

SBFM partners with Working Chance to provide employment opportunities for women with convictions

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SBFM has partnered with **Working Chance**, the UK's only employment charity solely for women with convictions, to offer opportunities to women leaving the criminal justice system. The partnership began in May 2024, and two women have been successfully employed to date.

The partnership prioritises quality matches that benefit individual applicants and supports **SBFM's Evolve** programme, which provides comprehensive support, training, mentorship and career opportunities in the facilities management industry.

Evolve addresses employment barriers by offering workshops, coaching and digital learning career support to various groups, including ex-offenders, the homeless, ex-services personnel, former sports professionals, the long-term unemployed, care leavers, neurodivergent people, and those with disabilities. **SBFM** collaborates with more than 40 *Evolve* Partners to expand career pathways beyond FM in multiple sectors.

Working Chance partners with 130 national employers and maintains connections with all 12 women's prisons across the UK. The charity's approach centres on providing hope and accessibility, allowing women to engage when they feel ready following conviction.

The application process has been streamlined to benefit applicants, especially those who require urgent support. This flexible and responsive approach enables **Working Chance** to contact **SBFM** about individuals who want to find work right away, ensuring rapid responses rather than lengthy waiting periods.

Details are managed through an online portal. Once candidates meet the established criteria, a systematic approach includes group induction and straightforward onboarding processes, effectively guaranteeing employment opportunities for those who complete these stages successfully.

Joanne Anderson, employment advisor at Working Chance, said: "We want all women who come to us to receive immediate, non-judgmental support. SBFM provides exactly that, treating all information sensitively and carefully. We prioritise empathy and support because the women we represent deserve an opportunity to move forward positively and not be denied the opportunity to work simply because of something that occurred in the past. SBFM's straightforward employment process reduces the immediate stress of having to find a job and provides positive employment opportunities for them to thrive."

Colin Shute, founder of SBFM and chair of the Employment Advisory Board, said: "We always want to invest in our people, and the women supported by Working Chance have skills and untapped potential that we hope to harness through programmes like *Evolve*. We are proud to support Working Chance, providing a crucial lifeline to those who truly need it."