



Ministry
of Justice



HM Prison &
Probation Service

Policy name: Employment on release Policy framework

Re-Issue Date 16 July 2026

Implementation Date: 30 April 2024

Replaces the following documents (e.g. PSIs, PSOs, Custodial Service Specs) which are hereby cancelled: N/A

Introduces amendments to the following documents: N/A

Action required by:

✓	HMPPS HQ	✓	Governors
✓	Public Sector Prisons	✓	Heads of Group
✓	Contracted Prisons		The Probation Service
	Under 18 Young Offender Institutions		Other providers of Probation and Community Services
	HMPPS Rehabilitation Contract Services Team		

Mandatory Actions: All groups referenced above must adhere to the Requirements section of this Policy Framework, which contains all mandatory actions.

Please note that this Policy Framework contains links to external documents for reference. In some formats, such as printed copies or non-digital formats, these links may not be accessible. Should you encounter any difficulty accessing referenced documents, please contact: NewFuturesNetwork@justice.gov.uk.

For Information: By the implementation date Governors¹ of Public Sector Prisons and Contracted Prisons must ensure that their local procedures do not contain the following:

- Locally developed policy or processes that deviate from the mandatory actions set out in this Policy Framework.

Governors must ensure that any new local policies developed because of this Policy Framework are compliant with relevant legislation, including the Public-Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act, 2010).

Section 6 of the Policy Framework contains guidance to implement the mandatory requirements set out in section 4 of this Policy Framework. Whilst it will not be mandatory to follow what is set out in this guidance, clear reasons to depart from the guidance should be documented locally. Any questions concerning departure from the guidance can be sent to the contact details below: NewFuturesNetwork@justice.gov.uk.

¹ In this document the term Governor also applies to Directors of Contracted Prisons.

It should be noted that the employment initiatives within this Policy Framework were launched across the adult estate and not the Youth Custody Service, with the exception of HMP Feltham B. This is because the funding to deliver these projects was limited to the adult Estate, on the assumption that education rather than employment brokerage is the focus for children.

How will this Policy Framework be audited or monitored: Operational staff responsible for reducing reoffending and employment outcomes, including Governors, Employment, Skills and Work (ESW) teams and Heads of Education, Skills and Work (HoESW) will monitor compliance with the mandatory actions set out in this instruction.

Assurance

There are two types of employment data that can be utilised for assurance purposes – performance data and management data, as outlined below:

Performance Data

Establishments have individual employment targets that are set by the HMPPS performance team and form part of a wider set of prison performance measures linked to the priorities of the Agency. This uses data collected by probation staff and recorded on nDelius, which Prison Employment Leads (PELs) in prisons can view. Prison staff can check the current targets through the regions performance teams, or through the establishments Head of Business Assurance (HOBA).

Employment outcomes are measured at both 6 weeks post-release, and at 6 months post-release. Governors are accountable for achieving or exceeding establishment performance targets.

The expected proportion of prison leavers employed at both 6 weeks, and 6 months varies per individual establishment. Targets are expected to change over time, as does the population of prisons. Please check the most recent employment targets document for up-to-date objectives.

The overall success of key employment initiatives contribute to the individual Annual Prison Performance Ratings 2024/25 - GOV.UK

Management Data

Separate to performance data, management data provides insight into what, specifically, is being achieved through the employment initiatives covered within this Policy Framework. Data is collected on the confirmed job offers that have been secured by prisoners prior to their release.

This data can be used by prisons to inform their employment strategies, established in partnership with their Employment Advisory Board (EAB), and drive improved future performance. To support improvements to performance, EABs have access to both management data and performance data.

New Futures Network collates this data nationally and uses it to inform its own approach to employer engagement. The aim of this is to provide prisons with the business connections that will provide the most suitable outcomes for their particular location and cohort. This collation of the data also allows prisons to compare their results with one another, which can further inform their own strategies.

Resource Impact:

The job roles linked to the employment initiatives include:

- Heads of Education, Skills and Work (HoESW)
- Prison Employment Leads (PEL)
- ID & Banking Administrators (IDBA)

These roles are permanent posts and have been implemented in resettlement prisons across England and Wales. HoESW are in post across all prisons in England and Wales. With the above roles in operation, a resource impact assessment is not required for this Policy Framework.

Contact: NewFuturesNetwork@justice.gov.uk

Deputy/Group Director sign-off: Matt Grey, Director, Rehabilitation & Change Directorate.

Approved by OPS for publication: Helen Judge, Joint Chair, Operational Policy Sub-board, April 2024.

