

HMP THE MOUNT'S PLAN TO REDUCE REOFFENDING THROUGH PRISONER EMPLOYERS EVENT

On Tuesday 22nd January 2019, HMP The Mount hosted its first Employer Event which was attended by various local and national employers, including Arriva, VGC Group and RMF Construction Services. Local employers including, SWR Group, Herts Exec and Dacorum Borough Council were also represented at the Employer's Event, in hope of finding potential candidates for their vacancies.

The event gave employers an opportunity to find highly skilled and motivated individuals to meet their recruitment needs and showed offenders that gaining skills in prison can lead to work opportunities upon release. Research shows that prisoners who secure a job at the end of their sentence are up to nine percentage points less likely to reoffend than those who leave without employment provisions in place, increasing safety in the local area and giving offenders the opportunity to give something back to society.

Kevin Leggett, Governor of HMP The Mount said: "I was delighted to see so many local and national employers in attendance at our first ever careers event, with a view to offer interviews, apprenticeships and jobs to the men in our custody. I'm pleased to confirm that many of these individuals, who are serving the last six months of their sentence, were successful in securing opportunities upon release, which is a massive step in helping them to resettle back into the community and reduces the chances of them continuing their offending behaviour. This event is the first of many initiatives that HMP The Mount plans to host to help residents get back into employment and rehabilitate, and we would like to thank the employers who attended for their support in making this such a positive experience for all involved."

Large employers in attendance, including VGC Group, who offer work on the new HS2 railway, have found that ex-offenders can be more committed and hardworking than the wider workforce, which results in lower levels of sickness absence and staff turnover rates for a business. It is also positive as over half of UK employers struggle to fill vacancies due to industry skill shortages and this is another way that businesses can tap into a new pool of talented, highly motivated people.

VGC Skills and Employment advisor Kimberley McGinty attended the event and found potential candidates for future job opportunities. She commented: "In the construction industry we are facing a large skills gap, so attending careers events within prisons is incredibly important. Many of these men are keen to turn their lives around, so from a business perspective, it is an untapped pool of resources. The ex-offenders we already have working for our company are hardworking, honest and push themselves to go beyond expectations, so to be a part of their development and to watch them flourish is great."

Last year (May 2018), the Ministry of Justice launched the Education and Employment strategy which sets out new measures to boost prisoners' training and skills while in custody and improve their chances of securing work on release. As part of the Strategy, prison governors will be given the power to commission education and training programmes which provides offenders with the skills that local employers are looking for.

Businesses interested in employing ex-offenders can visit

<https://offenderemployment.campaign.gov.uk/> to find out more and register their interest.

If any further employers are keen to learn more about how they can attend future events at HMP The Mount, please contact sarah.barrett@hmps.qsi.gov.uk