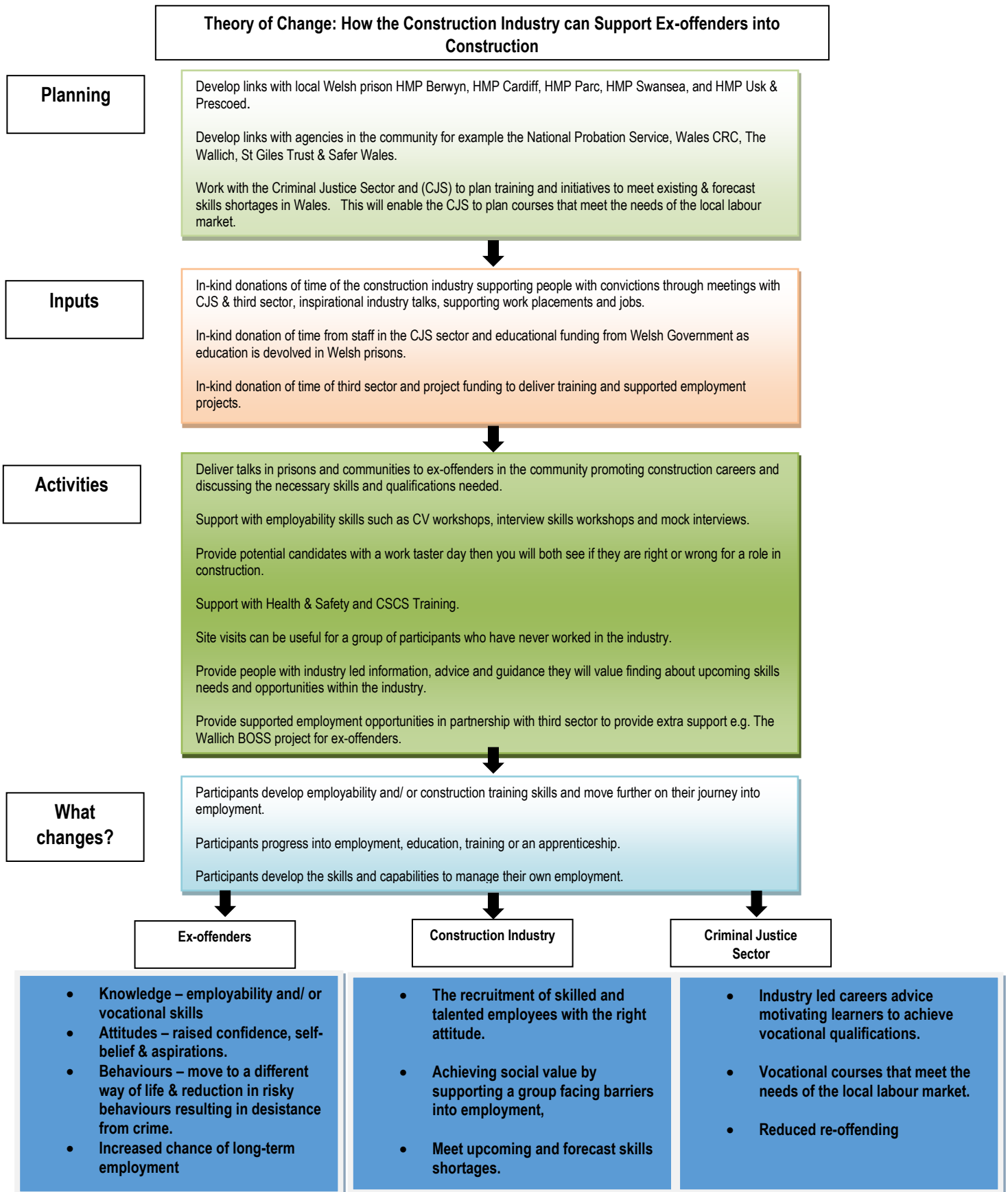
The Impact of the Project

- 65% of participants have gained employment within the rail industry
- Other Prisons have expressed an interest in a version of the project
- Increased community engagement
- Increased awareness of Diversity & Inclusion in Network Rail

¹⁰ Parry, G. & Green, E. (2017) Co-creating value: Through the gate and beyond. Project Report. UWE. Available from <http://eprints.uwe.ac.uk/30910>

