Briefing: Reforming the criminal records disclosure regime

Unlock is an independent, award-winning national charity that provides a voice and support for people who are facing stigma and obstacles because of their criminal record, often long after they have served their sentence. Our focus is predominantly on people in England and Wales.

The criminal records disclosure regime in England & Wales is one of the most punitive in the world; complex rules and lengthy or indefinite disclosure periods hamper reintegration and prevent people moving on. The current disclosure regime means people can struggle to access employment, training, housing and insurance long after they've turned their lives around.

When people do find work it is often low-paid or precarious and we see well-qualified and skilled people who are under-employed because they are unable to obtain work in their profession. This impacts them, their dependents and their communities, creating a cycle of deprivation and a financial cost to society through out-of-work benefits. The regime is in desperate need of reform.

The safeguarding of children and vulnerable people from potential harm is paramount and the regime of disclosure for sensitive roles is a key part of that. However, there is no evidence that the current regime of wide-ranging disclosure improves public safety. Instead it leads to routine discrimination against people with criminal records of any kind, often acquired in childhood or early adulthood, and often for the rest of their lives.

The current criminal records disclosure regime is neither proportionate nor effective, and we are calling on government to do the following:

1. **Enable a fresh start** – Conduct a root and branch review of the criminal record disclosure regime
2. **Ensure a fresh start** – Mend the broken DBS filtering rules
3. **Encourage a fresh start** – Develop a legislative footing for 'ban the box'
4. **Energise a fresh start** – Incentivise employers to recruit people with convictions
5. **Embed a fresh start** – Protect people from post-sentence discrimination

Reform of the disclosure regime means people with criminal records would have a fairer chance when applying for work or volunteering without fear of instant rejection because of mistakes they made years - sometimes decades - earlier.

Why it matters

A criminal record affects a large number of people: 11 million people in England and Wales have some form of criminal record. 1 in 3 men and 1 in 9 women has a criminal record by age 56.

Research suggests most people with convictions are only convicted once: Research for the Ministry of Justice found 33% males born in 1953 had been convicted of at least one standard list offence before the age of 53. Just over half of these had been convicted on only one occasion. 9% of females born in 1953 had been convicted of at least one standard list offence before the age of 53. Three-quarters of these had been convicted on only one occasion.

A criminal record is crippling for employment. 75% of employers discriminate against applicants on the basis of a criminal record[1] and 50% of employers say they would not recruit 'offenders or ex-offenders'. Due to shame and embarrassment about their earlier transgressions, people will often avoid applying for jobs which require

[1] Working Links (2010) Prejudged: Tagged for life, London: Working Links

criminal record checks. There is clear evidence from overseas that reform of criminal records gets people off welfare and into work.

A criminal record acquired as a youth can be a life sentence. A person can change quickly, but their criminal record does not: young adults in particular can find a criminal record holding them back at a key period in their working lives. This can have profound effects well into adulthood and difficulty moving on can contribute to serious youth violence. In the last 5 years, over 1 million criminal records that related to offences from more than 30 years ago when the person involved was between the ages of 10-25 were disclosed on standard or enhanced checks. Employers can require 'clean' records meaning even the most minor offences rule people out.

A criminal record can further entrench racial inequality: White people have had a consistently lower average custodial sentence length for indictable offences than all other ethnic groups since 2014. Black teenage boys are more likely to be charged with murder than manslaughter and more likely to receive a higher or maximum sentence than white boys. One in four black teenage boys guilty of manslaughter were given maximum jail terms, while white children found guilty of the same crime were sentenced to no more than 10 years, with the majority getting less than four. This particular statistic is striking within the context of the criminal records regime, where any sentence of more than 4 years in prison can never become spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

A criminal record can affect access to housing. Since 2011 social housing providers have had the right to apply blanket bans to applicants with criminal convictions. At least 105 providers ask on application and apply some form of exclusion for those who declare a conviction.

A criminal record can affect access to university. In 2018 UCAS removed the 'criminal convictions' box for applicants to non- regulated courses. Most universities continue to collect his information and we regularly hear from people who find that old and minor criminal records cause problems when applying to university, particularly in accessing courses like social work and healthcare.

