

Press release: From jail to a job: women take bold steps with forward thinking charity

Meeting the women supported into employment by the London based charity Working Chance, Amber Rudd heard about how having a job is offering women the chance to escape their past and secure their future.

While the female employment rate is at a joint record high of 71.8%, with over 1.3 million more women in full-time work since 2010, many women still face barriers to getting a job.

Recent DWP research showed 4 out of 5 employers fail to have special recruitment procedures in place for disadvantaged groups, including women leaving the criminal justice system.

Working Chance supports women in their search for the job they want, while also working with employers to highlight the talent pool they are missing out on if they exclude this group.

Amber Rudd praised the charity for successfully getting businesses to recruit more women leaving the justice system, and highlighted her own priority to do more to support vulnerable women to benefit from the UK's booming jobs market.

Work and Pensions Secretary Amber Rudd said:

Employment is a powerful tool that empowers women economically and means they can take control over their own life.

But for too many women, especially those leaving the criminal justice system, having a job can feel unreachable.

Working Chance proves it can be made a reality. By working with business, as we also do in our jobcentres, we can put opportunities within a woman's grasp, and support her to seize the chance to change her life.

By supporting women who are leaving the criminal justice system into employment the charity is helping women reduce reoffending, with the reoffending rate for those placed in jobs by Working Chance at just 4%, compared to 58% among all ex-offenders.

Emma Freivogal, Chief Operations Officer, Working Chance said:

Working Chance has transformed the lives of thousands of women and

their children to date but it's vital that we continue to challenge the prejudices and preconceptions prevalent about ex-offenders among many employers and prevent women from becoming trapped in a cycle of poverty and offending. We were delighted to host the Secretary of State today and to show her first hand the difference that having secure employment makes to women who have been in prison.

Amber Rudd's comments follow her previous announcements to improve support for women including scrapping the 2 child limit on Universal Credit for children born before April 2017, and piloting a more flexible approach to childcare provisions.

The visit to the Working Chance headquarters in London also comes after the Justice Secretary David Gauke announced that [community services supporting vulnerable women have been awarded £1.6 million funding](#), as part of the government's commitment to reduce the number of women entering the criminal justice system.

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