¹¹ As 10

Theory of Change: How the Construction Industry can Support Ex-offenders into Construction



Prison Facts and Best practice

Prison Factfile¹²

- The majority of prisoners (97%) said they wanted to stop offending. When asked what factors could stop them they said, a job (68%) and a place to live (60%).
- Just 26% of men leaving prison secured employment – for women only 9% secured employment.
- Residents in prisons who attend vocational training are more likely to secure employment after release.
- A criminal conviction can be a barrier to leading a law-abiding life on release. The Rehabilitation of the Offenders Act 1974 gives people with spent convictions the legal right not to disclose them when applying for most jobs.
- Half of employers responding to a YouGov survey in 2016 said they would not consider employing an offender or an ex-offender.
- More than four-fifths of prisoners said they had difficulty getting insurance this would be a barrier to accessing self-employment.
- Just three in ten prisoners had accessed services in prison to help them prepare for release 68% had received advice on housing and 46% had received advice about employment.

NIACE Good Practice Recommendations for Vocational Training in Prisons

A NIACE's report¹³ on vocational training and employability skills in prisons contained good practice for supporting an effective transition from offending and increasing employability. Below are some of the recommendations that the construction industry can support with.

- Vocational training provision should be designed to match the needs of the local labour market as well as the needs and interests of offenders.
- Vocational provision should include employability skills which can be transferred across a range of employment settings, including skills for job-seeking and writing applications; interview skills; team work, organisational, communication and inter-personal skills; and support with disclosure of convictions.
- Where possible, vocational training and employability skills should be complemented by practical work experience, including work opportunities available in prison.
- Learning and training in the community can be enhanced through effective collaboration with partners in the community, including employers, voluntary sector organisations and learning providers.

Good Practice: Release on Temporary Licence

Release on temporary licence or ROTL¹⁴, is when risk-assessed prisoners, towards the end of their sentence can work or volunteer while on day release from prison. It gives a company the opportunity to see what a candidate can offer a business while giving a serving prisoner valuable work experience. Construction companies including Willmott Dixon and Jehu Group have employed candidates on ROTL.

¹² Prison Reform Trust (2017). Bromley Briefings Prison Factfile. Available at: www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Bromley%20Briefings/Autumn%202017%20factfile.pdf

¹³ Dixon, A. & Casey, L. (2013). Vocational Training and Employability Skills in Prisons and Young Offender Institutions. Niace: London

¹⁴ Ministry of Justice (2018). Employing Prisoners and Ex-offenders. Available at: [assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/.../moj-offender-employment-guide-web.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/711111/moj-offender-employment-guide-web.pdf)

Barriers to Construction Employment: Clean Slate Cymru Project

Former offenders¹⁵ can face a number of barriers to employment. A combination of factors can include low self-confidence, educational gaps, as well as the legal requirement to disclose unspent offences, can all make it difficult to find work. On the Clean Slate Cymru project through the delivery of pilot projects participants were supported to overcome barriers. Below are listed some of the barriers participants identified and how the project supported people to overcome them. Other than fear of disclosing an offence the barriers are the same as any disadvantaged group would face. It is important to note that the Clean Slate Cymru project aims to support people into construction and only the barriers to construction employment are discussed.

As part of the Clean Slate Cymru project participants were asked what they thought their biggest barrier was to securing employment. The majority of participants said they were 'afraid of having to disclose a criminal record to an employer or college'

Geographical barriers – Participants on the Clean Slate Cymru project were offered work placement opportunities and jobs based on where they lived and whether travel to work was realistic. One employer offered a participant, Tim¹⁶, a work trial day because he thought he would be an asset to the site but he felt the journey to site on public transport was unrealistic. The employer was right Tim enjoyed the work placement but secured employment on a site closer to home.

Lack of ID for CSCS Test – Participants tended not to have the photographic ID needed for a CSCS Test and an ID Waiver needed to be completed by their Probation Officer. On the Tir Coed pilot project a homeless ex-offender, Tom¹⁷, was supported with an ID Waiver and passed his CSCS Test. Now Tom has a CSCS Card which is also valid ID and another barrier to work has been removed for him.

