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## Introduction

The purpose of this document is to report on the '**Jobs & Opportunities Expo**' that took place in Mountjoy West on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May 2017. The event was the first of its kind, not only for Mountjoy, but for the prison estate as a whole. The key point of differentiation was the fact that employers with vacancies to be filled were invited into Mountjoy West to interview inmates and assess their suitability for a job. Also in attendance were Community Employment Scheme representatives, education and training providers, and resettlement supports. Close to 50 prisoners (candidates) were selected to attend the Expo, most of whom had been coached in CV preparation and interview skills by IASIO Gate Service Training and Employment Officers in the weeks leading up to the event.

The report will set out the background to the Expo Day, and the stated aims and objectives that underpinned the event. It outlines the methodology used in analysing the respondents' surveys, and the findings that emerged out of that feedback. A description of the detailed process involved in planning and executing the Expo is provided—from its initiation to the collaborative effort displayed by both IPS and IASIO staff on the Expo day. There are five recommendations for improvement that will be of benefit to planning teams in the event of further Expos being staged in future. Finally, the report will close with a brief conclusion on the outcomes of the day.

# Background To Expo



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## Background to the Expo

There is growing evidence from research on what works in terms of care, rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders. The main results are pointing towards more intensive efforts to strengthen the structure and sequence of the range of interventions to support people to re-engage in the community. Finding employment is one of the key factors in reducing the risk of re-offending. However, ensuring support services such as housing, addiction and welfare needs are a pre-requisite to successful employment placement. Supporting and guiding prisoners into employment on release is a key objective of the **IASIO GATE** service.

The focus of this report and recommendations is specifically on the GATE service function relative to assisting prisoner's access to employment on release from prison and the IPS wish to facilitate that process through its services. This culminated on 18<sup>th</sup> May with the first ever '**Jobs & Opportunities Expo**' (Expo) in Mountjoy prison, or in any other prison in Ireland.

**IASIO** is a community based organisation funded by the Irish Prison Service (IPS) and the Probation Service. IASIO provides three distinct services:

**Gate** is a vocational prison-based 'through-the-gate' service that directly supports prisoners into training, education and employment. Central to the process is the identification of any barriers to progress, with the overall objective being the attainment of a sustainable pathway to change.

**Resettlement** is a prison-based 'through care' primary needs service. The service helps prisoners to address their immediate needs for stable resettlement upon release including access to housing, social welfare and medical cards. It works with prisoners pre-release, to develop a post-release plan and also provides support for up to six months post release.

**Linkage** supports offenders, under probation supervision, to access training, education and/or employment. The majority are in the community, and the service also offers guidance, placement, group-work and resettlement to prisoners who will be under probation supervision on release.

**The IPS** (Irish Prison Service) provides a wide range of training and upskilling opportunities to those in custody. These range from catering and laundry skills to industrial cleaning, construction, horticulture and I.T. Training is provided to an accredited standard in all of these areas. The IPS also works in partnership with the Education and Training Boards to deliver a broadly based education service that includes basic literacy and numeracy programmes, state examinations (Junior and Leaving Cert subjects), QQI certified programmes and Open University. These are complemented by adult education programmes offering soft skills, creative arts, release preparation and physical education.

In its 2016 – 2018 strategic plan (2.10), the IPS lists access to employment as a key objective.

## **THE IDEA**

The '**JOBS & OPPORTUNITIES EXPO**' was a joint collaboration between the IPS & IASIO. Assistant Governor, Donncha Walsh, asked the prison based staff of IASIO to bring their network of employers and key support services into the prison. The main objective was to provide prisoners from Mountjoy West who have acquired skillsets, and are ready to take up employment, with the opportunity to meet employers who are willing to discuss employment opportunities with them.

The 'Jobs' exhibitors invited to this event were employers (7 attended) and Community Employment Scheme representatives (8 attended) who had been targeted by the IASIO GATE and Resettlement staff. Each of these were willing to meet, interview and advise prisoners and to discuss employment prospects with them. In addition, the IASIO staff identified and invited other support services to exhibit. Those were in the areas of Training, and Education and in the area of Resettlement needs (12 attended). Of the 33 confirmed exhibitors, 27 were in attendance on the day.

It was agreed, at a very early stage of planning, by the campus Governor of Mountjoy and by the CEO of IASIO that the submission of a Business Case outlining very clear aims and objectives with measurable outcomes would be a pre-requisite to approval of this initiative. Additionally, as the staging of this event would be the first of its kind held in the Irish Prison Service, it should also serve as a learning opportunity to consider staging similar events, not only in Mountjoy, but also across the prison estate (and possibly with Probation Service clients).

## **STRATEGIC FIT**

Any event of this nature must have a strategic fit with the current strategy of the Irish Prison Service. This event met with the following strategies under the 2016 – 2018 IPS strategic plan and specifically under **Strategic Action 2 – Prisoner Support, 2.10** *"We will proactively engage with employers to provide employment to ex-offenders"* and **2.11** *"We will ensure that all releases from prison are planned to facilitate the safe and effective transition of a prisoner from custody to community"*.

# Aims & Objectives



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**The following AIMS AND OBJECTIVES were submitted for approval on 29th April:**

The Governor of Mountjoy prison and IASIO are organising a '**Jobs & Opportunities Expo**' for the prisoners in Mountjoy West on Thursday the 18<sup>th</sup> May. This will be the first of its kind held in the Irish Prison Service and it will serve as a learning opportunity to consider staging similar events across the prison estate.

The main objective of this event is to provide prisoners from the Mountjoy Campus who have acquired skillsets, and are ready to take up employment, with the opportunity to meet employers who are willing to discuss employment opportunities with them.

The 'Jobs' exhibitors at this event will be employers who have been targeted by the IASIO GATE and Resettlement staff and have committed to meet and interview prisoners and to discuss employment prospects with them.

In addition there will be other services present to provide advice and support in the areas of training and education and others in the area of resettlement support.

Workshops (2) for approximately 40 prisoners will be arranged for the 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> May, at which time those candidates selected to meet the employers will be assisted in updating their CV's and will be coached in basic interview skills by IASIO staff. In addition, those at the workshop will be provided with the list of employers attending and will be asked to select their employers of choice on the day.

***Measurable outcomes / learning***

During the course of the afternoon, all exhibitors will be provided with an assessment and feedback form in regard to the participants presented to them and, in particular, if they would consider offering a job to any of the candidates. Suggestions in regard to how any future event could be improved will also be canvassed. This will be an anonymous survey.

During the course of the week following the event, all participating candidates will be asked to provide their assessment of the preparation they received leading up to the day, what their views are in regard to the staging of the event, and if they feel it improved their job prospects. This too will be an anonymous survey.

Surveys from all exhibitors and candidates will be compiled and will form part of a final report and recommendations to the IPS. The most important outcome will be the number of employers indicating their willingness to consider employing candidates after their release from prison.

***Breakfast briefing / other guests***

There will be a breakfast briefing between 9.15am and 10am, prior to the candidates' attendance. It will be aimed at employers in particular, and introduced/facilitated by the IPS and IASIO/SFA. In addition to those exhibiting, we will have a Government representative in

attendance (**Mr. David Stanton TD, Minister of State at the Department of Justice and Equality**) and representatives from a small number of major employment sectors. This briefing will be an opportunity to showcase the extent of the education and skills training provided to the prisoners by the Irish Prison Service, and how that support extends from prison through to the community on release by IASIO and other services.

