

Support for people with convictions

Everyone is different, everyone is valued, so we'll help you succeed, whatever your career needs and whoever you are. Just bring yourself.

Careers and Employability Services

October 2023



How can this leaflet help?

- This leaflet includes contact details for advice and support organisations, and agencies supporting people with convictions into employment.
- The OU does not endorse any of the organisations these sites are linked to. They are here for your information and further research only. Some students don't have easy access to the internet, so we've included contact details, as well as online information.

This leaflet includes:

- Sources of information, advice, and guidance.
- Employers.
- Recruitment Agencies specialising in finding employment for people with convictions.

How to contact us:

The OU Careers and Employability Services supports registered students whilst studying and for three years after you have finished studying with us.

If you don't have internet access:

- If you are in a secure environment, ask your OU Co-ordinator to arrange a telephone interview with a careers consultant.
- If you are in the community with limited internet access, ask for a careers consultation by contacting the Students in Secure Environments (SiSE) team to arrange a telephone interview.

If you are in the community with limited internet access, ask for a careers consultation by contacting the Students in Secure Environments (SiSE) team to arrange a telephone interview:

Student Risk Checks
Hammerwood Gate
Kents Hill

Milton Keynes
MK7 6BY

E-mail: SR-SiSE@open.ac.uk

If you have internet access:

- If you are in a secure unit with internet access, you still need to ask your OU Co-ordinator to arrange a telephone careers consultation.
- If you are in the community with internet access, you can book a consultation on this link: <https://help.open.ac.uk/careers-consultation>.
- Our careers website www.open.ac.uk/careers covers all aspects of the career planning and job seeking process.
- We offer regular careers forums, webinars, and online workshops to get advice from careers consultants and employers, as well as share ideas and tips with other students:
<https://help.open.ac.uk/careers-news-and-events>

Our best wishes for your studies and future career.

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Sources of information, advice and guidance

Clinks Directory

This is a directory of organisations which support people with convictions.

<https://www.clinks.org/directory>

Unlock

Unlock is a charity for people with convictions <https://unlock.org.uk> Their Information Hub is a helpful resource and includes:

- Disclosure calculator and offers support
- Advice about job seeking
- Advice on disclosing to employers
- Self-employment

Contact details:

The Helpline
Unlock
Maidstone Community Support Centre
39-48 Marsham Street
Maidstone
Kent ME14 1HH

Phone: 01634 247350 (Monday to Friday, 8.45 am to 4.45 pm)

Text or WhatsApp: 07824 11384

Webform:

<https://infohub.typeform.com/to/zguWrK?typeform-source=unlock.org.uk>

Citizens Advice (CAB)

Citizens Advice provides free, confidential and independent advice to help people overcome their problems.

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>

Phone: 0800 144 8848 (England)
0800 702 2020 (Wales)

Adviceline is available 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. It's usually busiest at the beginning and end of the day. Calls are free from mobiles and landlines.

Fredericks Foundation

Fredericks is a Responsible Finance Provider that provides loans to people who want to set up a new business or maintain or expand an existing business. Fredericks is open to anyone who has a viable business proposition but cannot obtain mainstream finance.

Fredericks operates across England and Wales with a support team to help and guide applicants through the process. The support continues after the applicant has been successful, through mentoring, practical business advice, networking and links within the local community that can help support and grow new and expanding businesses.

<http://www.fredericksfoundation.org/>

Nacro

Nacro provides one-to-one advice, a helpline and online service, offering expert advice <https://www.nacro.org.uk/>

Contact:

Phone: 0300 123 1999 9am-5pm Mon-Thurs, 1pm- 5pm Fri

Email: helpline@nacro.org.uk

Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT)

Pact is a national charity that provides support to prisoners, people with convictions, and their families through a range of services, including:

- Mentoring
- Women's resettlement:
- Activity Hubs for people on probation:

<https://www.prisonadvice.org.uk/>

Contact:

Prison Advice and Care Trust
29 Peckham Road

London
SE5 8UA

Phone: 0207 7359535
Helpline: 0808 808 2003
Email: info@prisonadvice.org.uk

Prisoners' Advice Service (PAS)

Provides information and advice to prisoners on prisoners' rights. It cannot help with cases of wrongful conviction or appeals.