A criminal record affects insurance. People with unspent convictions are excluded from, or required to pay more for all types of insurance, which can also restrict self-employment opportunities. Insurance companies regularly take into account convictions that have no relevance to the insurance sought. Insurers fail to follow industry good-practice and are often misleading in the questions or assumptions they have, suggesting that people with spent convictions need to disclose these

A criminal record affects working with charities: The Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Act 2016 prevents charities from recruiting trustees and senior managers with certain criminal records. Amendments in 2018 extend the framework to cover senior staff and extend the trustee disqualification framework to cover people on the sex offenders register (even when the conviction is spent). These changes are disproportionate and an ineffective way of protecting charities. Individuals who are automatically disqualified can apply to the Charity Commission for a waiver – although they will need the charity's support to do so. For small charities this administrative burden of providing evidence of support, lack of clarity over the factors that influence waiver decisions and the delay while awaiting a decision – is likely to be impossible to manage.

There is no evidence that wide ranging criminal record disclosure contributes to public safety.

The criminal records disclosure regime in England & Wales

The criminal records disclosure regime is underpinned by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (ROA) and the Police Act 1997. The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act does not compel employers and others to ask about unspent convictions, but it does require those who have them to disclose if asked. While this requirement is in place, people with unspent convictions face, and will continue to face, discrimination by employers, insurers, housing providers, colleges and universities and can be prevented from working for charities in trustee or senior management roles.

Criminal records are disclosed either by an individual – in person or on a declaration form - or via official criminal records checks. The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is responsible for issuing official criminal record checks in England and Wales. The Police Act 1997 sets out eligibility for higher levels of criminal record checks, and what will be disclosed on them. There are three types of check: basic, standard and enhanced.

A basic check will disclose "unspent" convictions only. That means a criminal record will be disclosed on a basic check for the length of the rehabilitation period (set out in the ROA). Once that period has elapsed, the conviction becomes "spent". Rehabilitation periods depend on the sentence received for the offence; they can be lengthy, and some convictions can never become spent. Any employer can request a basic check.

A spent conviction or caution can appear on a standard and enhanced check. Some cautions and spent convictions can be 'filtered' (meaning they will not appear on such a check) after several years. However, a long list of offences cannot be filtered, and if a person has two or more convictions, no matter how minor, none will be filtered. Standard or enhanced checks can only be requested for defined roles, albeit on an expanding list.

Records of all convictions and cautions, including those acquired when under 18, are retained by the police for life. There is no distinct criminal records regime for children in England and Wales; child and adult records are treated the same, other than reducing rehabilitation and filtering periods.

Unlock's call for change

1. Reform the rehabilitation periods

Unlock has long campaigned for fundamental changes to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (ROA). The Act governs the disclosure of criminal records for any purpose and was envisaged by its creators in 1974 as a humanitarian endeavour, enabling law abiding people with convictions to move on.

In 1974, a million people (of a population of circa 56 million) had a criminal record. Today 11 million people – one sixth of the population – have one. Although the Act was updated in 2014 to enable more convictions to become spent sooner, changes to sentencing, technology and employer practices, alongside increasing evidence of abuse and ineffectiveness, necessitates a fundamental review of the aims and effectiveness of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (ROA) and criminal record checking processes. Now is the time to build on those changes and improve the legislation so that more people can move on and make a social and economic contribution.

All convictions should be capable of becoming spent: Determinate prison sentences over four years should have a rehabilitation period and indeterminate sentences should be subject to a review process to enable them to become spent. More than 8000 people every year receive sentences that mean they can never be legally rehabilitated (up from c.7000 in 2013/14). A significant number of these sentences will be for violence or sexual offences. Exclusions by offence type risk creating injustice at the margins and embedding the idea that some people are inherently incapable of rehabilitation. We do not believe that to be the case. Broadly, an individual's risk of committing further crimes is the same, or even less than, a person without a conviction after between 7 and 10 years. For older people, this risk reduces faster than for younger people and reoffending is lower for those in stable accommodation and employment. The risk of reoffending is consistently lower for those who have served longer sentences, which correlates to data on reoffending by index offence, which shows sexual and

violent reoffending have lower rates of reoffending than many other categories. Law-abiding people with convictions should have a legitimate expectation that they can be rehabilitated over time and through positive activity.

