



BOXING

The Right Hook

**A REPORT BY THE ALL-PARTY
PARLIAMENTARY GROUP FOR BOXING**

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FOREWORD



NICOLA ADAMS
2012 OLYMPIC FLYWEIGHT GOLD
MEDALLIST AND “AMBASSADOR FOR
FIGHT FOR PEACE”

As someone that has been involved in boxing, at all levels, since the age of 12, I have had the opportunity to witness the huge range of benefits that the sport can deliver to people and communities.

From a personal point of view, it has provided me with a livelihood doing something I love and the chance to follow my dreams.

I have had the good fortune to pursue a career at the elite end of the sport and win a medal at the Olympic Games, but the vast majority of my time in boxing has been spent in grassroots clubs where I have witnessed the amazing impact the sport can have on people’s lives.

As the case studies in this report show, boxing has the power to transform lives. It has an almost unmatched capability to engage some of the most disaffected young people and help to combat a massive range of social problems, covering crime, educational underachievement, health and fitness and community cohesion.

From the work I have done in my role as an Ambassador for Fight for Peace, I have seen for myself that boxing, a programme run by Street Games, which aims to increase participation in sport amongst women from disadvantaged communities, I have seen for myself that boxing is one of the most effective sports in helping to capture the attention of young people from difficult backgrounds.

The sport possesses a unique combination of attributes that enable it to get the attention of young people and impact positively on their character and behaviour.

It is something I have seen many times in gyms at home and abroad, where young people’s lives have been changed for the better through their connection with the sport and the values it has helped to engender within them. Since joining the GB Boxing squad in 2010, I have been invited to speak to groups of MPs, appeared at party conferences, and even spent time with the Prime Minister at a boxing project in the favelas of Rio.

On each of these occasions it has become apparent to me that there is now a widely held consensus amongst many politicians and policy makers that boxing has the ability to influence society in a way that reaches far beyond sport.

This report from the APPG adds weight to this view. It makes a compelling case for boxing and provides a host of evidence to highlight the specific benefits it delivers and the value this creates in terms of improved health, educational achievements and crime reduction.

It shows that boxing delivers benefits across the policy landscape and I wholeheartedly support the Report’s view that investment in the sport and boxing projects boxing should not be regarded solely as the remit of the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS).

For someone like me who is passionate about the sport, it is great to see that boxing is getting the recognition it deserves. I sincerely hope that all of the recommendations in this report are acted upon and that local authorities and government departments across Britain will take a closer look at how they can harness the sport to benefit the people and communities they serve.



FOREWORD



CHARLOTTE LESLIE MP
CHAIR OF THE ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY
GROUP FOR BOXING

In the summer of 2011, London was ablaze. Young people were tearing our streets apart in scenes many thought we would never see in a first world country, let alone our great capital.

One year later, in the summer of 2012, London was ablaze again. The Olympic Torch shone over our city, and our (variously!) young people propelled our country to a position on the international sporting medal tables that most of us thought we would never see, against the backdrop of our great capital.

The difference? The difference for some of those young people between throwing bricks through shop windows in a frenzy of angered meaninglessness, and between daily striving to be the very best version of themselves they can be, can be illustrated in a boxing club. Talk to some of our Olympians, and some of our superb Olympic boxers in particular, and they will tell you how, in a parallel universe, it could have been them on those London streets in 2011, were it not for boxing and the transformations that can happen in a boxing club.

In many ways, this is personal. I was an angry young person, with aggressively-cut short hair and far too much energy, harbouring an inexplicable desire to tear down any kind of authority. I was very lucky: I had amazing family support. My mum was a legend, and instead of trying to box me in to other peoples' expectations, she took me boxing. It was in Spaniorum Farm Gym near Bristol that I began to see what boxing can do; how it can provide an outlet for energy and frustration; how it can teach self-discipline and self-respect; and how it can provide a non-judgemental environment, with strict boundaries, which provides an identity that rivals membership of any gang.