<http://www.prisonersadvice.org.uk/>

Contact:

Letters Clinics for written enquiries:
Prisoners' Advice Service
PO Box 46199
London EC1M 4XA

Phone: 0207 253 3323
Monday, Wednesday and Friday 10:00–12:30 and 14:00–16:30

Freephone Service for women prisoners:
Tuesday mornings 10am – 12:30pm on 0800 024 6205: number cleared in all women's prisons.

Prison Fellowship

Prison Fellowship is a Christian organisation offering support through chaplaincy, letter links and facilitating sending presents to families at Christmas. It also offers a volunteer-led victim awareness programme, which the principles of restorative justice. You can also ask if they work in your prison.

<https://prisonfellowship.org.uk/>

Contact:

PO Box 68226
London
SW1P 9WR
Phone: 020 7799 2500 10:00 and 15:30, Monday to Friday
Email: info@prisonfellowship.org.uk

The Prison Funder Directory

Also known as the Hardman Directory. Lists funding for individual prisoners and ex-prisoners, e.g. for study. Every prison library should have a copy. You can also view the directory at:

<https://www.hardmantrust.org.uk/directory/>

Prison Reform Trust

Provides information resources and advice on prison life and prisoners' rights. It cannot help with wrongful conviction or appeals.

<http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/>

Contact:

Write to:

Prison Reform Trust

FREEPOST ND6125

London

EC1B 1PN

Advice and information helpline: 0808 802 0060

Monday 3pm–5pm; Wednesday 10.30am–12.30pm

Thursday 10:30am–12:30pm

Email: advice@prisonreformtrust.org.uk

Step Together

Step Together provides one to one support to arrange volunteering to develop the skills, confidence and motivation to move on in life. They work in Manchester, London and Dorset.

<https://step-together.org.uk/criminal-justice-programme>

Contact:

Step Together Volunteering

St Brandon's House,

29 Great George Street,

Bristol, BS1 5QT

Phone: 0117 955 9042 Monday to Thursday 9am - 5pm

Email: admin@step-together.org.uk

Women in Prison

Provides support and advice to women in prison and in the community.

<https://www.womeninprison.org.uk/>

Contact:

Women in Prison

2nd Floor, Elmfield House

5 Stockwell Mews

London

SW9 9GX

Phone: 0207 359 6674

Email: info@wipuk.org

Webform: <https://www.womeninprison.org.uk/contact>

Employers

This section will help you to identify employers who are positive about recruiting people with convictions.

Clean Sheet

Clean Sheet helps people who have been in prison find work across the UK. Clean Sheet Employers will actively consider Clean Sheet Members for work, training or even volunteering, within normal legal and licence restrictions.

<http://cleansheet.org.uk/employers/>

Contact:

Phone: 0300 123 3045

Email: info@cleansheet.org.uk

Business in the Community (BITC): Ready to Work programme and advice

Business in the Community is a network of businesses that aims to create a skilled and inclusive workforce. Its Ban the Box campaign calls on employers to remove the tick box from application forms, and in doing so to commit to fairly assessing criminal convictions. Employers who have banned the box

<https://www.bitc.org.uk>

Unlock

Unlock is a national charity that provides a voice and support for people who are facing stigma and obstacles because of their criminal record. Unlock has a list of featured employers who are committed to recruiting people with convictions and treating people with criminal records fairly

<https://unlock.org.uk/>

There are regular updates featuring employers who demonstrate good practice

Contact:

The Helpline

Unlock
Maidstone Community Support Centre
39-48 Marsham Street
Maidstone
Kent ME14 1HH

Phone: 01634 247350 (Monday to Friday, 8.45 am to 4.45 pm)
Text or WhatsApp: 07824 11384
Email: advice@unlock.org.uk