We support the proposals in Lord Ramsbotham's Criminal Records Bill, outlined in the table below. These proposals are a pragmatic attempt to see positive change, given the rehabilitation periods for adults were recommended in the Breaking the Circle report in 2003, and accepted by the government of the time. However, we believe the periods could and should be shorter. The specific periods should be informed by data that the government has on re-offending.

Sentence	Rehabilitation (disclosure) period (i.e. time it takes to become spent)			
	Adult (18+ at point of conviction)		Child (Under 18 at point of conviction)[2]	
	Current	Proposed in Bill	Current	Proposed in Bill
Prison – More than 4 years	Never	Sentence + 4 yrs	Never	Sentence + 4 yrs
Prison – Over 2, up to 4 years	Sentence + 7 yrs (+4 yrs for 2 to 2.5yr sentence)	Sentence + 2 yrs	Sentence + 3.5 yrs (+2 yrs for 2 to 2.5 yr sentence)	Sentence + 2 yrs
Prison – Up to 2 years	Sentence + 4 yrs (+2 yrs for up to 6 month sentence)	Sentence + 1 yr	Sentence + 2 years (+18 months for up to 6 months)	Sentence + 6 months
Community / Youth Rehabilitation Order	Order + 1 yr	Length of the order	Order + 6 months	Length of the order
Fine	1 yr	Nil	6 months	Nil
Compensation order	When paid in full	1 year, or when paid in full, whichever is sooner	When paid in full	1 year, or when paid in full, whichever is sooner
Motoring endorsement	5 years	Nil	2.5 years	Nil

Rehabilitation periods should begin on return to the community: Currently rehabilitation periods begin at the end of the sentence, yet evidence shows the riskiest time for recidivism is the first few months after release. The longer a person remains crime free, the less likely they are to commit a further crime. People who transition back into their communities without recourse to criminality is a better indicator of change. This would provide an incentive for people to engage with reducing re-offending initiatives. Recall to prison would result in the disclosure period being 'reset', strengthening the incentive to desist from crime.

Remove the 'drag-through' rule: In one of the most complex parts of the legislation, where a person receives a further conviction, none of their previous unspent convictions become spent until the longest of them does. This can mean that minor offences from childhood remain unspent for many more years than the original conviction because of convictions they received in early adulthood. There is no rational logic for this rule, and removing it would not impact on the future disclosure of the most recent conviction.

Disclosure rules should not create anomalies: The changes introduced in 2014 have created anomalies in rehabilitation periods - motoring offences have a five-year rehabilitation period, prison sentences of up to six months have a one-year rehabilitation period. Relevant orders have disproportionate impact - for example, an indefinite football banning order will prevent a conviction for being drunk and disorderly becoming spent. The offence is irrelevant for most jobs yet will have to be disclosed indefinitely. A relevant order imposes restrictions – preventing attendance at football matches in this case - but should not also prevent someone finding housing or employment.

A tribunal process should be available if automatic rehabilitation is restricted: Legal rehabilitation should be primarily automatic and be based on the sentence that someone receives. However if some criminal records are not capable of becoming automatically spent, a tribunal should be tasked with reviewing cases. For example, young people involved in serious violence who, as adults, have made significant efforts to rehabilitate themselves and/or a long time has passed. A tribunal process would enable individuals to apply to have their criminal record

[2] While we support these proposed rehabilitation periods for young people, we make recommendations below for a separate system of disclosure for under 18s

deemed spent or filtered and, if granted, would mean it must no longer be disclosed to employers on a relevant criminal record check. There is evidence from overseas that this approach works, and it would help to address the injustice that many people face as a result of what are currently arbitrary fixed rules that take no account of the positive steps people have taken.

Reform of the rehabilitation periods should mean:

- **All convictions are capable of becoming spent**
- **Rehabilitation periods begin on return to the community**
- **Disclosure rules do not create anomalies**
- **A tribunal process is available if automatic rehabilitation is restricted**

2. Develop a distinct approach to criminal records acquired in childhood

All formal responses to offending from the age of 10 become part of a person's criminal record and there is little difference in the ways childhood and adult criminal records are treated. The Taylor Review, Justice Committee and Youth Violence Commission all recommend reform of the disclosure rules for childhood criminal records. The regime for dealing with childhood records should mirror the separate youth justice system, reflect the unique status of children in society and their capacity for change.