Revisions

Date	Details
20 Feb 2025	Updated statistics and links to updated operational guidance.
27 Nov 2025	Updated statistics and links to updates operational guidance.
16 July 2026	Updated statistics and links to updates operational guidance.

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1. **Purpose**

- 1.1 Prison leavers who find employment in the year following release are up to 9 percentage points less likely to reoffend compared to those who do not.² A number of employment initiatives have therefore been put in place to improve the rate of people leaving prison moving into sustainable employment.
- 1.2 New Futures Network is the specialist employment team in HMPPS which led on the creation and roll out of the following employment initiatives:
- **Prison Employment Leads (PELs)** to match prisoners to jobs in advance of their release or sentencing date and oversee Employment Hubs in prisons.
 - **Employment Hubs**, where prisoners can access job vacancies and support in preparing them for work from different partners, including with applications and CVs.
 - **ID and Banking Administrators (IDBAs)** to ensure that eligible prisoners leave custody with right to work ID and a bank account – the basics required to start work, find accommodation, and claim Universal Credit.
 - **Employment Advisory Boards (EAB)**, chaired by business leaders, to provide support, challenge and advise prisons on their employment strategy.
 - **Employment Councils** were introduced to strengthen regional collaboration between Prisons, Probation and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), enhancing employment opportunities for people in custody and on release.
- 1.3 These initiatives are now ‘business as usual’ for prisons. This Policy Framework specifies the mandatory actions for prisons relating to them. The employment initiatives form part of the wider Employment, Skills and Work Improvement Framework for prisons.
- 1.4 In addition to prisons where the employment initiatives are operating, other prisons are encouraged to explore the implementation of employment initiatives, including self-funding the key employment roles. New Futures Network will provide support and guidance to prisons in establishing and managing these initiatives effectively.

2. **Evidence**

- 2.1 The employment initiatives were introduced due to the known positive impact and link between employment and reducing reoffending. Figures related to the employment rates of prison leavers are a key measure of success.
- 2.2 New Futures Network and other partners, including other Government Departments and the Third Sector, have built stronger links with employers, allowing prisons to offer more prisoners the chance to work in prison, on Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) and on release.
- 2.3 Together, New Futures Network and HMPPS colleagues have successfully completed the launch of several employment initiatives. Evidence suggests that these employment initiatives have contributed to positive outcomes in prison leaver recruitment.

Prison leaver employment rates have risen since the launch of employment initiatives.

² Thousands more ex-prisoners in work following major drive to boost employment - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

- 2.4 The proportion of prison leavers sentenced to 12 months or more who were employed within six months of their release more than doubled across the past four performance years, from 15% in 2020/21 to 38% in 2024/25.³

3. **Outcomes**

3.1 The high-level service outcomes for this Policy Framework are:

- Continue to enhance employment outcomes for prison leavers, through the effective delivery of employment initiatives, including:
 - Prison Employment Leads (PELs)
 - ID and Banking Administrators (IDBAs)
 - Employment Hubs
 - Local, Community, and National Partnership Agreements
 - Employment Advisory Boards (EAB)
 - Employment Councils
- Guide prisons to administer key employment initiatives effectively, running as part of prisons business as usual programme.
- Prisons offer employment provision that is appropriate to their prisoner cohort and is responsive to the employment markets in the areas into which prisoners will be released.
- Prisoners are engaged and supported to access employment support that best meets their needs and enhances their ability to find and keep employment on release.

4. **Requirements**

New Futures Network

- New Futures Network engages employers on behalf of HMPPS – attracting and guiding them through the process of recruiting prison leavers.
- New Futures Network has published employer guidance which outlines the steps and support available for establishing recruitment pathways with prisons.
- Specialist national account management is provided for key employers working with multiple prisons across England and Wales.
- Employment Brokers engage employers in their region.
- New Futures Network must ensure the opportunities they bring to each prison are suitable for the cohort there, taking account of geography (release areas) as well as other factors, such as the training on offer in the prison and any needs analysis done by the prison.
- National employment campaigns are delivered through New Futures Network, in which HMPPS works in partnership with various priority sectors.
- New Futures Network holds the national operational relationship with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), including with the DWP Strategic Relationship Team.
- The National Banking Programme for prisoners is led by New Futures Network. This includes managing HMPPS's relationship with the 6 high street banks who operate the programme, and UK Finance which represents the banking sector. New Futures Network must produce and update the operational guidance for this programme – and support the professional development of ID and Banking Administrators.
- New Futures Network is responsible for the National ID Programme for prisoners. This includes managing HMPPS's relationship with organisations such as the DVLA

³ Offender Employment Outcome Statistics - GOV.UK

for driving licences, and HMRC for National Insurance Numbers. New Futures Network must produce and update the operational guidance for this programme – and support the professional development of ID and Banking Administrators.