Scotland: support organisations

Organisations who are members of the Criminal Justice Voluntary Sector Forum
- search to find organisations who could offer you support:

<http://www.ccpscotland.org/cjvsf/cjvsf/cjvsf-members/>

Apex

Employment opportunities and life skills training for ex-prisoners.

www.apexscotland.org.uk

A list of organisations offering support – you will be able to see which one operates in your area:

Contact:

9 Great Stuart Street
Edinburgh
EH3 7TP

Phone: 0131 220 0130
E-mail: admin@apexscotland.org.uk

SACRO

Volunteer support services for prisoners and their families. Community mediation, restorative justice service.

www.sacro.org.uk

Having a mentor can be helpful, someone to support you through the entire process and Sacro offer this

Contact:

National Office
1 Broughton Market
Edinburgh
EH3 6NU

Phone: 0131 624 7270

E-mail: info@sacro.org.uk

Release Scotland

Network of employers who are positive about employing people with convictions:

<https://www.releasescotland.com/how-to-employ/>

Howard League for Penal Reform in Scotland

Promotes humane and rational penal policies. Fosters constructive policies of crime prevention and rehabilitation <https://howardleague.scot/>. They have links to support organisations:

Turning Point Scotland

Provides residential and community engagement programmes for individuals whose criminal behaviours can lead to a pattern of re-offending as a result of underlying issues and poor life-choices. <https://www.turningpointscotland.com/>

Contact:

54 Govan Road
Glasgow
G51 1JL

Phone: 0141 427 8200
My Support telephone number: 0800 6523757

N. Ireland support groups for people with convictions

Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO)

NIACRO supports people with convictions in the community and leaving prison.
Offices include:

Belfast
Amelia House
4 Amelia Street
Belfast
BT2 7GS
Tel: 028 9032 0157

Portadown
26 Carleton Street
Portadown
Craigavon
BT62 3EP
Tel: 028 3833 1168

Derry/Londonderry
Embassy Building

2nd Floor
3 Strand Road
Derry/Londonderry
BT48 7BH
Tel: 028 7127 1459

<https://www.niacro.co.uk/>

Extern

A social justice charity across the island of Ireland which advises and supports people who've been through the criminal justice system. Their support includes if you're in crisis, homeless or have addiction issues <https://www.extern.org/>

Contact:

Head Offices:

N. Ireland Head Office
Hydepark House
3 McKinney Road
Newtownabbey, BT36 4PE

Phone: +44 (0)28 9084 0555

Republic of Ireland Head Office
Extern, 1st floor, Block 4
Monread Leisure and Commercial Centre
Monread Avenue
Naas, Co Kildare
W91 YWX3

Phone: +353 (0)45 878720

NI Direct government services

Information for prisoners about benefits <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk>

Search for 'prisoners and benefits'

Housing advice for Northern Ireland

Support in prison and after release <https://www.housingadviceni.org/>

Community NI

List of support groups for people with convictions

<https://www.communityni.org/>

<https://www.communityni.org/beneficiaries/ex-offenders-and-prisoners>

Family support NI

List of support for young people including some relevant services for young people in the justice system <https://www.familysupportni.gov.uk>

Wales

Maximus

The Probation Service's **Education, Training and Employment** programme helps you with increasing your confidence, new skills, qualifications, training, and finding work.

<https://ete.maximusuk.co.uk/wales>

If you're a man, aged 18+ and can answer **'yes'** to both statements, they are able to help:

- I live in Wales
- I'm under supervision by the Probation Service and want support with my education, training or finding work.