In addition, between 12.45 and 1.45pm the IPS will take the exhibitors into the prison to showcase the various work and training units in action e.g. laundry, bakery.

The main messaging therefore will emphasise to employers they will be presented with candidates who have earned the right to be considered for employment by expressing the right attitude, behaviour and skillsets. Employers will also be assured of the full support of the Irish Prison Service through IASIO who will guide and support them before, during and after placement.

### ***Media***

IASIO will work closely with the Press Office of the IPS Corporate Services. We intend to invite the full range of media. The main messaging will form part of the previous paragraph above and that this is a 'first' and also how crucial the role of employers are in contributing to the reduction of recidivistic behaviour and thereby making communities safer.

### ***Beyond the Mountjoy gate***

While the event is taking place in Mountjoy West, we expect that offers of employment will extend to other prisons for candidates who may be released in time to interview and take up any vacant positions offered. All IASIO staff will be made aware of the '**Jobs & Opportunities Expo**' and the names of the employers who attended the event and expressed an interest in employing our target group. This will be by way of a presentation during the IASIO staff training days in Beladd scheduled for 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> May.

### ***Learnings***

A report of this project will be compiled very shortly after the event, which will include:

- A survey conducted of all stakeholders involved in the staging of this event e.g.
  - What went well?
  - What could have been better and how?
  - Should it be repeated and if so, how often?
  - Did it meet the short term objectives e.g. positive messaging to candidates and Exhibitors, leading to job offers / opportunities?



# Methodology & Findings



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## Methodology

All stakeholders were surveyed using an anonymous semi-structured questionnaire. The survey contained both closed and open-ended questions and was specific to the area the respondent was representing. There were five different surveys, which were distributed and collected by IASIO head office staff members throughout the day:

- Form A1: to be completed by all exhibiting employers
- Form A2: to be completed by all Community Employment (CE) employers
- Form B: to be completed by all exhibiting employers with the aim of giving feedback to each candidate they interview
- Form C: to be completed by all candidates who attended the Expo
- Form D: to be completed by all resettlement, training and education exhibitors

The full list of exhibitors is outlined under **Appendix 2**.

An additional survey, 'Form E,' was circulated to members of the IPS/IASIO planning team in the week following the event for their feedback.

The survey questionnaires used in the Mountjoy 'Expo' are available under **Appendix 1**.

The responses were entered manually into Survey Monkey—a web based survey design and data analysis tool. The analysis of responses was essential in order to determine if the project objectives were met and if the event added value to the target groups preparation for release. It was also essential to retrieve this feedback if consideration is to be given to organising any further events of this nature in Mountjoy or other locations across the prison estate. The open ended questions provided space for suggestions for improvement that could be adopted for future events.

The findings section of this report (below) contains the analysis from the anonymous responses received from each of the exhibitors to determine their value of this event to them. The candidate's anonymous feedback was also analysed and included in this report.

## Findings

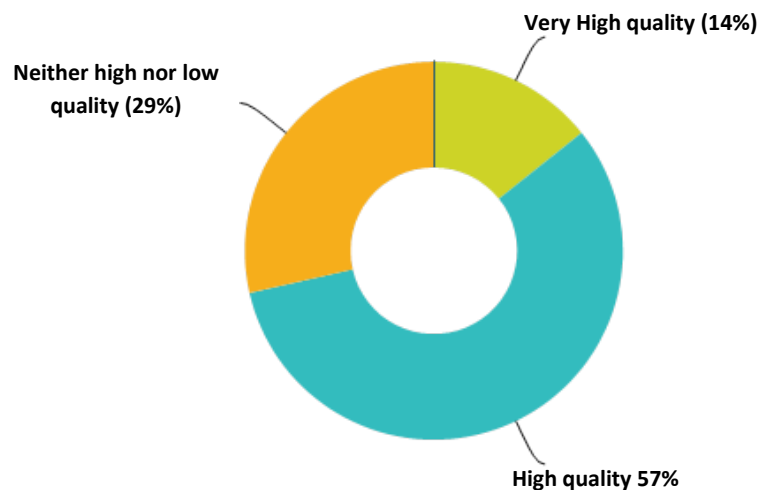
### 1. Feedback survey from employers:

Overall, the feedback from employers who attended the Expo day was hugely positive. **100%** of the employers rated the quality of their experience on the day as *'very positive'* which was the highest indicator available to them. **86%** of employers also said they were either *'extremely likely'* or *'very likely'* to recommend attendance at a similar event to other employers.

When asked their opinion on the candidates they interviewed, they responded with the following:

#### Q1 Overall, how would you rate the skills/quality of the candidate you met?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0

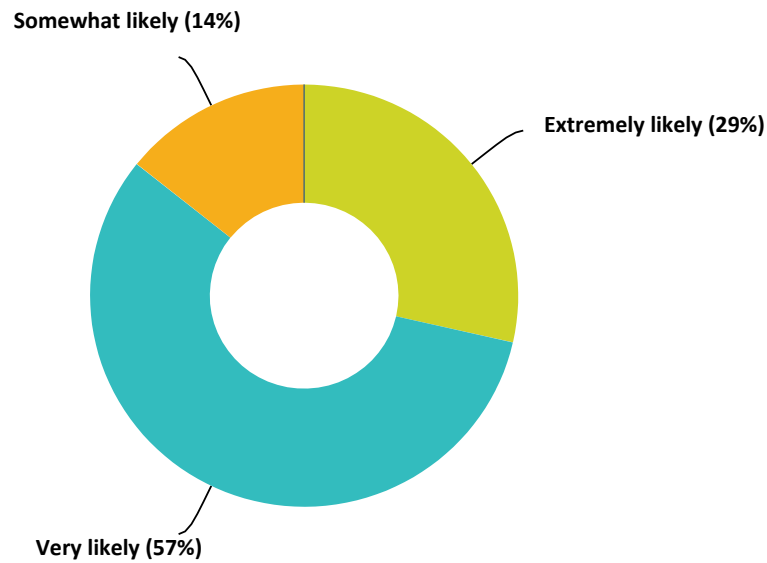


Respondents also commented that they were very impressed with the variety of skills among candidates.

The positive responses were also reflected in the finding that **86%** of employers stated they were either *'extremely likely'* or *'very likely'* to offer employment to candidates they met on the day (see chart below).

## Q2 How likely are you to offer employment to any candidates?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0



These are very positive findings, both in terms of the employers' experience of the Expo and their perception of the candidates they met.

Employers were also invited to provide suggestions for future events of the same nature in the form of some open ended questions:

### Q6 What would you have liked to have seen more of?

"More offenders, perhaps shorter sessions, but difficult to judge."
"More jobs options for the prisoners."
"Perhaps more learned skills in preparing for an interview."
"More jobs qualifications."
"More needs to be done to get inmates driving licences and forklift training. Only one inmate I spoke to had the required licence."

### Q8 Please feel free to add any additional comments:

"Great experience. Great people."
"The CV's were very well done."
"The day before, I wasn't very impressed with the prison officers. I felt very uncomfortable as it was my first time in a prison. Amanda Doyle TEO had assured me all would be ok."
"It was good but the space was small."

Evidently, the employers present on the day rated their experience very highly, yet we can see from their open ended responses that there is scope for improvement. Most notably, employers called for improved qualifications and skills among candidates, and also greater

participation from other employers to improve the range of available options for candidates. The negative reference to the prison officers concerns those who were at the front gate.