Lack of ID to prove right to work in the UK – Participants did not always have the necessary documents to prove their right to work in the UK. If people are clients of Job Centre Plus they may be able to help with this. There is a 'Work Ready Checklist' included in the Clean Slate Cymru Toolkit' that can be used at the start of an intervention to see if participants have a CSCS Card, the necessary ID and the right motivation and attitude to work in the construction industry.

Lack of confidence – Participants quite often demonstrated a lack of confidence. One participant Luke¹⁸ kept saying he was stupid because he had dyslexia. Luke did really well and passed IOSH Working Safely, Manual Handling and a CSCS Test. He seemed really surprised every time he passed a test. Luke needed to be reassured that he was clever and he was doing really well on the course. Luke was supported with employability and confidence building. After the course Luke walked up to an employer at an event and really impressed them and he was offered an immediate job.

No mobile phone – Some participants of the Clean Slate Cymru project did not have a mobile phone. This was a huge barrier for securing employment. On the project we provided written instructions of the course or a meeting in advance and occasionally followed this up with a letter.

Lack of computer skills – As one participant Karen¹⁹ said "I went to prison and hardly anyone was using a computer and eight years later they have taken over". A lack of computer skills can be a real barrier to participants taking a CSCS Test. The mock CSCS Test is useful for this and additional tuition has been provided to participants needing help with computer skills on a touch screen laptop

¹⁵ Prison Reform Trust (2015) Working it Out Employment for Women Offenders. Available at: <http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Women/Employmentbriefing.pdf>

¹⁶ Tim's name has been changed to protect his identity

¹⁷ Tom's name has been changed to protect his identity

¹⁸ Luke's name has been changed to protect his identity

¹⁹ Karen's name has been changed to protect her identity

Best Practice: Clean Slate Cymru Project

One of the objectives of the Clean Slate Cymru project was to run or commission pilot projects to innovate new and effective approaches designed to support ex-offenders to access opportunities education, training and employment in the construction industry. The pilots had the overarching aim of giving ex-offenders access to the construction industry. Below some of the pilots are discussed that demonstrated particularly innovative best practice.

Creating Enterprise included a one day work placement day as part of the pilot. This is a practical way for both a construction company and a participant to see if a career in construction is right for them. The Wallich Disclosure Workshop was a best practice example of supporting ex-offenders. Almost 100% of participants on the Clean Slate Cymru project said fear of disclosing an offence was the biggest barrier to securing employment. The Wallich addressed this concern in a practical and constructive way. ARC Academy's use of drug and alcohol tests was an effective and practical way of addressing why substance misuse is not acceptable on site and how effective the tests are that construction companies use. There were also pilot projects that aimed to support ex-offenders facing additional barriers. The Down to Earth Project trained women with convictions in sustainable construction techniques. TAG Train and Grow trained young people in the basic skills they would need on a typical work placement. CAVC Work Ready Pathway to a Construction Apprenticeship aimed to get participants, from HMP Cardiff, to consider a construction apprenticeship on release. The HMP Parc Progression Pop-up aimed to give residents a sense of hope that there were opportunities available to them in the construction industry and some practical steps they could take to get there.

Best Practice: Creating Enterprise Unpaid Work Placements

Best Practice: Creating Enterprise Unpaid Work Placements



Creating Enterprise delivered the Passport to Employment pilot as part of the Clean Slate Cymru project. Nine participants took part in the Creating Enterprise pilot that included IOSH Working Safely, four site tours, a practical work experience day and a 'Meet the Boss' question and answer session.

The Creating Enterprise pilot included an unpaid work experience in a positive way as part of the course. The placement only lasted one day and participants in some cases have continued to complete an unpaid work experience. If people have no experience in construction and want to learn new skills work experience can be positive if it is time limited and has the potential to lead to something.

The Creating Enterprise pilot included a one day work trial in housing maintenance or on a construction site. This is a practical way for both a construction company and a participant to see if they are right for a career in construction.

Best Practice: The Wallich Disclosure Workshop

On the ARC Academy pilot delivered as part of the Clean Slate Cymru project 100% of participants said they thought having to disclose an offence was the biggest barrier to securing employment. ARC restructured the last day of the course to include a disclosure workshop delivered by The Wallich to go alongside the interview skills workshop already planned. The disclosure workshop was followed by interviews with employers. Both employers from Morgan Sindall and Acorn Recruitment fed back that participants had disclosed offences in interviews.

