

BOSS Project

Building **O**pportunities, **S**kills and **S**uccess



Employ with conviction

Project Employer Guide

10 million

UK adults have a criminal record



Employment can reduce the rate of re-offending by up to

50%

Only **12%** of employers surveyed said that they had employed somebody with a criminal record in the past three years.



87% of employers who employ ex-offenders consider them at least as productive as other members of staff.

Tell me about the BOSS Project

The BOSS project is an innovative South Wales wide employability project which aims to reintegrate ex-offenders into their communities and in turn reduce re-offending.

By giving them the skills, qualifications, work experience, volunteering opportunities and confidence they need to gain employment or set up enterprise, we hope to change the perception associated with being an ex-offender and put the focus on what they offer as an employee rather than the label they represent.



Working alongside the BOSS project has been a hugely successful and satisfying experience for Acorn. We strongly believe in giving second chances and after working closely with the BOSS project we have seen that there are many job ready and extremely capable candidates out there that are deserving of an opportunity.

We have been pleasantly surprised by how many good quality candidates we have been able to work with alongside the BOSS project.

Acorn Recruitment



How does the BOSS Project work?

Each individual is assigned a dedicated learning & employment mentor who by understanding the client's personal needs, their experience, and aspirations is able to deliver a tailored pathway to employment.

We understand the importance of ensuring they have the right balance of soft skills and those skills in demand by industries; that's why we deliver courses on professional boundaries, interview skills alongside helping them obtaining their CSCS card, Health & Safety qualifications or external qualifications.

Why is the BOSS Project Important?



Re-offending costs the UK economy an estimated **£13 billion each year**, with each prison place costing **£45,000 annually**.

If we can reduce re-offending this will result in less victims of crime, safer communities, a lower welfare bill and ease the strain on the police and law enforcement agencies.

The impact on family members is often overlooked; despite evidence to show that re-offending increase the chance of divorce, loss of stable accommodation and a variety of debt problems.



Parental imprisonment approximately **trebles the risk** for antisocial or delinquent behavior by their **children**.



What support does BOSS provide?

BOSS is a partnership between The Wallich, the individual and the employer.

In work support and mentoring will be provided for a period up to 12 months, as well as providing the employer a dedicated point of contact to ease the transition and to overcome any initial hurdles.

Specialised Job Coach training will be provided to your current employees, enabling them to support those individuals whilst in employment.

In addition, we can provide expert guidance on conducting risk assessments, clear information on your disclosure requirements, assisting with articulating the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) element of tendering submissions and hold Employer forums on a quarterly basis to share best practice.



I knew it would be difficult for me coming out of prison after such a long time, but the BOSS project took a lot of the difficulty in declaring my offences to Employers away from me. Thanks to their support I am working hard, enjoying my job and have a bright future ahead of me.

Tom, ex-offender



What are the benefits of employing an ex-offender



There's convincing evidence to show that there are business benefits for including ex-offenders in targeted recruitment programmes, not only to address prevailing skill shortages and problems in filling job vacancies, but also regarding issues of corporate social responsibility.

(CIPD 2007 Employing ex-offenders to capture talent)

By partnering with the BOSS Project and adopting a fair recruitment policy towards ex-offenders, you can address recruitment gaps and skill shortages, offering an effective, low cost method of recruiting from an untapped and diverse talent pool of over 10 million people.

Ex-offenders can be a valuable part of your team; per a 2007 CIPD survey they are proven to be loyal and hardworking members of staff with above average levels of retention and decreased absenteeism.

However, 75% of employers admit to discriminating against these individuals, giving you a competitive advantage. Inclusive recruitment policies have also been shown to have a positive impact on employee engagement and can enhance your CSR responsibilities. On top of this, you can take comfort and pride in playing your part in giving someone a second chance and helping to reduce re-offending.

- Reduced spend on recruitment and higher levels of retention
- Enhanced Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy
- Access a talent pool of 10 million people
- Play your part in lessening the social impact of re-offending estimated at £13 billion annually



Are there risks to employing ex-offenders

There are risks in employing any member of staff, not just ex-offenders. The BOSS Project undertakes robust risk assessments and encourages positive disclosure of their convictions; by using a transparent process you are likely to know a lot more about a BOSS Project candidate than just your normal applicant.

Only 23 employers in the total sample of 474 respondents report negative experiences when employing an ex-offender (CIPD 2007 Employing ex-offenders to capture talent)

Is it legal to employ ex-offenders?

The short answer is yes, with exceptions for certain regulated roles with children and vulnerable adults.

For the majority of roles, The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (ROA) only entitles employers to know about unspent convictions. Even when there are unspent convictions it is completely at the discretion of the employer to make their own recruitment decisions.

When determining whether an applicant is suitable for the role applied for we recommend you ask about criminal convictions until at least the interview stage and work on a case by case basis; this way your judgment is based on their personality, skills and ability to undertake the role, rather than any preconceptions or biases, ensuring you get the best person for the job.



Employment can be the most important factor in reducing reoffending rates, however only 27% of people have a job to go to upon release from prison.

How do I get involved?

The first step is to contact the BOSS team to make us aware of your interest so we can speak to you further.

There is a myriad of options for you to become involved. A great way to start is to facilitate a workplace visit for group or provide a work placement to an individual. This helps break down any initial fears or concerns on both sides, provides an opportunity for you to get to know the individual and for the individual to prove themselves in a work environment.

In addition, you may wish to become involved with providing training workshops or courses, mock interviews, "What employers want" sessions, Entrepreneurship support and mentoring.

Ultimately, we would love to see you progress to become a full BOSS Project partner and being in a position to offer permanent employment within your company.

For further information, please contact:

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