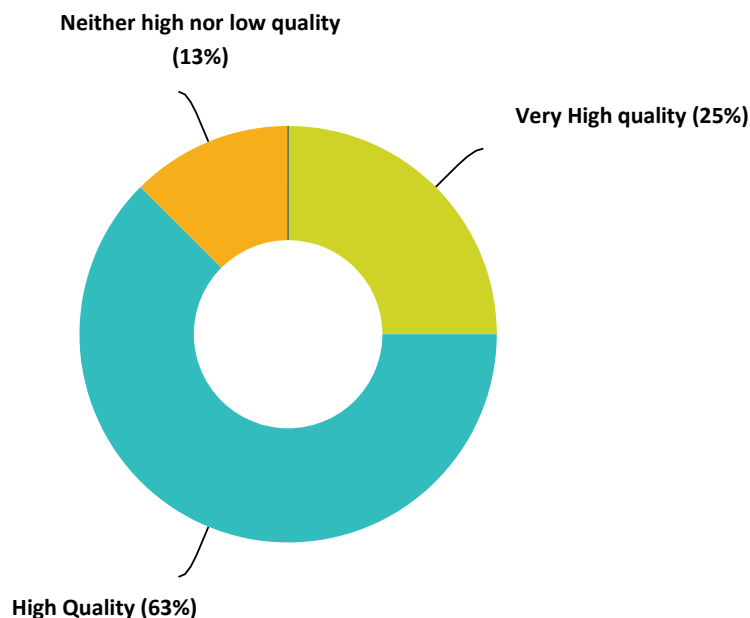
## 2. Feedback survey from Community Employment (CE) Schemes

For the most part, CE employers in attendance at the Mountjoy Expo echoed the positive sentiments of the other employers in that **88%** cited their experience on the day as ‘*very positive.*’ However, a common criticism among CE attendees related to the lack of space in their exhibition area, with one respondent describing it as ‘overcrowded’ and another felt ‘restricted.’ Nevertheless, they commented that the Expo was ‘well-organised,’ ‘a great idea’ and they were ‘delighted to be part of it.’

Responses were also positive when it came to giving feedback on the candidates they met. One respondent felt that many of the candidates had addiction issues and these must be dealt with prior to release. With the exception of this one response, CE employers considered candidates to be either high or very high quality/skilled.

### Q1 Overall, how would you rate the skills /quality of the candidates you met?

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0

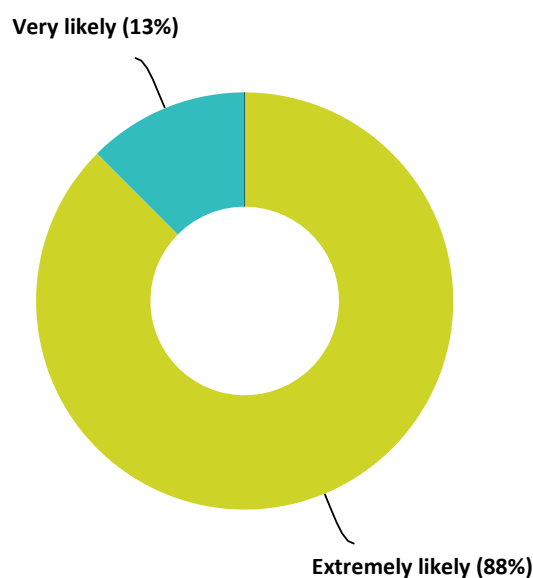


Expanding on this, they commented that candidates were “very motivated,” “eager,” “goal oriented” and that they “did well in articulating what it was they wanted.”

It is evident from responses that CE employers would be happy to engage with the candidates they met. One employer confirmed that “CE offers had been made to candidates,” and another stated “Any of the candidates that meet the criteria of our program and have CE eligibility would be welcome on our program.”

**Q2 How likely are you to offer employment to any candidates?**

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



The ‘additional comments’ question also gave rise to largely positive feedback from CE employers, especially in relation to the successful organisation of the event:

**Q8 Please feel free to add any additional comments:**

“Great idea and something to build on.”
“Very well presented and organised. Well done to Mandy and the team.”
“Delighted to have attended and it was a great opportunity. Looking forward to working with everyone in Mountjoy West.” (PACE Training and Social Enterprise)
“Excellent expo, well organised. Fantastic opportunity to meet with offenders in a relaxed atmosphere. Suggest a broader development of links with service providers.”
“We were delighted to be part of the expo and found that some of the candidates would benefit from our programs. They have given a lot of thought to where they want to go. We appreciate the amount of work that was put into the day.”

**Feedback to candidates on their performance:**

Each employer was asked to conduct informal interviews with candidates that presented to them. They were given a form with two, open ended questions relating to how the client presented and performed at interview. The first question asked the employer to list the candidate’s strengths. For the purposes of brevity in this report, we highlight the recurring strengths candidates presented with below:

Strengths
Confident and friendly. No problem talking about himself. Seems to have a good plan on release.
Full licence, presented well.
Has warehouse experience
Highly motivated. High level of knowledge of sports and fitness. Good candidate
Good background in boxing. Asked a lot of questions. Engaged well in conversation. Positive attitude
Ideal candidate. Good people skills and good qualifications. Positive mental attitude. Passionate about sport and fitness
Positive attitude. Eager to impress
Easy to talk to. Willing to learn. Open to feedback
Experience holding down a job
Very enthusiastic. Prepared (had photos of work). Talented
Very enthusiastic, kitchen experience
Friendly, positive, personable
Cleaning/hygiene experience
Very well presented, spoke well and convincingly. Seems motivated and passionate. Clear about his skills and activities within the bakery. Good CV.
Good presentation, fluent speaker, able to articulate, engaging.
Motivated and quite interested. Proud of his achievements in writing
Able to discuss his bakery skills and achievements. Seems to enjoy what he is doing and is motivated. Good CV, quite knowledgeable
Good presentation, confident and assured. Pleasant personality and comes across as experienced and skilled. Excellent CV and references.
Good social skills, dedication
Physical strength, mental strength, organiser
Very good people skills. Learns from mistakes, good qualifications, power lifting, confident, knows own strengths
Training and instruction--ITEC Level 5 Health and Fitness
Car valeting. Good experience

Employers also suggested areas for further development that would improve candidates' employment prospects. It was important to obtain this feedback as it will help both IASIO and IPS to focus on how clients can be trained, upskilled and prepared for employment in the event that they are not yet 'job-ready.'