The rules around disclosure can be complicated Unlock a charity that provides support to people with convictions has developed a disclosure calculator: www.disclosurecalculator.org.uk

Unlock also have a helpline you can call: 01634 247350 (Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm)
Text or WhatsApp: 07824 113848

Best Practice: ARC Academy Tackling Substance Misuse

Construction companies need to provide a safe and healthy working environment for all employees and people affected by activities. They need to ensure that the health, safety or condition of people or property will not be affected by the misuse of drugs or alcohol. When people misuse drugs or alcohol this can lead to increased accidents or incidents.

Best Practice: ARC Academy Addressing Substance Misuse



ARC Academy ran a construction pilot as part of the Clean Slate Cymru project. The 'ARC Academy Training and Employment Construction Project' aimed to support ex-offenders gain a CSCS Card the minimum requirement for working on most construction sites. On the enrolment day participants were given a drug and alcohol test.

ARC Academy worked in partnership with homeless charity The Wallich to deliver the pilot project. ARC held the enrolment day at the offices of The Wallich BOSS Project. Delivering the drug and alcohol tests at The Wallich was less intimidating than in a medical facility. It also meant there were support workers from the BOSS project on hand to support participants after the tests.

Some of the participants tested positive to substance misuse this provided a really good platform to talk about why substance misuse is not acceptable in the construction industry. The tests also provided a powerful and practical example of how effective drug and alcohol tests are in the construction industry.

Participants were also tested at the end of the pilot project and the tests revealed that they had not misused any substances since the enrolment day.

Supporting Women with Convictions into Construction

Women with Convictions²⁰

- Less than one in ten women, serving a short sentence, will have a job to go to on release from prison.
- Many women with convictions will face barriers such as lack of childcare support, lack of qualifications and low pay.
- Women are more likely than men to have claimed out-of-work benefits before, and after, time in custody.
- Evidence suggests mental illness, drug and alcohol dependence and lack of confidence disproportionately affect women in the criminal justice system.
- The combination of multiple disadvantage can seriously challenge women's ability to stay the course and succeed in training and learning.
- Complicated patterns of multi-agency involvement coupled with chaotic lifestyles can restrict women's ability to attend courses.

Best Practice: The Down to Earth Project a Pathway for Women with Convictions



The Down to Earth Project delivered a pilot to women with convictions as part of the Clean Slate Cymru project. Down to Earth worked with the National Probation Service and Working Links to recruit women on to the pilot. Recruitment was challenging for the pilot and the participants needed a lot of encouragement and support to enrol on and attend the pilot.

The pilot addressed the skills shortages in sustainable construction techniques and the under-representation of women in construction, currently women make up only 12% of the construction work force. On this pilot project participants were offered a 40-hour course in sustainable construction. Activities included carpentry, heritage and management skills, the use of tools and a Health & Safety accreditation.

Perhaps just as important as the practical experience and skills gained in construction, the participants reported significant improvements to their health, mental health and sense of connection to their community. Participants reported;

- Improvement in levels of anxiety and depression
- Improvements in overall health
- Improvements in a sense of belonging in their community

²⁰ Prison Reform Trust (2015) Working it Out Employment for Women Offenders. Available at: <http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Women/Employmentbriefing.pdf>

Supporting Young People with Convictions into Construction

Youth Offending Teams (YOTs)²¹ work with young people who are either in the Youth Justice System or who are on programmes to prevent young people offending for the first time or behaving anti-socially. Most young people under the supervision of the YOT will be aged 10 to 17, but some 18-year-olds will still be engaged with the YOT. YOTs are multi-agency teams made up of representatives from police, probation, education, health and social services, and specialist workers, such as accommodation officers and substance misuse workers.

TAG Train and Grow Youth Offending Team (YOT) Pilot



With current and forecast skills shortages across the board in the construction trades and professions across Wales. The TAG Train & Grow pilot aimed to address the industry skills requirement for General Operatives. As part of the pilot participants were given a practical and relevant introduction to the skills they would need on a typical work placement such as handling tools safely and using a tape measure.

The TAG 'Train & Grow Introduction to Construction' pilot was delivered as part of the Clean Slate Cymru project. TAG Train and Grow ran a pilot for young people under the supervision of the Caerphilly Youth Offending Team (YOT).