- New Futures Network oversees the employment system in HMPPS as a whole. This includes working with the operational line to develop and spread best practice – such as Employment Hubs, which began in the Northwest Prison groups, and have subsequently been rolled out across England and Wales; and Employment Advisory Boards.
- New Futures Network must produce and update the operational guidance for employment initiatives – and support the professional development of staff, including HoESWs and PELs, working on these.
- New Futures Network works with policy teams in the MoJ and Ministerial Offices to develop and implement new policy. It works with digital teams, who develop new tools for the employment system. It works with communications teams and correspondence teams to inform wider stakeholders about HMPPS's work in this area. It works with partners in the Third Sector and other key partners to improve employment outcomes.

Prison Employment Leads (PEL)

- The PEL position is a permanent role, maintained by prisons at Band 6, and replaced locally when the position becomes vacant.
- The PEL job description must not be modified, unless agreed in advance with New Futures Network in writing. The PEL's line manager – the HoESW – must ensure PELs are not working outside of the job role specifications.
- If a staff member leaves the PEL role, the HoESW must inform New Futures Network in writing, by emailing: NewFuturesNetwork@justice.gov.uk. This allows New Futures Network to assist with the onboarding process for new starters.
- It is the responsibility of the HoESW to ensure a reasonable handover to replacement staff is completed where possible.
- New PELs must complete the NFN Induction to support them in their role.
- PELs will work in and manage Employment Hubs as per the operational instructions, ensuring Hubs are open, accessible and utilised effectively.
- PELs will assess the work readiness of prisoners and match job ready prisoners to suitable vacancies and support them in applying for roles. They will need to be familiar with guidance on information sharing via the Information Sharing Policy Framework.
- PELs must support the accurate collection of management data from their Employment Hub.
- Follow HMPPS employer account management processes as outlined in the PEL Operational Guidance.
- Ensure the quality of banking and ID applications through a robust understanding of the processes and requirements of both programmes, whilst completing monthly quality assurance checks.
- Support the development of and adopt new employment related digital tools, including the 'Work After Leaving Prison' (WALP) service. This will include taking actions such as using the 'Get Someone Ready to Work' assessment, adding jobs where required; matching candidates to jobs and updating employment outcome status of prisoners; and taking advantage of the reporting functionality provided by the service.
- Work collaboratively with other partners, including Information, Advice and Guidance, DWP Prison Work Coaches and Third sector partners, through the EAB, (setting strategy), Local Partnership Agreements (defining local roles) and the Employment Hub (working with prisoners and making referrals to one another).

- PELs must work closely with prison Offender Management Units (OMU) to support the transition from prison to employment on release, specifically Prison Offender Managers (who are responsible for sentence plans), pre-release teams and key workers.
- PELs must join the PEL National Teams network to access key resources and collaboration space with the PEL network. This can be accessed via: PEL National Network | General | Microsoft Teams. Contact: NewFuturesNetwork@justice.gov.uk for support in joining.
- PELs will access the Prison Employment Lead SharePoint to access further resources and guidance.
- PELs are required to complete the Prison Work Coach resource tracker on a bi-monthly basis to report on the actual deployment of DWP Prison Work Coaches at their prison. The tracking tool is available on the PEL SharePoint to capture this information, which will be compared with DWP's monthly data return to identify gaps in service.
- Provide prisoners with job preparation and/or job matching support at 12 weeks prior to release, or in advance of their sentencing date.
- For continuous improvements to be made, we encourage PELs that leave the role to complete an exit survey: <https://forms.office.com/e/AJHQVn57ya>. It is the responsibility of the HoESW to prompt for this to be completed, as well as a reasonable handover to replacement staff where possible.

Employment Hubs

- All resettlement prisons must facilitate a fully open, accessible and operational Employment Hub. A physical space dedicated to employment that enables collaborative work between employment partners, including DWP Prison Work Coaches and Third sector partners, to meet the employment needs of prisoners and employers.
- Third sector organisations deliver valuable rehabilitation services across England and Wales. Employment Hubs enable physical collaboration with such organisations to bridge gaps between prison and the community, encouraging sustained employment post release.
- Staff and stakeholders must adhere to local safety procedures, particularly when working in isolation with prisoners.
- ESW Teams must utilise Employment Hubs to facilitate regular employment events, such as job fairs and employer led sessions, as determined by the requirements of the prison population.
- Prisoners have regular access to the Employment Hub, including the ability to make appointments with the PEL, IDBA and other partners, including the third sector.
- Employment Hubs are managed by PELs, in line with the operational instructions.
- Hubs must be visible to prisoners, consistently branded as per New Futures Network Employment Hub operational instructions and branding guidelines.
- Agreement must be reached between stakeholders on protocols or strategies about working together and making referrals to one another – led by the PEL or HoESW.
- PELs must use the latest digital equipment to support finding suitable jobs and supporting prisoners to apply for these.
- It is the responsibility of an establishment to cover any associated costs of relocating their Employment Hub. This includes any costs incurred to access digital services, such as providing cabling to any new location.