There is evidence that the current disclosure framework works against rehabilitation and the stigma and exclusion caused by a criminal record can make it harder to move away from serious youth violence. Those who acquire a criminal record as a child or young adult can find themselves affected in multiple ways and for a very long time, often for the rest of their lives. From employment, volunteering and studying at university, to travelling abroad and buying home insurance, a criminal record represents a significant barrier to the ability to move on and can drag people down, even decades later

The regime also entrenches existing inequalities, for instance among children in care and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic children, who are more likely to be criminalised than other children. There is some evidence the latter are sentenced more harshly than white children, with the resulting criminal records being disclosed for longer or indefinitely. International comparisons indicate that less punitive systems are possible, without compromising public or employer protection. The Standing Committee for Youth Justice (SCYJ) found that children in England and Wales are more likely to receive a criminal record than their international counterparts, and these records have a longer and more profound effect on their lives. Reforming rehabilitation periods will have some impact, but there are other ways in which a separate system for young people can be enacted. SCYJ make recommendations on automatic filtering of some childhood convictions – which we echo below.

Delays in the youth court mean thousands of young people will be subject to the same disclosure rules as if they had committed an offence as an adult, through no fault of their own. The law provides that young people convicted of murder must be sentenced based on the age at the time of offence, but does not provide similarly for young people convicted of less serious offences.

Childhood convictions that did not result in a prison sentence should be filtered automatically, at the most, four years after the person's last conviction. Any number of convictions that did not result in a custodial sentence should be filterable.

Where filtering is not automatic, a review mechanism should be introduced to consider offences for filtering.

Government should consider a quasi-judicial process to give people the opportunity to have their childhood criminal record permanently sealed.

Young people who commit offences as children but who are not convicted until after they turn 18 should be subject to the same disclosure rules as children.

3. Take a more nuanced approach to records acquired in early adulthood

Young people do not become adults overnight and the 'cliff edge' at 18 has been questioned in light of new evidence on brain development and maturation, and the effects on decision making, impulse control and desistance. Judges are able to take maturity into account when sentencing but this is not necessarily reflected in the way disclosure rules apply later.

Young adults are the group most likely to 'age out' of crime but punitive disclosure rules can make it impossible to obtain the stable employment, housing or training necessary to move on positively. A young adult at 21 has 45 years of working life ahead – the need to disclose a conviction can be the difference between being in work or not. Removal of these barriers could have a significant impact on an individual's long-term life chances and the safety of communities.

It may be difficult to determine fixed disclosure periods for young adults but a quasi-judicial processes – as they have in France – could offer the opportunity for "judicial rehabilitation" and the "sealing" of certain records. This concept was advocated by David Lammy MP in his 2017 review of disproportionality in the criminal justice system, a recommendation he reiterated recently - and this could interact with amendments to the filtering rules.

In addition to the removal of barriers to desistance, a reduction in the burden of disclosure may also improve the perceived legitimacy of the criminal justice system amongst young adults with convictions. That is, when a person who has already been legally punished continues to suffer discrimination (from potential employers and others) after their sentence has ended, they are unlikely to perceive this as legitimate. This sense of injustice is likely to be felt particularly keenly by those who have successfully desisted from offending or who are making a genuine effort to cooperate with rehabilitative interventions. Increasing legitimacy could also have positive effects on desistance.

The Justice Committee published its report into the disclosure of youth criminal records and recommended that the government conduct comprehensive research on a new approach to the disclosure of criminal records for young adults.

Government should:

- **Act on its commitment to the Justice Committee to conduct comprehensive research on a new approach to the disclosure of criminal records for young adults**
- **Consider how sealing processes could help young adults transition into training and employment**

4. Review the wider filtering rules

The filtering system was designed to prevent unnecessary disclosure of old and minor offences on standard and enhanced criminal record checks. Following litigation, the government has laid a Statutory Instrument to make changes to the existing rules. This will benefit thousands of law-abiding people with criminal records who want to go into regulated professions. Reprimands, final warnings and youth cautions will be automatically filtered from standard and enhanced DBS checks. Multiple convictions will be filtered after 11 years providing they were not for a specified offence and did not result in a prison sentence. However, the system is in need of further review.