As part of the pilot a YOT worker attended and participated in the course to gain a better understanding of what was involved in gaining an H&S accreditation and CSCS Card. This will enable him in the future to help the young people he supports revise for a CSCS Test.

- TAG Train & Grow delivered CSCS preparation, workshops on the correct use of hand tools and carpentry taster sessions.
- Direct 2U Training delivered IOSH Working Safely training.
- Caerphilly Youth Offending Team (YOT) referred young people to the pilot and a YOT worker attended and participated in the pilot to gain a better understanding of what was involved.

²¹ Youth Justice Board (2017) Youth Justice Statistics 2015/16 England and Wales. London: Youth Justice Board/ Ministry of Justice

Best Practice: Work Ready Pathway to a Construction Apprenticeship

The 'CAVC Pathway to Apprenticeship' pilot was an innovative project and the first of its kind in a Welsh prison for a long time. This pilot was delivered by Cardiff and Vale College (CAVC) in Cardiff prison to eight participants. They completed a Level 2 Diploma in Speaking and Listening: Health & Safety in a Construction Environment and CSCS test preparation. The Wallich also supported the pilot and offered participants after-course support in prison and in the community.

Best Practice: Work Ready Pathway to a Construction Apprenticeship



The Work Ready Pathway to a Construction Apprenticeship pilot was delivered at Cardiff prison, over 4 weeks. Cardiff & Vale College (CAVC) delivered 10 sessions, supported by Cardiff prison staff. Learners worked towards a Level 2 Speaking and Listening Agored Cymru unit, which involved researching Health and Safety (H&S) or creating a business idea and then delivering a presentation on their chosen topic to the group. HMP Cardiff added value to the pilot by including H&S accreditations and arranging for the CITB's mobile test centre to visit the prison to enable participants to take a CSCS Test before release.

- Learners completed motivational, job skills and mock interviews workshop sessions delivered by The Wallich BOSS project, Acorn Recruitment and Careers Wales i.e. positive disclosures and CV's.
- Apprenticeship talks were delivered by CAVC's Quality Skills Alliance – Dean of Work based learning, ACT Training and Morgan Sindall.
- CAVC delivered team-building, problem-solving and essential skills development through team games.
- CAVC delivered a workshop on challenging negative thinking through explanation of fixed/growth mind-sets.
- The Wallich BOSS project helped participants develop self-confidence and also gave advice regarding positive disclosure.
- Acorn Recruitment carried out mock interview sessions to enable participants to both practice and enhance interview skills.

The pilot was the first example of a pathway into an apprenticeship in a Welsh prison for a long time. The pilot was a good example of an initiative aimed at supporting the skills needs of the Cardiff City Deal and the South Wales Metro.

Best Practice: HMP Parc Progression Pop-up

HMP Parc is a category B local prison run by G4S based in Bridgend in South Wales. A Progression Pop-up was arranged firstly, to give participants a sense of hope that there were opportunities available to them within the construction industry. Secondly to give them practical advice on routes into the industry.

Best Practice: HMP Parc Progression Pop-up



Construction Youth Trust, ISG, NPT Group of Colleges, Jehu Group, Scape Group, Wates and the School of Hard Knocks visited HMP Parc to give a general overview of the opportunities in construction and provide some industry led information, advice and guidance.

- Staff at HMP Parc received positive feedback from participants at the event.
- Industry volunteers fed back that they got a lot out of the day and really enjoyed giving something back to such motivated candidates.
- Industry volunteers fed back that it was a good initiative matching an industry with skills shortages with ex-offenders.

Conclusion

The Clean Slate Cymru project worked with construction companies, training organisations, the third sector and the criminal justice sector to support people with convictions into construction employment. This Best Practice Guide illustrates the difference the construction industry can make to the lives of people with convictions. Existing best practice was explored such as Network Rail's Rail Track course at HMP Cardiff. Just 26% of men leaving prison secure employment on release. Over 65% of graduates of the Network Rail course secure employment in the rail industry on release. The Network Rail course illustrates the best practice that can happen when the construction industry works with prisons to design a course to meet an urgent skills need. There was also existing good practice of construction companies such as ISG working with The Wallich BOSS project to provide supported employment. This resulted in full time employment for a skilled and capable candidate and a valuable site asset for the construction company.

