The London Assembly Economy, Culture and Skills Committee has launched an investigation into people leaving prison in London and employment. The investigation will seek to:

* Understand the challenges faced by people who have served custodial sentences in entering or re-entering the labour market in London
* Evaluate the adequacy of the support currently offered to Londoners who have served custodial sentences to enter or re-enter the labour market, both prior to and following their release
* Understand to what extent characteristics such as age, gender and ethnicity affect people’s prospects of finding and maintaining employment after leaving prison in London
* Understand which interventions in London have proven effective at supporting people who have served custodial sentences to access and sustain employment
* Understand what actions the Mayor, local and central government can take to support Londoners who have served custodial sentences to access and sustain employment

The Committee would like to invite those who have knowledge and experience of this topic to provide written evidence to the Committee. The information you provide will help to inform the work of the Committee and influence its recommendations.

# Background

# In the year to March 2024, 17.1 per cent of ex-offenders in London were employed six weeks after release from custody, rising to 27.9 per cent after 6 months.[[1]](#footnote-1)

According to a 2021 survey, around half of employers would not hire someone with a criminal record.[[2]](#footnote-2) Nearly eight out of ten people with a criminal record cite employment as one of the main difficulties they face after being involved with the criminal justice system (CJS).[[3]](#footnote-3) This tends to persist for a long period of time and affect people of all ages.[[4]](#footnote-4)

The 2017 Lammy Review found Black offenders are more likely to be unemployed two years after a caution, conviction or release from custody and that probation services do not effectively meet the needs of ex-offenders from minority ethnic background.[[5]](#footnote-5) There is also a large gender disparity: In the year to March 2024, 49.3 per cent of male offenders were in employment 6 months post release, for women this was 17 per cent.[[6]](#footnote-6)

# How to respond

The Committee welcomes any evidence relevant to the following questions:

1. To what extent are individuals able to effectively prepare for entering the labour market whilst in custody?
2. What are the main barriers for individuals when looking for work after leaving prison?
3. How effective is the current support provision in helping individuals who spent time in custody find and sustain employment after leaving prison?
4. Are there any interventions which have proven particularly successful in helping individuals who have been to prison in finding and sustaining employment?
5. What could the Mayor, local and central government do to help people who spent time in custody find and sustain employment?

You do not need to answer all questions - please answer only those that are most relevant to you or your organisation.

# What we will do with the responses

The results will be used to inform the London Assembly Economy. Culture and Skills Committee’s investigation. Responses may be used to form part of a report or output from the Committee.

In the large majority of circumstances we will publish written submissions and the name of the individual or organisation that submitted it online. This is so that there is transparency about what evidence the Committee has received. Exceptions to this are usually applied where there is a legal reason for non-publication or if there is a safeguarding or welfare issue. If there is a reason that you would like your evidence not to be published with your name (submitted anonymously) or not to be published at all (submitted confidentially), please let us know and the Committee will consider the request. However, this cannot be guaranteed, and the Assembly may be required to release non-personally identifiable information if requested under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

# About the London Assembly Economy, Culture and Skills Committee

The London Assembly consists of 25 elected London Assembly Members, who publicly examine the policies and programmes of the Mayor of London and relevant agencies through committee meetings, plenary sessions, site visits and investigations.

The Economy, Culture and Skills Committee examines and reports on matters relating to economic development, culture, skills, sport and tourism in London, and leads on scrutiny of any actions or decisions taken by the Mayor in these areas. It routinely publishes the findings and recommendations of its investigations.

The members of the committee are:

* Hina Bokhari AM (Chair)
* Anne Clarke AM (Deputy Chair)
* Marina Ahmad AM
* Neil Garratt AM
* Alessandro Georgiou AM
* Zack Polanski AM
* Unmesh Desai AM

# Contact us

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1. Ministry of Justice, [Offender Employment Outcomes – Statistical Summary](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-employment-outcomes-update-to-march-2024/offender-employment-outcomes-statistical-summary#official-statistics), 17 February 2025 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Working chance, [Worst-case scenario](https://workingchance.ams3.cdn.digitaloceanspaces.com/media/documents/Worst-Case_Scenario_-_Working_Chance_2021.pdf), July 2021 (p.15) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Unlock, [Double discrimination?](https://www.unlock.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Double-discrimination-Full-report-July-2019.pdf), July 2019 (p.3) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Unlock, [Double discrimination?](https://www.unlock.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Double-discrimination-Full-report-July-2019.pdf), July 2019 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. UK Government, [The Lammy Review](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/643001/lammy-review-final-report.pdf), September 2017 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Ministry of Justice, [Offender Employment Outcomes - Statistical Summary](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-employment-outcomes-update-to-march-2024/offender-employment-outcomes-statistical-summary), 17 February 2025 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)