The filtering periods are lengthy and not based on evidence of risk. The list of offences that can never be filtered is lengthy and includes offences with a broad definition, creating injustice at the margins. The Supreme Court accepted that a fair system can be based on rules and pre-defined categories. The Law Commission found 'a lack of a principled basis for the inclusion of individual offences in the list'. Many cautions given to adults will remain on their enhanced DBS check for life as a result of the 'list of offences that can never be filtered'. That list does not discern any difference between offences that led to a conviction and those leading to a decision to issue a police caution.

We believe an acceptable system can operate principally on automatic rules, but that these must be the right rules and there should be a mechanism to deal with those 'hard cases' that fall between categories. Short prison – and suspended - sentences can never be filtered, yet we know there are discrepancies in sentencing that are not related to the offence. These blunt rules bake in existing injustices.

The sheer number of very old and minor criminal records that are routinely disclosed raises serious questions about the effectiveness of the DBS filtering process. Between 2013 and 2018 1 million criminal records related to offences from more than 30 years' ago when the person involved was between the ages of 10-25 were disclosed on standard or enhanced criminal record checks. A fair, proportionate and flexible filtering system should be developed which protects the public without unduly harming the ability of people to move forward positively with their lives.

We urge the government to take this opportunity to look at introducing such a scheme that incorporates lessons from other similar schemes, like those in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

- **Scotland** - In September 2015, the Scottish Government introduced a filtering system for old/minor convictions and introduced a review process by way of an 'application to a sheriff' that allows those with a spent conviction for an offence on the "rules list" to apply to a sheriff to have this information removed from their disclosure certificate if they consider that is not relevant to the role for which they have asked for the disclosure.
- **Northern Ireland** - In March 2016, the Department for Justice in Northern Ireland introduced a criminal records filtering review scheme which includes an opportunity for independent review. There are limitations but it nevertheless provides an exemplar for a similar review process in England & Wales. The Independent Reviewer is also the Independent Monitor in England and Wales.

Government should:

- **Reduce the list of offences ineligible for filtering**
- **Set filtering time periods based on evidence**
- **Review the lifelong disclosure of adult cautions for offences not filterable**
- **Introduce a review mechanism for individuals whose criminal record is not automatically filtered**
- **Create a distinct system for disclosure of childhood criminal records and take a more nuanced approach to those acquired in early adulthood**

5. Protect people with convictions from post-sentence discrimination

The criminal records disclosure regime and the ROA are open to abuse by employers and others. With policy responsibility for criminal record disclosure legislation straddling the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice, a wide review of the current regime should be undertaken with the aim of reforms seeking to minimise the unnecessary and disproportionate impact of criminal records on law-abiding people with convictions from moving on positively in their lives.

Protecting people with unspent convictions: The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act does not compel most employers and others to ask about unspent convictions, but it does require those who have them to disclose if asked. While this requirement is in place, people with unspent conviction face, and will continue to face, discrimination by employers, insurers, housing providers, colleges and universities and can be prevented from working for charities in trustee or senior management roles.

While disclosure rules apply, government will need to employ other ways to encourage the reintegration of people with convictions – in particular in accessing employment, training and housing. This should include piloting financial incentives to encourage employers to hire people with convictions, placing ban the box on a

statutory footing, providing information to employers to challenge misconceptions and prejudice, and requiring employers to provide a rationale behind their decision making where they determine that an unspent conviction makes an applicant unsuitable.

Ending the use of stigmatising language: Using stigmatising language in legislation, policies and practices embeds bias and implies individuals are "offenders" who cannot be rehabilitated until considerable time periods have elapsed. This is simply not borne out by evidence.

Prohibiting asking about spent convictions: The Act does not prevent employers or others asking about spent convictions. Rather, the onus is on the prospective employee to decide whether they are legally entitled to withhold the information. We recommend making it an offence to ask about spent convictions unless authorised to do so – for example when recruiting for regulated activity roles.

Providing legal protection for spent convictions: Details of spent convictions can be obtained unofficially – through online media, references from previous employers, word of mouth or by asking people themselves. Not everyone is aware of their rights to withhold spent convictions. It should be possible for individuals to take action against an organisation that takes into account spent convictions when making a decision. This requires legislative change to provide a clear and specific remedy.