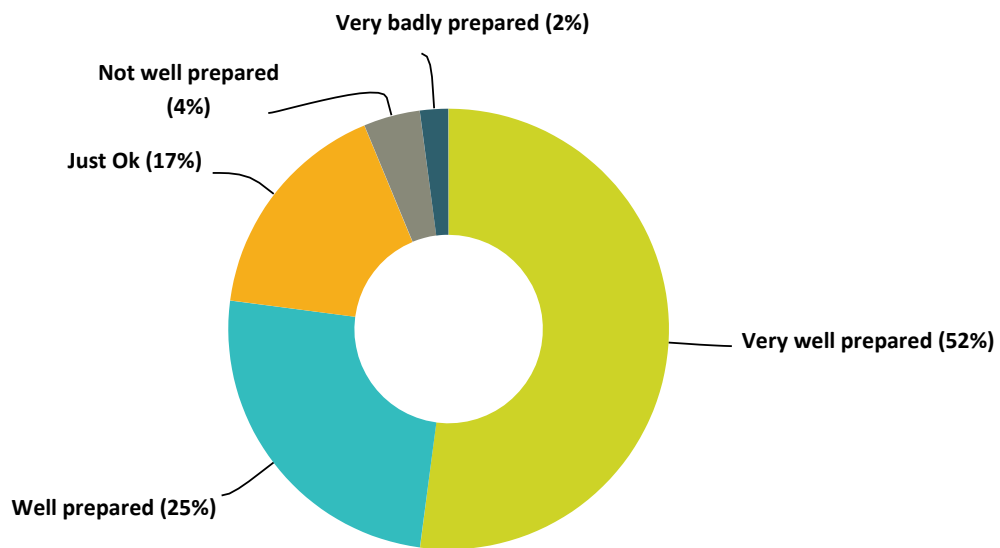
Further Development Needs
Suggested he list all courses completed in Mountjoy on CV
Needs fork lift licence
Wants a driving job, but has a ban. Needs realistic goal
Needs full licence (5 responses)
Needs training in sports course
Sports and fitness qualification
Interview skills
In this context, if his plan does not materialise he doesn't seem to have a backup.
Might need to focus on what he really wants to do. Skills not really applicable to bakery
English language improvement
A little shy, could sell himself better, but came across well and as a dependable person.
Suggest he develops more broad working skills
Driving licence, renew tickets, gym, confidence
Education in nutrition and training
Fitness instructor/Personal Trainer qualification
More one to one communications skills
He was unsure about how to return to work on release
Full licence needed, more sales training, car cleaning skills, speaking to customers
Driving experience

### 3. Feedback survey from candidates

There was a much greater deal of variation in candidates' experiences and opinions than the other respondents surveyed. Some candidates responded more negatively, but interestingly the questions that drew negative responses were related to candidates' perceptions of themselves and their own abilities.

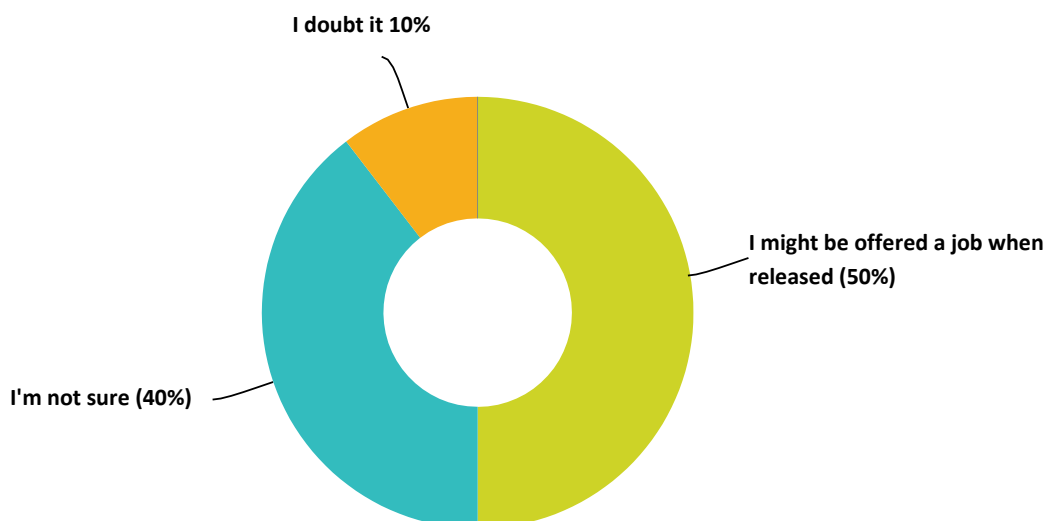
#### Q1 Overall, how prepared were you for meeting employers?

Answered: 48 Skipped: 0



#### Q2 Do you think any of the employers would offer you a job?

Answered: 48 Skipped: 0





Despite the slight negativity surrounding their own prospects, candidates viewed the Expo itself as a very positive event. **83%** of candidates said they would ‘*definitely recommend*’ attendance at similar events to others, and **96%** rated the quality of their experience on the day as either ‘*very good*’ or ‘*good*.’ This positive feedback was expanded on in the additional comments section:

**Any additional comments:**

“Just fantastic opportunities.”
“Prep was great beforehand.”
“Would like to see more like this.”
“It was very good. It helped me get ready for when I get out.”
“I think the expo was a good opportunity for prisoners with not too long left to serve.”
“Great work looking forward to you coming back.”
“Glad I came.”
“Happy to say I had a great day at the Jobs expo. There was great services with lots of info.”
“A very worthwhile experience - informative and a great way to get to know of various courses and opportunities.”
“Thank you it was enjoyable.”

Candidates also provided open ended feedback on what they would like to see if similar events were to be run again. Responses included more education stands (particularly third level); information on mental health awareness; computer manufacturing; photography, and training for D Licence and HGV theory tests. Finally, one respondent felt that the training provided by the Expo exhibitors (business studies/start-ups, mobile theory test units etc.) should be on the standard prison curriculum. He felt that elements of the current offering are hobbies and past times and, although fun, are of little practical significance on release.

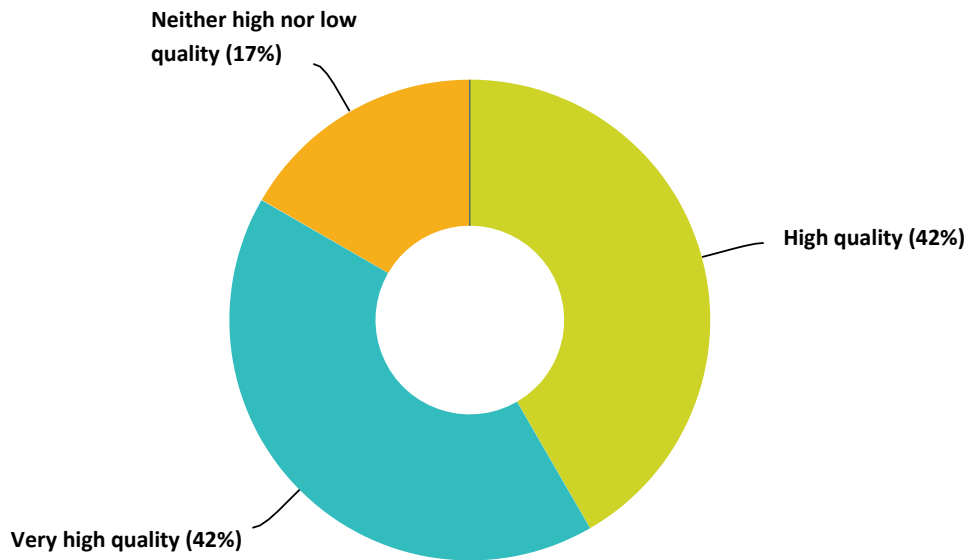
**4. Feedback survey from Trainers, Educators and Resettlement services**

Feedback from exhibitors from the training, education and resettlement services was again, extremely affirmative. **100%** of respondents said they rated the quality of their experience on the day as ‘*very positive*.’ Some elaborated on this, saying they were “Blown away by the energy, organisation and passion” and describing the event as “a great experience and one that could be developed further.”

They rated the skills, enthusiasm and qualifications of the candidates very highly. Comments used to describe the candidates included ‘eager,’ ‘motivated,’ ‘willing to learn,’ ‘personable,’ ‘engaging,’ and ‘interested.’ They felt however, that some clients could benefit from self-advocacy skills as they were unsure of how best to present the skills they have acquired in prison and that these are directly transferrable to the workplace.

