

UNDERSTANDING FASD

Challenges transitioning out of the justice system into employment

Being released from custody typically brings great happiness and a renewed sense of freedom to the individual. The process of reintegrating back into society and finding work can be harder for someone with FASD.



Tangible barriers to work Physical obstacles to accessing work

● Accommodation & housing

Households or accommodations that involve the use of alcohol or drugs and where family members or peers engage in illegal behaviours.

● Clothing

Lack of appropriate clothing for interviews and workwear that meets safety standards.

● Transportation

Lack of driver's license due to driving bans, poor knowledge of public transport and not being able to afford to pay for transport.

● Financial resources

Poor budgeting whilst living on reduced incomes.

● IT resources

Not having access to or sufficient skills to use a computer to access online job advertisements, prepare job applications and use job search technologies.

● Personal identification (ID)

Lack of or misplaced birth certificates or photo identification.

● Parole conditions

Requirements to report to the police station which may be during working hours or a significant distance from workplace.

Intangible barriers to work

Skills, knowledge, and environmental obstacles to accessing work

- **Criminal records**

Recruitment of people with a criminal record may be subjective and biased by the absence of Human Resource policy around employing someone with a criminal record.

- **Employer attitudes**

Someone who has FASD and a criminal record may be seen by a potential employer as presenting a double risk to the workplace. The employer may also feel ill-equipped to mitigate this perceived risk.

- **Pre-existing cognitive issues**

Due to cognitive difficulties, people with FASD may find it challenging to transition from the highly structured prison environment to making independent decisions regarding where to live, how to schedule daily activities, manage appointments, etc.

- **Employability skills**

People who have been in prison may experience interruptions in schooling and occupational training.

- **Social support**

Family and peer connections may be lost when someone enters the justice system. On release, they may lack guidance, support and positive role modelling to engage in positive activities such as work.

- **Drug and alcohol**

People coming out of the justice system are at risk of engaging in drug and alcohol use if they lack appropriate social supports and may find it difficult to access treatment services.

- **Criminogenic Environments**

People returning to communities with high rates of crime or households with negative role models.

People with FASD may face multiple challenges that impact on their ability to engage in employment as they exit the justice system. These need to be considered and addressed by professionals seeking to help the person access fruitful employment.