As part of the Clean Slate Cymru project pilot projects were commissioned. Pilots included everything from 'Pop-up Progression' events where construction industry volunteers gave IAG to people interested in pursuing or continuing a career within the industry in Welsh prisons. To courses that covered practical and theoretical construction skills. There were examples of best practice in pilot projects Creating Enterprise's one day work experience as part of the pilot was an effective way of seeing if participants wanted to pursue a career in construction.

ARC Academy's inclusion of drug and alcohol tests was a practical way of explaining why substance misuse is not acceptable in the construction industry and how good the tests are. What ARC did really well was hold the testing at The Wallich where there were support workers on hand to support participants with their results. There were also examples of pilots working ex-offenders facing additional such as women. Women in the criminal justice system are disproportionately affected by mental illness, drug and alcohol dependence and lack of confidence. The Down to Earth project worked with probation to support women with convictions to learn practical sustainable construction skills. Participants on the course reported better health, improved mental health and said they felt more connected to their community. The construction industry can provide good careers and opportunities for growth. With existing and upcoming skill shortages there are some really motivated candidates in prisons and communities who could be a valuable site asset.

Recommendations

There is added value of the construction industry working in partnership with the criminal justice sector to improve the design and delivery of vocational construction courses. This ensures the prison service is training prisoners with the skills the men need to address skills shortages within the construction industry. Prisons are really keen to talk to employers about how they can tailor construction courses to meet the needs of the local labour market. The Network Rail course at HMP Cardiff is a good example of this and it should be replicated.

The construction industry can add value to courses by providing employability support in prisons and communities. Many Clean Slate Cymru participants had never had a job interview. This did not necessarily mean they had never had a job. A mock interview provided by an employer can really add value to a vocational training course in prisons or communities.

Construction industry talks such as the progression pop-ups at HMP Parc can give people a sense of hope and let them know there are opportunities for them in the construction industry. Almost 100% of participants on the Clean Slate Cymru project felt that having to disclose an offence was the biggest barrier to securing construction employment. While the rules around disclosure are complicated people might need reassurance that an unspent conviction is unlikely to be a barrier to construction employment.

Where more Work is needed

Many residents we spoke to in prisons were really keen to start a construction apprenticeship. Residents in prisons cannot complete an apprenticeship because of the employed status of apprenticeships. The prisons are working hard to at least prepare residents for an apprenticeship. The Work Ready Pathway to a Construction Apprenticeship was piloted as part of the Clean Slate Cymru project. Residents in prison are keen to use their time constructively and build a future for themselves and their families.

There needs to be a joined up construction pathway for young people in the criminal justice system. As part of the Clean Slate Cymru project we only had the resources to complete one pilot project specifically for young people. Youth Offending Teams (YOT) from all over Wales contacted the project to help develop a construction pathway for young people. There is a particular need for employer engagement for young ex-offenders it is recommended that this is led by a third sector organisation.

There needs to be a joined up construction pathway for women in the criminal justice system. As part of the Clean Slate Cymru project we only had the resources to complete one pilot project with women. Recruiting women with convictions was challenging and time consuming. As an industry we need to be doing more to tackle stereotypes with groups that face additional barriers. The challenges of working with women were exacerbated by there not being a prison for women in the whole of Wales.

While the third sector can be innovative and can respond quickly to unmet need. The short term nature of funding can mean that learning and innovation can be lost. The Wallich BOSS projects funding is due to end in late 2019. There needs to be more sustainable funding for effective projects such as The Wallich Boss project.

The criminal justice sector needs to understand that the construction industry often need to achieve community benefits within the time limits of a construction development. While it is important for processes and procedures to be followed even the most socially responsible companies may need to achieve social value elsewhere to meet their targets.

Further Sources of Information

The Clean Slate Cymru Frameworks

As part of the Clean Slate Cymru project 'Ex-offenders into Construction Frameworks' have been put together for each of the National Probation Services regions of Wales. Each framework worked towards providing joined-up services to support and guide ex-offenders into construction employment.

The Clean Slate Cymru Toolkit

The 'Clean Slate Cymru Toolkit' has been designed as a resource for the construction industry to support ex-offenders on their journey into employment. The Clean Slate Cymru Toolkit provides the construction industry in Wales with a resource to support ex-offenders into construction education, employment and training.