

## Press release

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# Probation Service KickStart Fund provides job creation support to the social enterprise sector

From [Probation Service \(/en/organisation/25cc7-probation-service/\)](/en/organisation/25cc7-probation-service/)

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## **€1 million available to social enterprises to provide meaningful employment to people with a criminal past**

The Minister for Justice Helen McEntee today (26 November 2021) welcomed the opening of applications for Round Three of the Probation Service KickStart Fund. €1 million is being made available to the social enterprise sector to support the recruitment of skilled people who find it difficult to secure work because of their criminal record.

Funded through the Dormant Accounts, the Probation Service KickStart Fund is administered by a partner agency, Pobal and is supported by the Irish Prison Service. The fund was established in 2017 and recognises that people with education and training, who are in work, are less likely to re-offend and more likely to make better citizens. The continuation of the Kickstart Fund is one of the 46 inter-connected actions associated with the Working to Change strategy aimed at increasing access to employment opportunities for people with criminal convictions.

In announcing Round Three, Minister McEntee stated:

"Reducing offending and re-offending rates is a target we should all have an interest in. We all want to live in safer communities with fewer victims. While securing a job cannot undo the harm caused by crime in the first place, it can prevent it from happening again in the future.

"This KickStart Fund, along with my department's Working to Change strategy, which I launched last year, aims to reduce re-offending rates by increasing employment options for people who have served their time and repaid their debt to society. Having a criminal record, however, makes it difficult for people to secure work and to make sustainable changes for their future.

"The social enterprise sector has played a vital role in providing the first step on the employment ladder for many people with a criminal past. This employment provides people with the catalyst for change, an income but more importantly, an employer-to-employer work reference which facilitates further progression into the mainstream labour market."

Today's announcement of a third round of KickStart funding is a recognition of the crucial role the social enterprise sector has played in providing meaningful employment to those furthest from the labour market, particularly throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mark Wilson, Director of the Probation Service stated:

"The Probation Service is delighted to work in partnership with Pobal again to deliver much needed funding to the social enterprise sector. Social Enterprises have been the backbone of Irish society for many decades and in particular throughout the COVID-19 pandemic they have and continue to play a critically important role in supporting their local communities. As in previous rounds of this funding, we hope that the Kickstart funding will enable people with a criminal past to access employment and be afforded the opportunity to be part of this vital support structure in their local areas.

"Creating employment opportunities for people with experience of prison or Probation means that crime does not have to be part of their future. This creates a win-win situation for everyone."

Speaking about the KickStart Fund, Jerry Murphy, Deputy CEO, Pobal said:

"Pobal is proud to work with the Department of Justice and its two criminal justice agencies, the Probation Service and the Irish Prison Service to build and further develop meaningful employment opportunities for people with a criminal past through the KickStart Fund. The social enterprise sector provides key services and supports in communities throughout the country and plays an important role in supporting those with a criminal conviction who find it difficult to access the labour market."

Details and application forms to apply for Strand 3 of the KickStart Fund and information about the application process is now available on [www.pobal.ie](https://www.pobal.ie).  
(<https://www.pobal.ie>)

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