**Q2 Overall, how would you rate the quality of the candidates you met?**

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0



Representatives from this area also provided suggestions for further improvement which could be adopted for future events. These included the following:

**Any additional comments:**

"From talking to the inmates, they asked to be fully trained before leaving prison so they don't fall back into the previous cycle. Having a recruitment agency connected with the training part would give some more positive feedback to candidates."
"Hopefully this event will be the start of increased interest from employers next time."
"Vast range of skills/qualifications. Candidates for higher education/employment just need to break down the stigma of being labelled 'offenders.' There is also a role for others in this."
"Less rehabilitation tables- inmates know these services are available."
"Candidates spoke to me about upskilling to various licenses while they are here so they can apply for jobs straight away rather than spending time doing more training to get work. This is an area Irish School of Motoring training could help with."
"A half day would have been sufficient, or if it is opened up to more inmates. Thank you."
"Very good start for the jobs expo and wish for it to continue. Access to PCs or laptops would be beneficial to access information for the clients."
"There was not enough space. Perhaps have interviews in the upstairs section & the stands/services section on the lower level."
"Social Welfare & immigrant groups, Solas, FÁS reps should attend."

## 5. Feedback survey from the IPS/IASIO Planning Team

The planning team was composed of both IPS and IASIO staff. A representative sample of six members of the planning team provided their feedback from the day.

Overall, the event was deemed to be a success from the perspective of the planning team, with **67%** rating it *'very successful'* and the remaining **33%** citing it as *'successful.'* **All** of the IPS and IASIO staff surveyed stated that they would like this event to be repeated in Mountjoy.

Respondents indicated that improvements could be made if there was additional time provided to plan for the event. The general consensus was that while this event was successful, more lead-in time would have greatly assisted clients and IASIO staff in the preparation of clients by way of CV/interview skills workshops. This would facilitate greater numbers of employers taking part, assist in smoother running of media interviews (the press release which included a specially designed infographic appeared to have been successful; see **Appendix 3**) and the wide range of media coverage was positive (see **Appendix 4**). The event was viewed by the planning team as a template to be built upon for future events.

# Analysis & Recommendations



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## Analysis

Overall, analysis of the responses shows that the event met the stated aims and objectives and the positive feedback from those surveyed confirms the success of the event. The most important measure of success was the offer of employment to 4 candidates on the day, and several follow-up enquiries about candidates arose in the following weeks. It is evident from responses that CE employers were also happy to engage with the candidates they met. One employer confirmed that *“CE offers had been made to candidates,”* and another stated *“Any of the candidates that meet the criteria of our program and have CE eligibility would be welcome on our program.”*

Early reflection would indicate the close working relationships between the staff of the IPS and IASIO was a key factor leading to that outcome. The support and involvement of key IPS/IASIO personnel was not only good practice but their input/expertise was invaluable in ensuring the smooth running of the day (table of key stakeholders is available in **Appendix 5**). Overall, the success of this event can be attributed to a determination by the team to meet the pre-set deadline rather than following a more favourable lead-in time that would have enabled increased skills analysis and preparation of candidates and matching those to perhaps a larger and more diverse group of employers.

## Recommendations

### RECOMMENDATION 1

#### **Longer lead-in time for better preparation and planning**

Staging events of this nature require considerable internal research and careful advanced planning. There are 2 stages (planning and preparation) and 8 main steps: a) Identification of candidate’s needs; b) Identification of employers and supporting agencies; c) Feasibility; d) Proposal Plan; e) Prior approval, f) Continuous preparation of candidates; g) Implementation of proposal plan; h) Report and wrap-up.

#### **Preparation Stage**

##### *a) Identification of candidates’ needs*

In planning an event of this nature it is essential that the strategic objectives of the IPS and the identified needs of the prisoners are to the forefront. It is therefore incumbent on the proposer/s to have established the skillsets of each candidate and identified

potential areas for development e.g. literacy and numeracy skills, CV development, interview skills etc. This individualised plan for candidates will require cross-sectoral professional input e.g. between IASIO GATE and Resettlement staff, educational, training, medical, and housing. In essence, any factors that might negatively impact on the person's successful placement into employment should be identified and addressed before their release from prison or at least identified so as to inform the effective referral to relevant community services as part of their release from prison. In regard to the Mountjoy 'Expo' the Assistant Governor facilitated meetings to ensure all parties were working together cohesively in the interest of the candidates.

*b) Identification of employers and supporting agencies*

It is equally important that potential employers with matching job opportunities for the candidates are identified at an early stage. Preferably, those employers would be known to IASIO staff. In all cases, employers should be vetted before being invited to exhibit. The supporting agencies invited to attend must also be relevant to the candidate's needs.

*c) Feasibility of staging in-prison*

When the number of 'job-ready' candidates and willing employers has been established, the size and the location of the venue in the prison should be identified. This cannot be agreed in isolation of any security regulations determined by the IPS. Access and egress to and from the venue for exhibitors and guests must also be identified and should be made as stress-free as possible, for the exhibitors in particular. All exhibitors must be informed of their obligations (ID, prohibited items etc.) prior to entering the prison setting to facilitate ease of access. The availability of facilities such as car parking, refreshments, catering, and toilet facilities should be identified in the proposal.

## **Planning Stage**

*d) Proposal Plan*

Develop a proposal plan containing all of the key elements outlined below under Recommendation 2.

*e) Prior approval*

As wide-ranging resources will have to be considered for the staging of any event, including the strategic fit and proposed timing, the approval of the IPS Governor and the CEO of IASIO is essential. With that in mind, a proposal plan must be submitted to the IPS Governor and the IASIO CEO. In particular the main concern of the Governor

would be around resources, implications for security, and feasibility within the prison. The main concern of the IASIO CEO would be assurances that the proposal has a strategic fit; sufficient staff resources; and aligns with agreed annual targets set for the current year. It would be in the interest of all parties concerned that the Governor and CEO would meet to consider the submitted proposal for approval or otherwise as soon as possible.

*f) Continuous preparation of candidates*

The preparation of candidates should be long established before the implementation stage of the plan. While the short window of opportunity to do this for 'Expo 2017', did not appear to mitigate against the success of some candidates, it would be best practice in future for the prison based Education and IASIO staff to establish ongoing essential education and training modules for CV development and interview preparation at an early stage of referral from the ISM Officer. The '**Journey to Work**' group work course developed by IASIO would be useful. The intention to stage a 'Jobs & Opportunities Expo' giving candidates access to potential employers from the employment sector of their choice could undoubtedly act as a motivating factor for prisoners.

*g) Implementation of proposal plan*

Implement proposal plan as agreed with the Prison Governor and the CEO of IASIO containing all of the elements set out above.

*h) Report and wrap-up*

The Report should contain verification that the project objectives were realised, (and if not, why?) evidenced by feedback from all participants, exhibitors, and stakeholders. It should also include a list of recommendations to enhance any future event of a similar nature. The wrap-up will require all exhibitors and guests to be acknowledged and thanked for their support for the event.

In order to give each step due attention and ensure the best possible outcomes, IASIO recommends that **at least 6 months lead-in time** be given between the initial planning stage and the Expo event.