Embedding legal protection in employment law: Section 4(3) of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (ROA) provides that a spent conviction (or failure to disclose one) is not a proper ground for dismissal or rejection from employment. However, there is no penalty for failure to comply, either in the ROA or employment law. A claim for unfair dismissal depends on having two years' continuous employment. This is particularly hopeless for people dismissed for having a spent conviction because this tends to happens towards the beginning of their employment. The Employment Rights Act 1996 (ERA) includes automatically unfair dismissal which does not require two years' service. The ERA should be amended to include failure to comply with s.4(3) of the ROA as an automatically unfair dismissal, applicable to applicants and employees, giving practical effect to the ROA. Additionally, s.4(3) of the ROA clearly envisages a scenario in which a prospective employer will be prevented from refusing work to a candidate because of a spent conviction. We propose that protection be extended to prospective employees or workers to prevent them from being refused a job because of a spent conviction, in the same way that the Equality Act 2010 provides protection against other forms of discrimination.

Stopping the Google effect: After convictions become spent, information is still often readily available online, and search engines/news organisations should operate a presumption that this information is removed once convictions become spent rather than requiring individuals to apply for removal of every search result. Despite legal precedent, internet providers are reluctant to remove listings and individuals have little choice but to take expensive legal action – out of reach for most and too slow to help them secure the job.

Reviewing eligibility for standard and enhanced checks: An array of employers can now access spent conviction information. Employers are responsible for ensuring they have carried out the correct level of check but the ambiguity of the eligibility guidance, combined with a lack of governance, means checks are sometimes done inappropriately. A large number of employers require 'a clean DBS' from employees and we regularly hear from people whose spent convictions have been used to reject or dismiss them from employment, even where the role is not excepted from the ROA. Access and use of higher level DBS checks should be reviewed in full. Exceptions should be granted on the basis of an individual job role, not the employer, industry or profession and, where an exception is necessary, only relevant spent convictions should be disclosed.

Prevent ineligible checks: An 'ineligible check' is one carried out at a higher level than permitted in law. This could mean an enhanced check where only a standard is permitted, or a standard or enhanced check where only a basic is permitted. The latter is more common, and has a greater impact, as higher level checks disclose cautions and spent convictions that an applicant is legally entitled to withhold and which would not be disclosed on a basic check. We estimate that more than 2000 people each year have to deal with the consequences of a caution or conviction unlawfully disclosed to an employer.

Improving awareness: Everyone convicted of a criminal offence should be made aware of the ROA and offered information and guidance on the long-term impact of having a conviction. The information given at present is poor and inconsistent. The DBS should publish and maintain accurate guidance on their process, specifically targeted at people with convictions (with a focus on the positions that are eligible for DBS checks, and how individuals can address issues such as employers undertaking illegal DBS checks).

Government should:

- **Protect people with unspent convictions by identifying ways to encourage employment and reintegration**
- **End the use of stigmatising language**
- **Prohibit the asking about spent convictions**
- **Provide a legal remedy for the use of spent convictions without lawful reason**
- **Embed that legal protection in employment law**
- **Work with search engine providers to develop a mechanism for removal of spent conviction information from online searches**
- **Review eligibility guidance for standard and enhanced checks to minimise unlawful checks**
- **Ensure people with convictions are provided with information on their rights and responsibilities regarding disclosure**

About Unlock

Unlock is an independent, award-winning national charity that provides a voice and support for people who are facing stigma and obstacles because of their criminal record, often long after they have served their sentence. Our focus is predominantly on people in England and Wales.

Firstly, **we help people.** We provide information, advice and support to people with convictions to help them to overcome the stigma of their criminal record. This includes running an information site which has over 1 million visitors a year, and a confidential, peer-run helpline that helps around 8,000 people a year. This work is charitably funded; we do not deliver government-contracted services. We help practitioners support people with convictions by providing criminal record disclosure training. We support employers, universities, housing providers and others to develop inclusive policies and procedures for people with criminal records.

Secondly, **we advocate for change**. Every year we hear from thousands of people who are unnecessarily held back in life because of their criminal record. We work to address systemic and structural issues. We listen to and consult with people with criminal records, undertake research and produce evidence-based reports to inform policy makers and the public. We challenge bad practice, influence attitudes and speak truth to power. We co-founded and support the Ban the Box campaign and we are pushing to wipe DBS checks clean of old/minor criminal records. We have a track record of constructive engagement with government, the DBS and employers in working towards a fairer and more inclusive society.

If you have any questions about this briefing, email policy@unlock.org.uk