

# Boxing Futures - New Horizon Youth Centre

Promoting confidence and  
self-esteem amongst at-risk  
youths

## The Club

Boxing Futures is an independent charity who want young people within the criminal justice system, or in disadvantaged communities, to feel a part of the wider society by providing them with opportunities they may not otherwise have access to.

Through funding from London Sport, Boxing Futures were able to deliver a Satellite Club at the New Horizon youth centre in King's Cross, London, which is a youth centre who work with the most vulnerable and at-risk young people around the area. The club was set up to deliver weekly non-contact sparring sessions to young people who engage with the Youth Centre and who are homeless or in supported accommodation.

The team involved in the delivery of the Satellite Club is made up of three coaches, a facilitator and a member of the Youth Centre.

## The Aim of the Club

The team at Boxing Futures want homeless young people to have the opportunity to participate in regular physical activity, and to try to remove the 'stigma' that is typically attached to boxing. The team believe that boxing is one of the most beneficial sports that someone under stress can do, and these young people tend to have a lot of built up anger instigated by the various complex issues in their lives, including those encountered when living on the streets.

Furthermore, the team want to ensure that the sessions aren't too structured as these young people may have previously rebelled against structure in their lives.



## Recruiting participants

Workers at the New Horizon Youth Centre, where the sessions take place each week, engage with the young people on a regular basis actively encouraging them to sign-up to the sessions.

Boxing Futures have a positive relationship with the staff at the centre, and the head coach, Cello, visits the centre to build relationships with prospective members and encourage them to attend. He stated that this helps to build trust by assuring them that the club is a safe and controlled environment where they can have fun and build positive relationships.

## Ongoing Engagement

The dynamics of the group mean that there are some young people who have dropped out, or only come to the sessions occasionally as they have other priorities such as work commitments or finding accommodation. However, Cello and the team use various methods to try to encourage participants to keep coming back.

Positive reinforcement is one of the methods used in the sessions to promote engagement. Participants are able to work towards gold, silver and bronze awards based on their progress and attendance. Depending on the award they achieve, they can obtain a certificate, or T-shirt, as well as attend a presentation ceremony at the end of the sessions where they are presented with their award. This has proven to be effective as many state that they feel they haven't achieved much in their lives; on this basis the awards are having a huge impact, developing confidence and self-esteem, allowing them to believe in themselves and their ability.

The support and coaching that he had received previously from the Boxing Futures team encouraged him to return to the sessions once he had recovered. On returning to the session he had a lot of anger and frustration as a result of the incident, but with the support and a one-to-one session with the head coach he left feeling calmer and less angry.



## The Challenges

The young people who Boxing Futures work with face various barriers which can prevent some of them attending the sessions. Whilst some barriers are unavoidable, such as moving away from the area, Boxing Futures are able to help overcome some of the barriers which could prevent the young people from participating.

An example of this is the financial implications such as travelling to the centre, whereby some of the young people have to choose between the £1.50 bus fare or food for the day. Although Boxing Futures have been unable to support with the cost of this, having the positive relationship with the youth centre has meant that New Horizon are able to support where they can, such as supplying clothing and trainers where needed so that the young people are able to participate.

A more specific example of where Boxing Futures can help overcome barriers to participation was seen when one of the young people was involved in a stabbing in the community; and therefore unable to attend some of the sessions. The support and coaching that he had received previously from the Boxing Futures team encouraged him to return to the sessions once he had recovered. On returning to the session he had a lot of anger and frustration as a result of the incident, but with the support and a one-to-one session with the head coach he left feeling calmer and less angry.

### What Makes the Club Successful?

- **Impact-focused** - with a focus on trying to build confidence and self-belief in these young people, as well as getting to know each of the young people on a personal level, the club is focused on trying to have a positive impact on each and every individual.
- **Positive reinforcement** - praising, encouraging and rewarding the young people when they do well has proven effective in keeping them engaged. It also gives them a sense of pride and achievement they may not have had before starting at Boxing Futures.
- **The coaching team** - the team make a real effort to get to know the young person by talking to them before and after the sessions. They also work on developing life skills, such as respect and discipline throughout the sessions.
- **Being empathetic** - the facilitator and coaches at the club are understanding of the young people's situations, and with one of the coaches having had similar life experiences to the young people, he is able to relate to the young people.
- **Open and safe** - the club is a controlled environment where young people can feel safe, and despite there being members of rival gangs in the group, they all come together and support each other.



### Got an idea for a Satellite club? Get in touch:

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