## **RECOMMENDATION 2**

### **Submit a detailed proposal (Business Case) for prior approval**

Once steps a-f above has been completed, the next stage of organising any event of this nature must be by way of submitting a Business Case to the IPS Governor and to the IASIO CEO for approval. The Business Case should be a clearly defined proposal plan that includes:

- Proposed date/s
- Aims and objectives, measurable outcomes, any associated additional costs
- An outline of how the event meets element/s of the IPS strategic plan
- Outcome of analysis of potential candidates needs and employment preferences
- Clearly identified exhibitors pertinent to the candidates' needs, who are prepared to offer employment, advice, support and other necessary support services
- Clearly identified, or proposed steps to be taken, to prepare the candidates within the Prison for interviews, to include resources necessary
- Size of exhibition (Number of exhibitors and sectoral breakdown – relevance to target group) / location and facilities, including catering and toilets
- National sectoral representation e.g. Construction Industry Federation (CIF) as necessary
- Proposed number and cross-sectoral planning team members
- Clearly defined roles and timelines leading to the staging of the event.
- A commitment to publish an inclusive evaluation report within one month post event

Following submission of the above, the joint planning team should await prior approval or requests for further clarification from both the IPS Governor and the IASIO CEO before implementing the plan.

The IPS Press Officer and the IASIO Communications Manager should be in contact at an early stage to agree media coverage and to collaborate, particularly in the few days prior to staging the event, and, with the strict proviso that:

- Final approval of all media guests invited to attend rests with the IPS Press Officer
- Final approval of all prisoners proposed for media interview/s rests with the IPS Press Officer
- Final approval of all potential employers invited to exhibit and to interview candidates rests with the IPS Press Officer

### **RECOMMENDATION 3**

#### **Post-event evaluation report**

To measure the value of the event and to enable future planning that includes learning from the experience, the circulation, and the collection **on the day**, of critical analysis survey forms from all stakeholders is essential. In all cases, an evaluation report should be compiled and submitted to the Prison Governor and the CEO of IASIO by the project team leader and also to the key stakeholders in IPS & IASIO within one month post event.



## RECOMMENDATION 4

### Follow-up with candidates

- The employer's feedback on each candidate should be used to complement the persons 'employment release plan'. In that regard, analysis of the candidate's feedback, coupled with that of the employer is crucial in identifying the areas for further improvement which will need to be addressed.
- Where a candidate is returning to their own community outside of the area of the 'Expo employers', links should be made with an IASIO colleague, and as necessary, a Linkage TEO as early as necessary to identify an employment placement for the candidate. This would require an IPS/PS protocol to be developed whereby Linkage TEOs can take referrals from GATE TEO's, which is not currently in existence.
- Where offers extended by employers exceed the prisoner availability / suitability, clients from other prisons, or indeed clients on probation should be identified and given that opportunity. This will require liaison between prison based staff and community based IASIO staff. In essence, where any employer wishes to employ an ex-offender, every effort should be made to find a suitable candidate among all clients referred to any IASIO Service, regardless of funding stream.

For the purpose of consistency of recording and monitoring, all placements into employment should come through IASIO staff only. ***This would provide the contact details for feedback from employers to IASIO staff e.g. 6 months after placement to establish if the placement was successful or otherwise.***

## RECOMMENDATION 5

### Developments to IASIO database

IASIO will investigate the possibility of developing its current database with a view to being able to provide a comprehensive profile of each person referred that is focused on, and specific to, their qualifications and skills. This additional data collection would start with the first meeting between the referred person and the TEO and would be available to all IASIO staff nationwide. This would enable employers with vacancies to approach IASIO staff citing essential qualifications relative to their vacant posts. IASIO would seek to develop its database to include the following:

- The persons areas of interest specific to employment sector/s
- Current skills sets

- Further training needs
- Location on release and/or location where employment is being sought
- Support needs post release e.g. Housing, Medical, Finance (DSP). Where those concerns arise the person should be referred to the IASIO Resettlement staff.
- Release date (where applicable)

## Conclusion

From the analysis and recommendations set out above, we can conclude that the Mountjoy West Expo was hugely successful. Responses from all surveyed were extremely positive and it was clear that there was an appetite among both exhibitors and candidates for such an event to be repeated. Four candidates were offered jobs on the day, and others are likely to follow as enquiries are still ongoing.

Aside from these more obvious successful outcomes, the Mountjoy Expo has potentially had long-term and far reaching positive consequences. Inviting employers—influential members of their communities—to an event of this nature creates a shift in perceptions and mind-sets and breaks down stereotypes around prisoners, commonly assigned a master-status of ‘criminal.’ Media coverage of the event was wide-ranging and hugely positive, also reflecting a shift from the norm of sensationalising criminal behaviour. The profile of the IPS and IASIO was raised, as media coverage included acknowledgment of the excellent work being done in Irish prisons in upskilling and training prisoners and equipping them insofar as possible to reintegrate and make a positive contribution to their communities on release.

The event was a great opportunity for learning in terms of developing a template for how to run similar events in future. With this in mind, next steps should involve taking account of the suggested improvements and constructive feedback given by all surveyed. The event was viewed as very positive, but very much a platform to build upon, rather than a perfected model and finished product. Some respondents from the planning team felt the Expo could have been improved if there was a greater lead-in time allotted to the event. All those surveyed called for a greater employer presence so again, additional time would enable IASIO staff to network and canvas potential employers to take part. A number of the education/training/resettlement exhibitors cited a lack of space in their allocated area, so it would be wise to assess the feasibility/logistics in any prison seeking to hold an event.

It is clear that events such as the Mountjoy Expo are an excellent way of motivating clients to consider their options post-release, and guide those not yet ‘job-ready’ as to how they might improve their prospects. Such an event was timely, given the economic upturn and increased opportunities in Dublin at least. This, combined with increased employer networking, the development of Social Enterprises and traineeships, more favourable media reporting and increased emphasis on the community’s role in reintegration could have untold positive consequences for prisoners. It is very much hoped that we would use the hindsight gained from the Mountjoy West Expo and the findings of this report as a tool to improve future events, and ultimately, opportunities and outcomes for our clients—in which the Irish Prison Service, the Probation Service, and IASIO have a shared interest.

# Appendices



Seirbhís Phríosúin na hÉireann  
**IRISH PRISON SERVICE**

FORM A1

---

**‘JOBS & OPPORTUNITIES EXPO’ IN MOUNTJOY WEST ON THE 18<sup>TH</sup>  
MAY 2017**

**CONFIDENTIAL EMPLOYMENT REPRESENTATIVES SURVEY ON  
EVENT**

---

**1. Overall, how would you rate the skills/quality of the candidates you met?**

- Very high quality
- High quality
- Neither high or low quality
- Low quality
- Very low quality

**Any comment? (Optional)**

**2. How likely are you to offer employment to any candidates?**

- Extremely likely
- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Not so likely
- Not at all likely

**Any comment? (Optional)**

*Are you aware of incentivised  
employment schemes for businesses open  
to recruiting people with convictions?*

**YES      NO    (please circle)**

**3. How likely are you to recommend candidates to other employers?**

- Extremely likely
- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Not so likely
- Not at all likely

Any comment? (Optional)

**4. How likely are you to recommend attendance at any similar event to other employers?**

- Extremely likely
- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Not so likely
- Not at all likely

Any comment? (Optional)

**5. Overall, how would you rate the quality of your experience today?**

- Very positive
- Somewhat positive
- Neutral
- Somewhat negative
- Very negative

Any comment? (Optional)

**What would you have liked to have seen more of?**

**What would you have liked to have seen less of?**

**Please feel free to add any additional comments here:**

**The Irish Prison Service and IASIO would like to thank you most sincerely for your feedback and for your attendance at today's event.**

---

**‘JOBS & OPPORTUNITIES EXPO’ IN MOUNTJOY WEST ON THE 18<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2017**

**CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT SURVEY ON EVENT**

---

**6. Overall, how would you rate the skills/quality of the candidates you met?**

- Very high quality
- High quality
- Neither high or low quality
- Low quality
- Very low quality