Local Partnership Agreements (LPA) between prisons and DWP districts

- LPAs ensure that each prison has documented working arrangements between HMPPS and the relevant DWP District.
- LPAs help avoid local gaps in employment services and unnecessary overlaps in provision through collaboration between HMPPS and DWP at a local level.
- The LPAs will reflect the variation in local set-up in different areas and is a task for ESW Teams and local DWP management to complete together, with the involvement of colleagues in the Probation Service.
- Supplement effective joint working arrangements between organisations and specific roles including PEL, Prison Work Coaches, New Futures Network Regional Employment Broker, Jobcentre staff including Employment Adviser, and Employment Adviser Manager and Probation.
- HoESW must ensure LPA face-to-face meetings are conducted, LPA is agreed and signed, is up-to-date, and reviewed quarterly. This is to strengthen local relationships between organisations and to consolidate collaborative working between HMPPS and the relevant DWP district.
- The ESW Team must document and map the support provided by PELs and DWP Prison Work Coaches to prisoners and prison leavers during their resettlement as part of the Employment Pathway and Finance, Benefit & Debt Pathway operating at the prison.
- LPAs must hold up-to-date contact details of stakeholders, including; PEL, DWP Prison Work Coaches, relevant line managers, and other key stakeholders to the local agreement.
- Robust escalation routeways for resolving issues or raising concerns must be outlined clearly.

National Partnership Agreement (NPA) between MoJ and DWP

- Governors and ESW Teams are responsible for delivering the MoJ obligations as outlined within the National Partnership Agreement: Work in Prisons.
- While Prison Employment Leads come under the line management of the Heads of Education, Skills and Work; it is the responsibility of the Head of Reducing Reoffending to resolve any issues related to DWP staff working conditions and accommodation at the prison.
- DWP will continue to provide Prison Work Coaches across England and Wales to deliver employment and benefit support to prisoners and prison leavers. Following consultations with post-holders, New Futures Network and DWP have clarified the respective roles and responsibilities of PELs and Prison Work Coaches, to support effective collaboration.
- ESW Teams must utilise local and national partnership agreements to ensure all parties deliver on respective commitments. Please flag any issues to: NewFuturesNetwork@justice.gov.uk.

National Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) between DWP & MoJ

- The DWP & MoJ Data Sharing Agreement allows data sharing between the departments to support prisoners and anyone under probation including community orders, suspended sentences and court orders.
- The DSA details the information on individuals that can be shared with, or received from, the DWP by prison staff, staff vetted to work inside prisons, prison probation and community probation.
- DWP Prison Work Coaches and Jobcentre staff may share the items listed at appendix D.

- Prison staff, vetted prison partners, and probation staff may share data listed at appendix E.
- Appendix D also confirms Prison Work Coaches can confirm correct name and DOB to support ID & Banking Administrator applications.
- The DSA allows DWP Prison Work Coaches to input updates to prison systems.
- DSA issues can be escalated via Local Partnership Agreement group and meetings
- Any locally unresolved data sharing issues can be escalated to NewFuturesNetwork@justice.gov.uk

ID and Banking Administrators (IDBA)

- The IDBA position is a permanent role, maintained by prisons at a Band 3 grade, and replaced locally when the position becomes vacant.
- The job description for IDBAs must not be modified in any way, unless agreed with New Futures Network in writing. The PEL must take steps to ensure IDBA staff are not working outside of the job role specifications.
- IDBAs must assess the needs of prisoners in sufficient advance of their release or sentencing date, and support those that are eligible to acquire a bank account and suitable ID.
- IDBAs must complete the required training for their role, including dedicated e-learning and familiarisation with the ID and Banking Operational Guidance, as well as further operating guidance for the Prisoner Banking Programme.
- In order to resolve queries and collaborate with colleagues, IDBAs will utilise all relevant resources and communication channels, including the National IDBA Teams channel, prior to contacting New Futures Network.
- IDBAs must submit regular application data to New Futures Network via SharePoint, as outlined in the ID and Banking Operational Guidance. Any prisons with self-funded IDBAs or staff providing ID and banking support can contact [New Futures Network on NewFuturesNetwork@justice.gov.uk](mailto:NewFuturesNetwork@justice.gov.uk), who will explain the processes outlined in the ID and Banking Operational Guidance.
- If a staff member leaves the IDBA role, the PEL or HoESW must inform New Futures Network in writing, by emailing: NewFuturesNetwork@justice.gov.uk. This allows New Futures Network to assist with the onboarding process for new starters.
- For continuous improvements to be made, we encourage IDBAs that leave the role to complete an exit survey: <https://forms.office.com/e/AJHQVn57ya>. It is the responsibility of the PEL to prompt for this to be completed, as well as a reasonable handover to replacement staff where possible.

