



FROM PRISON TO EMPLOYMENT

TESTIMONIAL

“When I received a custodial sentence, I thought that was the end of my working life. So many negative comments I heard in the past about being an ex-offender along with the stigma that comes with it.

My outlook changed when after 4 weeks of being in closed prison conditions I was transferred to open conditions. My life took a new direction and had more meaning. The support from staff and government agencies was phenomenal. I was happy again as I saw potential.

After release I got in touch with agencies that assist ex-offenders in securing work. I signed up with Clean Sheet and my work coach was amazing, she was always in touch and offering support, guidance and suggestions. I eventually got the position I was looking for as an apprentice in tunnelling which not only was pioneering in that it was the first of its kind being done in the UK, also I was one out of two of the first women in this field. And my work coach is still interested in knowing how I am settling in.

My whole experience as an ex-offender has been all positive. All the negatives have contributed to a positive outcome.

Never let other people's experience dictate what you want to do or where you want to go. We are all individuals in all unique ways. We are stronger than we think. Determination brings success.

My advice would be always think positive. Always be honest with disclosures. Never make a decision based on someone else's disappointment. Failure is our own fault.

After leaving secondary school in 1989, I never stopped applying my school motto to my life '*per ardua ad alta*' meaning '*through difficulties to the heights*'.”