



HM Prison &
Probation Service



First Twinning Project programme launches at HMP Downview with Arsenal

First programme is for women prisoners

Delivered by Arsenal and supported by the FA

London, 3rd April 2019 – The Twinning Project is delighted to announce the beginning of its first programme, delivered by Arsenal at HMP Downview in Sutton, Surrey, to help tackle the high reoffending rate by women in the UK.

As part of the Twinning Project, Arsenal is offering a six-week programme to 12 HMP Downview prisoners that will include weekly workshops both in the classroom and on the football pitch.

The course will be led by Tom Hartley, Development Officer for Arsenal Women, with support from PE officers at HMP Downview. It will focus on helping prisoners develop leadership skills, form positive relationships, understand the laws of the game, and build their technical football skills in outdoor training sessions. The aim is for the participants to develop and demonstrate key qualities and skills for employment both within football and beyond once they are released.

Upon completion of the course, the prisoners will earn a certificate from Arsenal, officially recognising their participation.

Launched in October 2018, the Twinning Project is bringing together professional football clubs and prisons across the UK to use football as a catalyst for change to provide real opportunities to better prepare prisoners for release, find employment and reduce reoffending which is a huge cost to the country and local communities.

David Dein MBE, former Vice Chairman of Arsenal Football Club and the Football Association, and founder of the Twinning Project, commented, “We are delighted that Arsenal has teamed up with HMP Downview to deliver the first new programme for the Twinning Project. Our hope is the course will be truly life changing for the Downview participants, helping them build self-esteem and develop skills that will unlock better opportunities for them upon release. It is a fantastic result to have Arsenal, one of the world’s top women’s football clubs, take the lead on tackling the reoffending rate among women in the UK.”

Tom Hartley, Development Officer for Arsenal Women, who will lead the course, commented, “I am looking forward to continuing Arsenal’s long history of prison work with this new programme. We have seen from our previous work in Pentonville, Feltham and Holloway Women’s Prison the life-changing impact that these programmes can have, so I am excited to be able to design and lead a new programme of work at HMP Downview. If taking part in this course can have a positive impact on the women involved and it contributes to reducing the risk of re-offending and improves their chances of employability in the future, then we know we are making a meaningful difference.”

Natasha Wilson, Governor, HMP Downview, commented: “We are excited to work closely with Arsenal to deliver this innovative coaching programme to women in our care. This project will have a positive impact on their time in custody and will assist with their reintegration into society. Initiatives like the Twinning Project provide much needed opportunities to change lives and make a difference to individuals and the communities in which they live.”

Justice Minister Edward Argar, said: “By teaming up with some of the county’s top football clubs, inside the prison gates, the Twinning Project is giving even more offenders the chance to use the power of sport to make a positive difference to their lives. I am excited to see this project brought to the women’s estate for the first time today.”

“I’m hugely grateful to David Dein for his dedication in driving forward this project. I really believe that sport can play a positive role in reducing reoffending, building self-esteem and improving employment opportunities for offenders on release.”

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Notes to editors

About the Twinning Project

- To date, 34 Premier League and EFL football clubs have agreed to engage in the Twinning Project to pair with their local prisons.
- Through the initiative the clubs, in conjunction with other football bodies, will work with PE officers from the Prison Service to deliver coaching, stewarding, lifestyle skills, and other employability-based qualifications to prisoners to help them prepare for release.
- Additionally, the PGMOL will deliver refereeing courses.
- These qualifications will provide a vital route to paid employment which is proven as a key factor in reducing reoffending and helping prisoners to rebuild their lives.

- The Twinning Project is backed by the Government and the UK's leading football bodies, including the Football Association, Premier League, English Football League, PFA, PGMOL and LMA. The scheme will be open to men, women and young offenders in custody.
- Currently women reoffend within the first year of release at a rate of 23.4%
- Women make up 5% of the UK prison population
- Women have a higher rate of self-harm in prison (30%) versus men (13%)
- Overall, in the UK adults reoffend at a rate of 63.8% and juveniles reoffend at a rate of 41.6% in the twelve months after release
- Only 17% of offenders enter the workplace upon release, leading to a high reoffending rate. Lack of paid employment on release is the #1 issue driving reoffending

About Arsenal

- Arsenal's history of prison work runs back to 2005 and includes programmes in Holloway Women's, Pentonville and Feltham Prison.
- The club has delivered to over 200 inmates from Pentonville and Holloway Women's prison since 2015.
- Although the latter closed in 2016, Arsenal still provide four hours a week of accredited BTEC in work skills, sports leadership and football skills sessions at Pentonville, as well as arranging activity-based Family Days.
- Arsenal also spent a short, sustained period working with Feltham Prison in 2010.