<p><b><u>Any comment?</u> (Optional)</b></p>
--

**7. How likely are you to offer employment to any candidates?**

- Extremely likely
- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Not so likely
- Not at all likely

<p><b><u>Any comment?</u> (Optional)</b></p> <p><i>Are you aware of incentivised employment schemes for businesses open to recruiting people with convictions?</i></p> <p>YES      NO    (please circle)</p>
--

**8. How likely are you to recommend candidates to other employers?**

- Extremely likely
- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Not so likely
- Not at all likely

<p><b><u>Any comment?</u> (Optional)</b></p>
--



**9. How likely are you to recommend attendance at any similar event to other employers?**

- Extremely likely
- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Not so likely
- Not at all likely

Any comment? (Optional)

**10. Overall, how would you rate the quality of your experience today?**

- Very positive
- Somewhat positive
- Neutral
- Somewhat negative
- Very negative

Any comment? (Optional)

**What would you have liked to have seen more of?**

**What would you have liked to have seen less of?**

**Please feel free to add any additional comments here:**

**The Irish Prison Service and IASIO would like to thank you most sincerely for your feedback and for your attendance at today's event.**

**FORM B**

---

**‘JOBS & OPPORTUNITIES EXPO’ IN MOUNTJOY WEST ON THE 18<sup>TH</sup>  
MAY 2017**

**SHORT INTERVIEW FEEDBACK FOR EACH CANDIDATE**

---

**We want our candidates to have a valuable experience from meeting you today. Even though you will only have a brief period to meet each candidate we value your opinion and would like your initial views as to areas you feel need to be considered to further improve his employment prospects.**

**NAME OF CANDIDATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Strengths:**

**Further development needs:**

**This feedback will be provided to, and discussed with the candidate. The interviewer will not be identified to the candidate by the IPS/IASIO**

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**‘JOBS & OPPORTUNITIES EXPO’ IN MOUNTJOY WEST ON THE 18<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2017  
CONFIDENTIAL CANDIDATES SURVEY ON EVENT**

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**11. Overall, how prepared were you for meeting employers?**

- Very well prepared
- Well prepared
- Just OK
- Not well prepared
- Very badly prepared

Any comment? (Optional)

**12. Do you think any of the employers would offer you a job?**

- I might be offered a job when released
- I'm not sure
- I doubt it
- I definitely won't

Any comment? (Optional)

**13. How likely are you to recommend attendance at any similar event to others?**

- I definitely will
- I will
- Maybe
- No
- I definitely won't

Any comment? (Optional)

**14. Overall, how would you rate the quality of your experience today?**

Very good

Good

Just OK

Bad

Very bad

Any comment? (Optional)

**What would you have liked to have seen more of?**

**What would you have liked to have seen less of?**

**Please feel free to add any additional comments here:**

**The Irish Prison Service and IASIO would like to thank you most sincerely for your feedback and for attending the event.**

**‘JOBS & OPPORTUNITIES EXPO’ IN MOUNTJOY WEST ON THE 18<sup>TH</sup>  
MAY 2017**

**CONFIDENTIAL EXHIBITOR REPRESENTATIVES SURVEY ON  
EVENT**

---

**15. Which sector do you represent here today?**

- Resettlement
- Education
- Training

**16. Overall, how would you rate the quality of the candidates you met?**

- Very high quality
- High quality
- Neither high or low quality
- Low quality
- Very low quality

Any comment? (Optional)

**17. How likely are you to recommend attendance at any similar event to other agencies?**

- Extremely likely
- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Not so likely
- Not at all likely

Any comment? (Optional)

**18. Overall, how would you rate the quality of your experience today?**

- Very positive
- Somewhat positive
- Neutral
- Somewhat negative
- Very negative

Any comment? (Optional)

**What would you have liked to have seen more of?**

**What would you have liked to have seen less of?**

**Please feel free to add any additional comments here:**

**The Irish Prison Service and IASIO would like to thank you most sincerely for your feedback and for your attendance at today's event.**

## Appendix 2: CONFIRMED EXHIBITORS FOR EXPO DAY

<b>Employers</b>	<b>Community Employment</b>	<b>Resettlement services</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Training &amp; Employment</b>
Muttugly	Averyl – RADE	PMVT Trail	UURAS	Irish School of Motoring
Premium Cleaning	Liberties recycling	Ballymun Citizens Information	Inchicore College	Safety Solutions
Irish shipping and transport (Freight) HGV/Rigid	ARC Crumlin	Mendicity Prison in-reach project		The way ahead training
O'Brien Transport	Sankalpa	Focus Ireland Coffee Shop		
Comfort Keepers	Community Lynks project	Focus Ireland Pete Programme		
Camohe Motors	Spellman Centre	Stanhope supported temporary accommodation		
Bravo Outdoor Sign-writing	PACE			
Avarto (Call centre)	Pete Programme			
Egan Hospitality Group	TARGET project			
Kings Laundry Group	Exchange House Ireland			
Camerino Caffè				
Insanity Fitness				
Titanium Motors				



# Jobs and Opportunities Expo

## Mountjoy Prison

18th May 2017



### Main Employment Sectors



**From:** IASIO (The Irish Association for the Social Integration of Offenders Ltd)  
**Event:** Jobs & Opportunities Expo on **Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> May** (access to Prison from 8.30 am)  
**Venue:** Mountjoy (West) Prison, North Circular Road, Dublin 7.  
**RSVP:** Media attendees **must RSVP** with the name of the person attending to [cxmccauley@irishprisons.ie](mailto:cxmccauley@irishprisons.ie) or **(087) 6674284** by the **5pm** deadline on **Wednesday May 17<sup>th</sup>** in order to guarantee prison security clearance access.

*'Minister of State calls on employers to play their part in offender reintegration, helping to make their communities safer'.*

**Mountjoy Prison, May 18<sup>th</sup>:** For the **first time** in Ireland, over **30 SME employers** and other services will set up interview and information stands in an **Irish Prison**. Employers will **interview and assess** more than **40 prisoners** who have earned the opportunity for selection. The chosen candidates are those that have **spent their time productively** engaged with in-prison services to acquire a **valuable skill** or **trade** making them more **job ready** than when they began their sentence.

A key objective of the '**EXPO**' is to showcase the range of **education and skills training** provided by the **Irish Prison Service** and assure employers of the full support of **IASIO**, who will guide and support them before, during and after placement. The **EXPO** will be launched by the **Minister of State for Justice & Equality, Mr. David Stanton TD** between **9.00 - 10.00am** during a breakfast briefing hosted by the campus **Governor, Mr. Brian Murphy**. Minister Stanton will be calling on employers to play their part in offender reintegration and helping to



make their communities safer. During this time, **Ms. Patricia Callan, Director, ABFI, IBEC** will address all attending on the value of employing ex-offenders.

IASIO is a non-profit national criminal justice organisation tasked with providing alternatives to crime for people on probation and in prison.