Phone: 0300 456 8152

Email: ETEWales@maximusuk.co.uk

St Giles Trust

St Giles Trust has a Peer Advisor Programme offers people who have experienced disadvantage the opportunity to train to a City & Guilds accredited Level 3 Advice and Guidance qualification. <https://www.stgilestrust.org.uk/>

Contact:

Unit 8 Coopers Yard
Curran Road
Cardiff
CF10 5NB

Lard Coopers
Llawr 8 Iaf
Heol Curren
Caerdydd
CF10 5NB

Phone: 0207 708 8000

Email: info@stgilestrust.org.uk

Volunteer mentor roles

Northern Learning Trust

Reaching Out Project has a team of volunteer mentors who provide advice, guidance, help and support as well as someone to talk to. They are impartial, objective, and non-judgemental. A unique aspect of this project is the engagement of ex-offenders as Peer Mentors. Through their lived experiences they are in a position to understand the issues and challenges faced by their mentees.

<https://www.northernlearningtrust.org.uk/what-we-do/criminal-justice/ex-offenders-mentoring>

Contact:

Cheviot House
Beaminster Way East
Kingston Park
Newcastle upon Tyne

Phone: 0191 2710131

Email: enquiries@northernlearningtrust.org.uk

St Giles Trust

St Giles Trust has a Peer Advisor Programme offers people who have experienced disadvantage the opportunity to train to a City & Guilds accredited Level 3 Advice and Guidance qualification. <https://www.stgilestrust.org.uk/>

Contact:

They have several centres in England and Wales – this is the Head Office:

St Giles Trust Head Office
64-68 Camberwell Church Street
London
SE5 8JB

Phone: 0207 708 8000

Email: info@stgilestrust.org.uk

User Voice

User Voice exists to reduce offending and support rehabilitation and is created and run by people who have been in prison and on probation. This means they speak from experience.

<https://www.uservoice.org/>

Contact:

20 Newburn Street
London
SE11 5PJ

Phone: 0203 137 7471
Email: info@uservice.org

Recruitment agencies specialising in supporting people with convictions

These agencies do not come with an Open University recommendation. This resource is to make you aware of support that may be available in your area.

Apex Works

Provides support with employability, training and access to employment, and operates in the East Midlands. Dedicated support programmes are available for those with additional barriers such as a learning disability or English as a second language.

<http://www.apex-works.co.uk>

Contact:

Apex House
74-76 Charles Street
Leicester
LE1 1FB

Phone: 0116 261 6510
E-mail: info@apex-works.co.uk

Access2Advice

Comprehensive support offering advice, advocacy and mentoring. Training is delivered both inside and outside the gate. Based in Derby.

<http://www.access2advice.org/>

Contact:

Access2Advice
Unit 14 Melbourne Business Court
Millennium Way
Pride Park
Derby
DE24 8LZ

Phone: 07817 727542

E-mail: support@access2advice.org

Bridge of Hope

Vacancies from inclusive employers.

Contact:

Bridge of Hope
9 De Montfort Street Leicester, UK

E-mail: info@bridgeofhope.careers

Career Connect

Careers information, advice, guidance and support, across NW England, delivering a programme that prepares and supports people with convictions into employment.

<https://www.careerconnect.org.uk>

Contact:

Career Connect
7th Floor, Walker House
Exchange Flags
Liverpool
L2 3YL

Phone: 0151 600 7700

Email: adviser@careerconnect.org.uk

Forward

Forward offers tailored support, training and access to jobs to people with convictions and those in recovery from addiction. They have supported many people into employment and to set up their own enterprises. They cover London and South East England. <https://www.forwardtrust.org.uk/>

Contact:

Forward
Edinburgh House
170 Kennington Lane
SE11 5DP

Phone: 0203 981 5525

E-mail: info@forwardtrust.org.uk

Group Horizon

National training provider offering full apprenticeships, traineeships and a variety of short courses relevant to the current jobs market, to support people back into employment, with specialism within the construction, manufacturing, smart meter, low carbon and renewable energy sectors.

<http://www.grouphorizon.co.uk>

Contact:

G24 The Avenues
Eleventh Avenue North
Team Valley Trading Estate
Gateshead
Tyne & Wear
NE11 0NJ

Phone: 0191 497 7722

Email: info@grouphorizon.co.uk

Maximus

This programme, delivered on behalf of the Probation Service, offers up to three months of support to men on probation to find work, or access skills and training. Only in the Northwest, West. Midlands and London.

