

Giving an ex-offender a second chance can be a win-win for business, says Deputy Prime Minister

- new polling shows widespread support for businesses which recruit prison leavers
- over 90 percent of businesses already doing it highlight the reliability of such staff

New polling commissioned by the Ministry of Justice has found that over 90 percent of businesses that employ ex-offenders said that they are reliable, good at their job, punctual and trustworthy.

The Deputy Prime Minister unveiled the research ahead of a summit designed to cut crime by boosting the number of prison leavers who get a job.

Following careful vetting and employment security checks, prisoners are already employed in certain industries like agriculture, construction and transportation.

The Deputy Prime Minister set out his ambition to increase the number of prisoners gaining skills and prison leavers in jobs six months after release, with employment known to cut reoffending rates by up to nine percentage points.

The research also showed over 80 percent thinking that businesses who give offenders a second chance are making a positive contribution to society.

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

Giving an ex-offender a second chance can be win win for them and their employer. Business owners have told me ex-offenders are among the most reliable and motivated workers in their team – they have a desire to prove themselves trustworthy and they have something to lose.

It's a win for society too – ex-offender with jobs are paying their taxes and are significantly more likely to turn their backs on crime and stay on the straight and narrow.

I want to see new opportunities for ex-offenders opening up and reoffending coming down.

He was speaking after a series of conversations with employers and a visit to Lyons Haulage in West Sussex on Wednesday where he met two serving prisoners who work as HGV drivers while on day release from HMP Ford.

Prisons like HMP Ford already partner with sectors facing staffing shortages including construction, hospitality and agriculture.

The Deputy Prime Minister told the summit that he wants prisons to build more links with local employers. He set out plans for every resettlement prison in the country to have a board of businesses providing advice so that training reflects the skills employers are looking for and challenge so that prison staff are focused on getting people into work.

He told the audience of hundreds of employers that prisons would play their part by making sure that jobs are well-advertised inside and that prisoners left with a CV that shows their skills, identification to prove their right to work and a bank account so they can get paid.

The [New Futures Network](#), part of HM Prison and Probation Service, already supports over 400 businesses to work with prisons and probation staff to match serving and former prisoners with jobs.

The Recruiting Prison Leavers Summit is being attended by employers ranging from construction companies and manufacturers to hospitality businesses and retailers. They are hearing from ex-offenders including John, who now works for ready meal company COOK, Mo who works at construction firm Wates, and Stacey, who is employed by Timpsons.