

EVALUATION OF TABLE TENNIS IN PRISON SETTINGS



The Project

After receiving funding through Sport England's Small Grant scheme, a project to evaluate the impact of table tennis in prison settings has been completed by Professor Rosie Meek of Royal Holloway University of London.

Although delayed by COVID-19 for two years, the project ran between 2022 to 2024 and involved three English prisons who received equipment and resource to create and build table tennis provision in their prisons.

| Location* | Equipment (2 x tables, bats and balls) | Activator Training Access for Staff | External coaching resource for 6 weeks |
|---|--|---|--|
| Low security open male prison in the north of England | | | |
| Women's prison in the south of England | | | |
| Young Offender's Institution in the south of England | | | |

* Names of the prisons cannot be shared

Methodology



Qualitative interviews with 8 prisoners across 2 sites



Prison staff reflections from participating prisons



Written submission from a member of PE staff from one prison



Reflections from a community coach on his experiences of delivering coaching in a prison

Findings



Play in prison settings is important for psychological, social and physical wellbeing, particularly post COVID-19



Table tennis is a means of promoting wellbeing, particularly in prison settings and when working with children with experiences of trauma



Providing of equipment was well received by prisoners and increased uptake as a result of having 'good kit'



Table tennis was recognised as a social sport, which was particularly valued in the Women's prison



Prison staff valued the equipment and training provided by Table Tennis England



The coaching activity provided more encouragement for prisoners who typically don't visit the gym to engage in physical activity



HM Prison & Probation Service



ROYAL HOLLOWAY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON



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