

FACTSHEET

Finding employment

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On release from prison and arrival back in the UK, one of your priorities will probably be to find employment. Although the Prisoners Abroad Resettlement Team cannot find you a job, we can put you in touch with other agencies that can assist you. This leaflet addresses some of the questions we are frequently asked about employment.

Contents

1	Before release.....	1
2	Disclosure of a Criminal Record.....	2
3	Who Can Help?.....	3
3.1	Prisoners Abroad.....	3
3.2	The Employment Service.....	3
3.3	Nacro Resettlement Plus helpline.....	3
3.4	Apex Trust – Jobcheck.....	4

1 Before release

If you wish to begin preparing for your release and thinking about how you will obtain employment, here are some points for you to consider.

- Write a CV, listing any previous employment, work experience, skills, qualifications, other languages spoken and your general interests
- Let your caseworker know if you want information about specific services in other areas of the UK. We can find out what is available in the area you are returning to.

You can also begin to think about your sentence and imprisonment and how to present this to an employer. The following may be difficult questions to think about or answer, but if you have made changes in your life, or have had the opportunity to learn new skills and want to present your experiences in a positive way to an employer, it is worth giving it some consideration now.

- Have you completed any Education or Rehabilitation programmes whilst in prison?
- Under what circumstances was your offence committed and what has changed in your life since that time?
- What would you like to do in the future? Is there any training you could do on release that would help you achieve your goals?
- What would you offer a prospective employer?

2 Disclosure of a Criminal Record

If you have been convicted of an offence overseas, UK law states that you need to disclose this fact if asked about a criminal conviction on a job application form. (Please refer to the 'Disclosing Offences' factsheet, which gives you more information on the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act.)

How employers or the British authorities go about checking your conviction is not entirely clear. However, we have established the following:

- It is possible to obtain information about those who have served prison sentences abroad
- It is clear that systems are in place, which allow information to be passed between countries about those with criminal offences. However, it is not clear what happens to this information once it has been given to the British authorities. In some cases, this information has been made more widely available than it should have been. If, on your return, you encounter particular problems with this, please contact us at Prisoners Abroad as we believe the law needs to be clarified and will try and assist.
- Some employers will ask for a police check to be carried out before confirming the offer of a job. There are 3 different levels of police checks, dependant on what type of work you are applying for. The basic check will only reveal any current 'unspent' conviction (see 'Disclosing Offences' factsheet for more details). The most thorough check will reveal any history of offending. This check is carried out on people applying for work with children and other vulnerable people.
- If you have spent a substantial time living abroad, some employers may ask for a 'certificate of good conduct' from the country where you have been living.
- Some people choose not to disclose a conviction overseas, but in doing so they risk losing the job at a later stage if un-disclosed information comes to light (they can also be prosecuted for this).

3 Who Can Help?

3.1 *Prisoners Abroad*

The Prisoners Abroad resettlement team can:

- Refer you to some of the organisations listed or try and find suitable services in your area
- Talk through your concerns and worries regarding employment issues
- Let you use a computer to write CVs or letters for jobs

3.2 *The Employment Service*

This is the Government Agency that provides Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) to people who are unemployed but are able to work and are actively seeking work. If you are claiming JSA, the Employment Service will offer resources to help you find suitable work. They can also give advice on training opportunities. When you make a claim for benefits you will need to register at the nearest Job Centre to your address. At the Job Centre there will be a number of resources available to you:

- A member of staff can assist you with your search for work
- You can use 'Job Point', a touch screen computer to help you search for jobs yourself
- You can also access programme centres where you can have your CV created, use the Internet and have access to the phone to make enquiries about work
- Advice about the Government's 'New Deal Scheme', which offers extra help particularly to young people under the age of 24

You can visit their websites at www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk and www.worktrain.gov.uk.

3.3 *Nacro Resettlement Plus helpline*

Nacro's helpline offers advice to ex-offenders, serving prisoners and their families and friends in England and Wales. They can help with:

- Problems disclosing convictions in relation to employment, insurance, travel and emigration
- Information on employment, housing and welfare benefits and also on Nacro's training and housing services
- Leaflets on the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act

You can also contact them at:

169 Clapham Road, London SW9 0PU

www.nacro.org.uk

Tel: 0800 0181 259 (free from within the UK) or +44 20 7582 6500 from overseas.

3.4 Apex Trust – Jobcheck

Jobcheck is a national telephone helpline, which offers confidential advice and information on:

- When a conviction becomes spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act
- The Criminal Records Bureau.
- Disclosing Offences

You can telephone them on 0870 608 4567.

If you require this leaflet in a large print format, please contact us. Our details are below.

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