

Apprenticeships for prisoners to cut crime

- prisoners to have access to apprenticeships for the first time to help cut crime
- scheme to provide job-based training in key industries and boost local employers
- game-changing move to get more ex-offenders into jobs and cut £18 billion cost of reoffending
- launch comes in National Apprenticeship Week celebrating the positive impact apprenticeships bring to employers, individuals, and the economy.

Polling published last year found that nine out of ten businesses that hire ex-offenders say they are reliable, good at their job, punctual and trustworthy.

Currently prisoners are unable to take advantage of apprenticeships, which would give them access to gold-standard training they can gain the skills needed to secure work on release – with evidence showing that prison leavers in work are significantly less likely to re-offend.

The government will change the law so that prisoners at open prisons across England are able to apply for apprenticeship opportunities in vital industries, including hospitality and construction , providing direct routes into jobs with businesses in the community.

The scheme will initially be offered up to a hundred prisoners across England before being rolled out across the wider prison estate.

Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, Dominic Raab, said:

We are introducing prisoner apprenticeships to give offenders the skills and training they need to secure a job on release.

Getting offenders into work offers them a second chance to lead a more positive life and stay on the straight and narrow.

Breaking the cycle of crime is critical to our mission to drive down reoffending, cut crime and protect the public.

Secretary of State for Education Nadhim Zahawi said

We want everyone to have access to the high-quality training they need to progress and build a brighter future.

Apprenticeships will offer prisoners a lifechanging chance to gain

the skills they need to secure a rewarding career, while providing more businesses with the skilled workforce they need to grow.

At HMP Prescoed and Cilwrgi farm the Deputy Prime Minister yesterday (10 February 2022) met offenders working in agriculture in areas such as maintenance, animal care and woodland management.

The prison has one of the largest training programmes in the prison estate, giving prisoners the experience to plug local skills shortages and contribute positively to the community.

The new scheme is the latest step in the government's drive to boost the number of prison leavers with jobs. Prisoners are already able to study, train and work while in jail and a further 5,000 prisoners take part in vital work in the community through release on temporary license, where they learn important skills and help shore up local labour shortages.

Prisons like HMP Ford in West Sussex partner with sectors facing staffing concerns – including construction, hospitality and agriculture – with a number of offenders also training up as HGV drivers.

The scheme will see hundreds of prisoners start an apprenticeship by 2025, with pre-apprenticeship training offered to thousands more – preparing them for a full apprenticeship scheme or a higher skilled job on release.

This week is [National Apprenticeship Week 2022](#) which aims to celebrate and promote the fantastic benefits which apprenticeships offer both learners and employers, spotlighting businesses who are investing in this life-changing education route.

Note to editors

The government intends to bring forward Regulations later in the year that will change the law to allow prisoners to access apprenticeship opportunities while they are still serving time but are out on day release or nearing the end of their sentence.