



Sheriffs' & Recorder's Fund: Insights and Impact Summary



Project Objectives and Approach

The Sheriffs' & Recorder's Fund (SRF) commissioned Bean Research (as an independent evaluator) to research the impacts of the individual grants made by the Fund to prisoners released from London prisons.

1. Key findings:

a. Individual impact

71% of those researched said the SRF grants **reduce the likelihood of reoffending**, **67%** say the grants increase chances of **employment** and **67%** say the SRF grants enable **access to education and training**.



The above impacts are set within a highly challenging context

Most prisoners experience difficulties integrating back into society on release, related to a range of factors, in particular:

- **Lack of stable accommodation:** Half of people released from prison between 2022-23 had no settled accommodation on release.
- **Limited employment and education opportunities:** 83% of people are unemployed six weeks after leaving prison. Reoffending is almost twice as likely if unemployed, and re-offending is 26% more likely one year on, without any training.
- **Financial Challenges:** The Discharge Grant of £82.39 barely covers basic needs with ex-offenders waiting c.5 weeks for their first Universal Credit payment.

The report clearly demonstrates that the Sheriffs' & Recorder's Fund responds to these needs.

b. Societal impact

Money disbursed not only provides practical and immediate help but contributes to long-term change. Grants are seen as invaluable and essential for the **wellbeing** and **successful rehabilitation** of individuals leaving prison.

Positive feedback from partners highlights the Fund's role in providing **hope, stability**, and a **sense of being cared for**.

"The Fund not only gives much-needed financial support, but shows that the judiciary are willing to assist in moving forward, rather than just sentencing."

"The mere fact that we offer to apply for the grant gives the individual a sense that someone cares".

According to referral partners, grants bridge the gap during a critical transition period, through practical and emotional support. But crucially, grants can contribute to changing the cycle of offending.

Grants give individuals **agency**, by enhancing their self-esteem, fostering a sense of dignity, and providing them with greater control over their lives.

"It provides a boost to self-esteem and makes the difference between someone being able to integrate as opposed to not or being able to attend an interview looking decent and fit for purpose."

"The clothing allowance has been helpful for building trust and giving practical help. It lets us have real conversations while helping clients feel good about themselves."

By supporting individuals into **employment**, building increased **confidence**, enabling entrepreneurial opportunities, and improving **physical and mental health**, grants have delivered lasting change.

"A grant in 2021 for a released prisoner who had been admitted to a course of Electrical Installation, was used to fund the required electrical installer's toolkit. He completed the course, secured employment as an installer with a reputable electrical contractor, and is still there."

Furthermore, with 1 in 3 recipients having a dependent, the additional long-term impact is **generational**.

2. Reach & Use of Grants

Since 2011, the Fund has awarded grants totalling over **£2.3 million**. Applications come via 32 different referral organisations, 84% of which are National Probation Service offices.

18,197

Applications received

16,344

Grants awarded

£2,385,041

Value of grants awarded

Applicants largely reflect the prison population, although tend to be slightly older than many third sector justice provision.

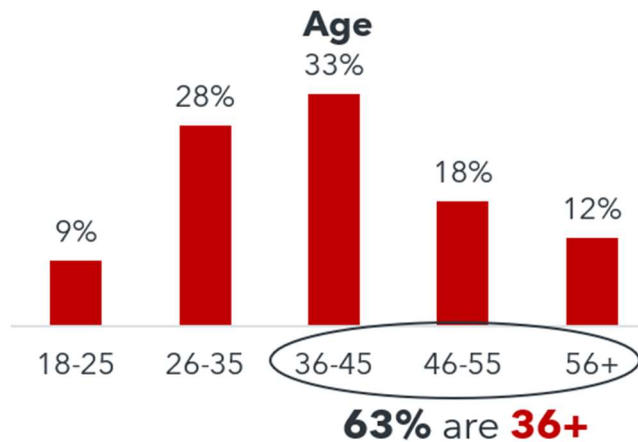
91%

Are male



33%

Have a dependant



41%

Have a disability

1 in 4

Report depression or anxiety

Grant Usage and Need

Partner Organisations say **most** prison leavers need financial assistance due to lack of employment income (63%), accommodation support (27%) and, delayed or no access to public funds (26%). As a result, the grants applied for are largely addressing basic needs.

- **Clothing and Hygiene Essentials:** Weight changes, loss of belongings, or lack of appropriate attire for weather and job interviews. Lack of basics like toiletries.
- **Household Items and White Goods:** To furnish new accommodations.
- **Identification Documents:** Required for employment and benefits applications and access to financial services.
- **Vocational Training and Employment Support:** Funding for training and equipment for various trades to enable access to employment.

Insights were drawn from Bean Research's analysis of:

- Applicant Database, Forms and SAGE financial data,
- 5 in-depth interviews with probation officers and charity contacts,
- Online survey with 44 referral partners (organisations and probation officers), and
- Literature review.

