

Chequers partners with Onwards & Upwards to support ex-offenders

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Landscaping and arboriculture service provider [Chequers](#), part of Churchill Group, has partnered with the charity Onwards & Upwards to support the training and employment of ex-offenders. XO Bikes is an initiative of Onwards & Upwards that provides ex-offenders with bicycle repair training.

During the six-week course, trainees work towards an industry-recognised Velotech qualification. The programme supports all trainees in finding employment in bike repair or elsewhere at the end of the course. Repaired bicycles are then sold, with the profits being used to support the next training cohort.

Chequers, as a specialist service provider to Social Housing clients, sometimes comes across damaged and abandoned bicycles on its grounds. Once Chequers confirms with its housing clients that bikes are abandoned, it will collect and donate these to Onwards and Upwards. In May, Chequers collected 30 bikes from its various clients and donated these to the charity.

Ex-offenders continue to be a vulnerable group, with many leaving prisons without qualifications or employment. By backing the scheme, Chequers is supporting Onwards and Upwards in its mission to ensure that ex-offenders are given as many opportunities as possible while also reducing the possibility of re-offending. Recycling these bikes also has a positive impact on the environment.

Naomi Childe, managing director at Chequers, said: "Onwards and Upwards is an impactful charity whose values align with ours. By reusing these bikes, we'll continue making a positive impact on the environment while also supporting ex-offenders into work. Chequers remains an organisation committed to social values in all that we do."

Ollie Harper, operations assistant at Onwards & Upwards, said: "We're grateful to Chequers for the

generous bike donations. Like us, they care about the legacy on both the planet and on some of the most marginalised people in society. We're looking forward to working with Chequers to lessen the chances of re-offending."