<https://www.maximusuk.co.uk>

Contact:

Phone 0300 456 8152

Email ETELondon@maximusuk.co.uk

Only Connect

London based, through the gate support for men released from prison and start support while still in prison.

<https://onlyconnectuk.org/>

Contact:

OC Central
32 Cubitt Street
London
WC1X 0LR

Phone: 0207 278 8939

Webform: <https://onlyconnectuk.org/contact>

Pecan

South London charity, working locally and regionally. Provides intensive resettlement mentoring for people with convictions, employment support across the community, training in a variety of employment focused topics.

<https://www.pecan.org.uk>

Contact:

121a Peckham High Street

London

SE15 SSE

Phone: 0207 732 0007

Email: welcome@pecan.org.uk

Recycling Lives

Opportunities from voluntary positions to graduate placements in the recycling sector. Programmes offer experience in administration, customer service IT, marketing, welding and fabrication, HR, accounts and recycling operations. Locations include Preston, Leyland, Bury, Northampton, Walsall, Erith, Durham, Workington, Falkirk and Birkenhead. <https://www.recyclinglives.org/>

Contact:

Recycling Lives

1a Essex Street

Preston

Lancashire

PR1 1QE

Phone: 01772 654321

Email: jobs@recyclinglives.com

St Giles Trust

St Giles Trust has a dedicated employment service, helping place people with convictions into a variety of employment fields. London, Wales, Yorkshire, Midlands, South East. <https://www.stgilestrust.org.uk/>

Contact:

St Giles Trust Head Office
64-68 Camberwell
Church Street
London
SE5 8JB

Phone: 0207 708 8000

Email: info@stgilestrust.org.uk

Startup

Startup offers business advice and support into self-employment for women who have convictions or disadvantaged by social, economic and financial circumstances. Its peer mentoring services are delivered by women who are themselves prison leavers. Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Hertfordshire and Warwickshire.

<http://www.startupnow.org.uk>

Contact:

Bicester Innovation Centre
Commerce House, Telford Road
Bicester
OX26 4LD

Phone: 01869 249219

Email: info@startupnow.org.uk

Step Together

1:1 support and match individuals with a cause and a specific voluntary role. Working on both sides of the prison gate, to ensure seamless progression from prison to community. London, East, North West, South East, South West.

<https://step-together.org.uk/>

Contact:

Step Together Volunteering

St Brandon's House,
29 Great George Street,
Bristol, BS1 5QT

Phone: 0117 955 9042 Monday to Thursday 9am - 5pm

Email: admin@step-together.org.uk

The Prince's Trust

Helps develop skills and motivation, secure employment or return to education for young people aged 13-30 years.

<https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/>

Contact:

Freephone: 0800 842 842 (09:00-21:00, 7 days a week)

User Voice

User Voice exists to reduce offending and support rehabilitation and is created and run by people who have been in prison and on probation. This means they speak from experience.

<https://www.uservice.org/>

Contact:

20 Newburn Street

London
SE11 5PJ

Phone: 0203 137 7471
Email: info@uservice.org

Women in Prison

Provides support and advice to women in prison and in the community.

<https://www.womeninprison.org.uk/>

Contact:

Women in Prison
2nd Floor, Elmfield House
5 Stockwell Mews
London
SW9 9GX

Phone: 0207 359 6674
Email: info@wipuk.org

Working Chance

Recruitment consultancy which places women with criminal convictions into mainstream quality jobs.

<https://workingchance.org/>

Contact:

Working Chance
Claremont Building
24-27 White Lion Street
London
N1 9PD

E-mail: info@workingchance.org
Webform: <https://workingchance.org/get-support/>

Careers and Employability Services on social media

Twitter <http://www.twitter.com/OpenUniCareers>

Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/OpenUniCareers>

LinkedIn The Open University Careers Network
<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/3871260>

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