Employment Advisory Boards (EAB)

- EABs will operate permanently and in line with the Operational EAB Guidance and EAB Terms of Reference. There is tailored EAB guidance available specifically for the Womens Directorate.
- EABs must be chaired, or co-chaired by a senior business leader, identified in line with the Operational EAB Guidance.
- All resettlement prisons will facilitate EABs that advise, support and challenge prisons on their training and employment offers, to both prisoners and prison leavers.
- ESW Teams will review and update their employment and education strategies utilising the commercial knowledge of EABs, including a review of workshops to ensure the training and work opportunities provided within these reflect standards, requirements, and opportunities within the local labour market.

- Prisons will identify suitable Chairs when required and advise New Futures Network when there is an EAB Chair vacancy. Prisons will share the EAB Chair Expression of Interest form with prospective new EAB Chairs to complete. New Futures Network will share all EAB Chair applications with the prisons ESW team who must consider applications with the Governing Governor to decide who is the best fit for the prisons current employment priorities. The Chair of the National Oversight Board must approve all new appointments. New Futures Network will support the onboarding of new Chairs with a full EAB Chair Induction as well as subsequent interventions with EAB Chairs.
- All new Chairs and members must be provided with the EAB Comms Toolkit. It is the responsibility of the prison to ensure they are familiar with the necessary processes and clearances.
- The ESW Team will facilitate EABs quarterly as a minimum, and notify New Futures Network if this is not possible – outlining the reasons why. New Futures Network will support where possible, although steps should be taken locally in the first instance to resolve issues.
- HMPPS staff are responsible for ensuring that EAB meetings take place, that agendas and minutes are shared with attendees, and that other secretariat tasks are completed. These responsibilities are not expected to fall to the Employment Broker and should instead be agreed locally, typically assigned to either the HoESW or PEL. Employment Brokers are not expected to attend EABs but do have the autonomy to join where required. Employment Brokers are expected to attend Employment Councils.
- The appropriate staff will ensure security checks are processed to allow EAB Chairs to attend prisons as and when required, including the vetting of EAB Chairs and members. This is the responsibility of the ESW Team. Prisons will follow the standard processes for vetting procedures.
- It is the responsibility of the prison to ensure EAB Chairs and external members have signed the data sharing agreement.
- Governors, HoESW and PELs are expected to attend all EABs where possible.
- If an EAB Chair leaves, the HoESW or other nominated prison colleague must inform New Futures Network by emailing: EmploymentAdvisoryBoards@justice.gov.uk.
- Any EAB issues identified should be addressed locally where possible. For issues that cannot be resolved, the escalation routeway outlined in the Operational EAB Guidance must be followed.
- Where prison staff identify a potential EAB member, they must suggest said person(s) to the EAB Chair. EAB Chairs ultimately hold the responsibility and decision on EAB membership.
- It is best practice to invite DWP Jobcentre Service Leaders (Band 10 / Grade 6) to EABs - List of Jobcentre Plus Service Leaders - GOV.UK
- Employment Councils bring together EAB Chairs within a region, forming links between Prisons, Probation and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

5. **Guidance**

5.1 Please see links to further guidance that is not referenced within the Policy Framework:

- The Female Offender Strategy (2018)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-offender-strategy>
- Farmer Review - Importance of strengthening female offenders' family and other relationships to prevent reoffending and reduce intergenerational crime (2019)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/farmer-review-for-women>

- Concordat on women in or at risk of contact with the Criminal Justice System (2021)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/concordat-on-women-in-or-at-risk-of-contact-with-the-criminal-justice-system>
- The Female Offender Strategy Delivery Plan (2023)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-offender-strategy-delivery-plan-2022-to-2025>
- Women's Policy Framework (2021)
<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/60d44c56e90e0743ad59fe95/women-s-pf.pdf>
- Womens Policy Framework Guidance v1 Dec 2024 used.docx
- [Women's Justice Board recommendations for reducing women's imprisonment - GOV.UK](#)