### **Key IASIO placements from 2012 – 2016:**

- **5,342 people** have been placed into **education**
- **3,204 people** have been placed into **training**
- **4,829 people** have been placed into **employment**
- In addition, **over 3,000 people** have accessed resettlement supports

### **IASIO CEO Paddy Richardson calls for action:**

*IASIO knows from experience that providing employment opportunities for ex-offenders plays a crucial role in the reduction of recidivistic behaviour and thereby making communities safer. Most of the people referred to IASIO services come from the most disadvantaged communities in the country. It is true they have committed a crime and come to us with a question mark hanging over them as to what they might or might not do in the future. However, with the right attitude and support, change is possible and that question mark begins to fade as they are supported into something more rewarding.*

*We know it is a matter of embodying hope and communicating this through our work with people who may have often lost theirs. Change is difficult, our clients often face multiple personal challenges i.e. addiction, health and education, training deficits, homelessness and prejudice. Our aim is to foster within the person a belief that change is possible, work with them and then help organise the practical supports to effect that change.*

*However IASIO is only one part of the equation. The complex needs of the people making up the criminal justice system require a multi-agency approach. What is required is the most efficient interlocking system of supports and service delivery, but even in achieving this, the responsibility for real success extends beyond the criminal*

*justice system and into mainstream services and the community. It requires everyone taking some level of responsibility – local government and state services have an obvious part, as do the media in terms of properly portraying the issues rather than trading on fears. But it also depends on employers, community groups, community leaders and even individuals.*

Acting Director of the SFA (Small Firms Association), Linda Barry stated: *“Clearly there is evidence that employment plays a significant role in the rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-offenders and can help reduce recidivism through the provision of stability, motivation, personal development and financial rewards. There are 1000’s of people prepared, given the right support systems, to make life changing decisions but they need opportunities for this and are therefore dependent on a positive business and community response. Employers should not impose blanket bans on employing ex- offenders, as by focusing on previous criminal conduct, society overlooks the talents, skills and motivation of individuals in whose development we all have a vested interest”.*

*In conclusion, IASIO CEO Paddy Richardson asks that everyone play their part in creating successful outcomes for people who want and who have earned a second chance, and, by doing so, will contribute to safer communities for all of our citizens.”*

**-Ends-**

**For further information please contact:**

Aisling Bracken, Human Resources & Communications Manager at:

Tel. 086-0414862 (For security reasons, mobile telephone calls cannot be taken while in the prison on May 18<sup>th</sup>. However calls can be taken on this number after 5pm on the day)

Landline: Please call the Mountjoy no. 01-8062912 all day until 5pm on May 18<sup>th</sup>.

or Email: [abracken@iasio.ie](mailto:abracken@iasio.ie)

To contact the **CEO, Paddy Richardson** directly: Tel. 086-8219525

or Email [prichardson@iasio.ie](mailto:prichardson@iasio.ie)

Website: [www.iasio.ie](http://www.iasio.ie)

**PLEASE NOTE: For security reasons, mobile telephone calls cannot be taken by the above named while in the prison. Please call the Mountjoy no. 01-8062912 all day until 5pm on May 18<sup>th</sup>.**

## **Editor's Notes**

### **About IASIO**

IASIO is a national criminal justice organisation tasked with providing alternatives to crime for people on probation and in prison. It operates three front line Services - the Linkage Service, The Gate Service, and the Resettlement Service - that are funded by the Probation Service and Irish Prison Service, and which directly engage with offenders as part of their criminal justice sanction. The aim is to promote an offender's desistance from crime through the identification of real alternatives and necessary supports.

The important work of the IASIO Services is carried out by 21 Training and Employment officers and 8 Resettlement Coordinators. The breadth of services covers every prison and the majority of counties in Ireland. The IASIO services are a sustainable means of assisting former offenders, keeping them out of the cycle of crime and reducing recidivism. Additionally, they serve in no small way in making communities safer.

For further information please see our website [www.iasio.ie](http://www.iasio.ie)

## APPENDIX 4- Media Coverage

The media coverage received was as follows:

1. Morning  
Ireland: <http://www.rte.ie/radio/utills/radioplayer/rteradioweb.html#!rii=b9%5F21175337%5F48%5F18%2D05%2D2017%5F>
2. Drivetime: <http://www.rte.ie/radio/utills/radioplayer/rteradioweb.html#!rii=b9%5F10725036%5F83%5F18%2D05%2D2017%5F>
  - Interview at 2:20:55 to 2:26:18
3. Today FM Matt Cooper: <https://www.todayfm.com/The-Last-Word-with-Matt-Cooper/listen-back>
  - Interview at 1:51:40 to 1:58
4. A reporter and photographer from the Independent/Herald papers also attended the event and it is in today's edition of the Herald and may go into [independent.ie](http://independent.ie) later today.
5. Today FM: Article: <https://www.todayfm.com/News/Everyone-Deserves-a-Second-Chance>
  - News at 1pm (1:08:24 to 1:10:22) News at 2pm (1:59:20 to 1:59:20)
  - News Bulletins: <https://www.todayfm.com/AlPorter/listen-back> (*Make sure you click the listen back link for Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> May first*)
6. 98fm: Article link: <http://www.98fm.com/Mountjoy-Hosts-Jobs-Expo-For-Prisoners>
  - News at 12pm: [http://www.98fm.com/listen\\_back/5/14428/18th\\_May\\_2017\\_-\\_Dublins\\_Best\\_Music\\_Mix\\_Part\\_1/](http://www.98fm.com/listen_back/5/14428/18th_May_2017_-_Dublins_Best_Music_Mix_Part_1/)
  - News at 1pm: [http://www.98fm.com/listen\\_back/5/14429/18th\\_May\\_2017\\_-\\_Dublins\\_Best\\_Music\\_Mix\\_Part\\_2/](http://www.98fm.com/listen_back/5/14429/18th_May_2017_-_Dublins_Best_Music_Mix_Part_2/)
7. FM104: Both the 12pm and 2pm News bulletins: <https://www.fm104.ie/on-air/shows/the-10-3-show/listen-back/>
8. Newstalk article: <http://www.newstalk.com/Jobs-expo-for-exprisoners-to-take-place-today->
9. Others: Dublin Live Article: <http://www.dublinlive.ie/news/dublin-news/mountjoy-prison-host-jobs-expo-13053166>
10. Biz plus: <http://bizplus.ie/mountjoy-prison-hosting-sme-jobs-expo/>
11. Radio Nova: Listen back Thursday 3pm News <https://www.nova.ie/listen-back/thursday/>
12. Q102 Article <https://www.q102.ie/news/mountjoy-jobs-expo/>

## APPENDIX 5: INPUTS FOR JOBS & OPPORTUNITIES EXPO, MOUNTJOY

<b>Title</b>	<b>Planning</b>	<b>Proposal – Aims &amp; Object’s</b>	<b>Approval</b>	<b>Project Team</b>	<b>Logistics &amp; Facilities</b>	<b>Security / Vetting</b>	<b>Media</b>	<b>Prep Candidates</b>	<b>Exhibitor invites</b>	<b>Sectoral &amp; other Guests</b>
<b>Campus Governor</b>			●							
<b>Assistant Governor</b>	●	●		●	●	●				
<b>CEO IASIO</b>	●	●	●	●			●			●
<b>4 X IASIO staff</b>	●			●				●	●	
<b>ISM Officer/s</b>	●			●				●		
<b>Chief Officer</b>	●			●	●	●				
<b>IPS Trades / Facilities</b>	●			●	●					
<b>IASIO HR &amp; Comms</b>							●			
<b>IPS Press Officer</b>						●	●			●

**NOTE:**

In addition to the above, 3 IASIO staff from Head Office were assigned on the day of the exhibition to distribute and collect all survey forms. A further 5 staff from other prisons attended to provide logistical support to their Mountjoy based colleagues. In the days leading up to, and following the event, the person with responsibility for the IASIO ICT/Administration designed a Survey Monkey to feed in the survey responses which produced the survey analysis contained in this report.