

Clean Sheet: From Prison to Employment

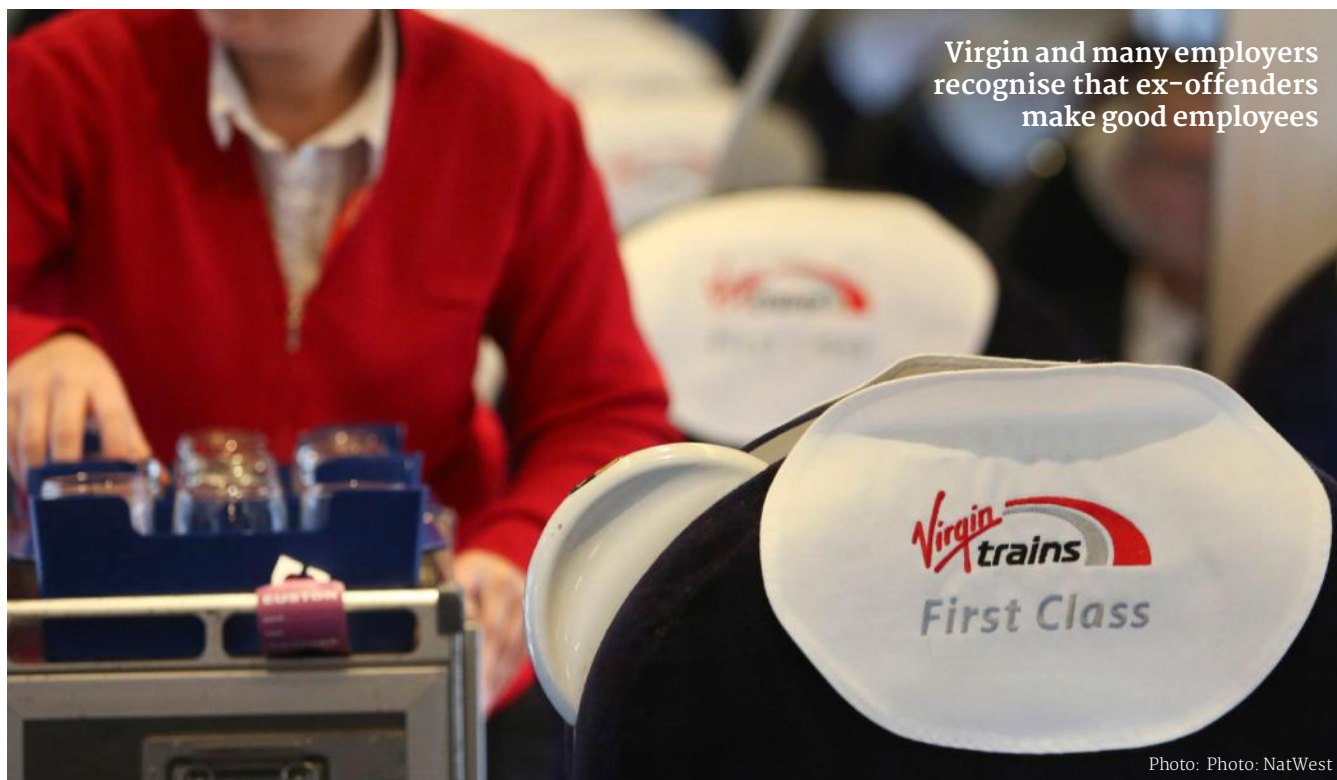
*Experience shows that ex-offenders make good employees, with a very wide variety of talent between them. **Christina Williams** outlines the work of Clean Sheet, an organisation that invites offenders and ex-offenders, as well as employers, to join as members. The Clean Sheet Team encourages and trains the ex-offenders to enable them to find employment with the employer members.*

The cost to society of reoffending is in the region of £15 billion per year. Nearly half of adults (48%) are reconvicted within one year of release. For those serving sentences of less than 12 months this increases to 64%. Employment for ex-offenders is one of the key drivers in reducing reoffending, with individuals between a third and a half less likely to reoffend if they have a job. With over 11 million people in the UK with a criminal conviction, supporting these individuals into work is not yet

mainstream practice among all employers in the UK. Clean Sheet works to change that and already has a national network of over 140 employers that break down the stereotypes and support ex-offenders into employment. The charity supported 312 members into work in 2018.

“I have been offered a really amazing job at an NGO. I went for a different job but during the interview they ended up asking me if I would

consider a better opportunity based on my skills and unique experiences. As soon as I left the building I burst into tears. This has been one year to instantly forget but ... I’m going to be on a really good wage and doing very interesting human rights work ... It’s funny because I counted today that I had applied to 614 jobs since January the 3rd. I had 24 replies, 3 interviews ... I cannot thank you enough for your continued support and advice. For someone like me who tried to forget the mistake I made over 18 years ago,



Virgin and many employers recognise that ex-offenders make good employees

Photo: Photo: NatWest