This passion for providing the opportunity for young people to flourish through sport, and boxing in particular, is shared across party political divides, and across the House of Commons and the House of Lords.

Following the London Riots, and the glorious flip-side of young people's energy, the London Olympics, the All Party Parliamentary Group on Boxing were determined to look at how we can harness the power of sport, and boxing in particular, to unleash the energy and ability of our young people to propel them, and our nation, to be the very best they can be.

We owe special thanks to all those who came to give evidence to this report, which has expanded in scope as more evidence and material has come to light, even as this report was being written. I would personally like to thank Lord Pendry for his wisdom and all he has done over the years for sport and boxing. But we would most like to thank those young people themselves who have been so inspirational and shared their life-changing experience and insights with us.

INTRODUCTION

IF YOU VISIT ALMOST ANY BOXING CLUB, YOU WILL PROBABLY NOT BE ABLE TO LEAVE WITHOUT HEARING AN EXTRAORDINARY STORY ABOUT HOW A YOUNG MAN (OR WOMAN) CAME TO THE CLUB AT A TIME WHEN THEIR LIFE WAS FALLING APART, WHEN ALL THE PROBLEMS THAT GOVERNMENTS TRY SO HARD TO SOLVE WERE DESTROYING THEIR FUTURE: VIOLENCE, DRUGS, CRIME, ABUSE, A CHAOTIC FAMILY, DEPRESSION, UNEMPLOYMENT AND TRUANCY. THEN YOU WILL HEAR THAT BOXING CHANGED ALL THAT...

You will hear how boxing slowly turned their life around – then when you meet that young person, they will be articulate, positive, and telling you about the opportunities that have opened up for them, and how they owe it all to boxing and their boxing club.

These stories of incredible journeys – stories that most state interventions would die to be able to tell – appear to be two a penny in boxing clubs. And compared to many state interventions, they are dead cheap, and often free to the taxpayer. So this report begins with a crucial question: are these prolific anecdotes, almost too good to be true, actually a true reflection of reality?

This report aims to convert such anecdotal knowledge into a more objective account, using evidence from a range of individuals experienced in engaging and supporting young people at risk of rocketing off the tracks. This report also looks at what boxing and sport, more widely, can learn from existing initiatives and organisations.

Then if boxing (and more generally, sport) really is so effective at turning lives around, this report asks why are we not using it more – why are we pumping millions of pounds into state schemes which see results that appear to be so much less effective than what the average boxing club, operating on £25k per year, and dealing with 60 children at a time, can produce?

Our national track record is poor. In 2011, over a quarter of all ASBOs were issued to people aged between 10 and 17,¹ and over three quarters of those in that age group who have completed a custodial sentence are reconvicted within a year of being released.² As well as the tragic waste of lives and talent, the financial costs of this are high. Each young person who continues to veer off the straight and narrow to become a young offender or prisoner can cost the state of the order of £35,000 per annum³.

This report also analyses why boxing and sport might be having such an impact on mental health, physical health and life chances, before tackling the most important thing: what we can do about it.

Unlike many reports on sport, this is not primarily directed at the Minister with responsibility for sport. It is directed at anyone with an interest in tackling educational disadvantage, anti-social behaviour, mental health issues, unemployment, welfare and benefit costs, and national economic productivity. It aims to demonstrate that, if we are really to start to tackle these issues, we must take a far more evidence-based, intelligent and prejudice-free view of how to do it. We simply can no longer afford to see boxing through a red-mist of disapproval – the human waste of such prejudice is simply too high. Neither can we afford to continue to dismiss sport and physical activity as a nice optional extra. Sport is fundamental to a healthy, productive society and, as such, is a concern of nearly every government department, not just the last letter of DCMS.

¹ Home Office, Anti-social behaviour order statistics – England and Wales 2011. <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/asbo-stats-england-wales-2011/>. Last accessed 22 January 2013.

² Independent Commission on Youth Crime and Anti-social Behaviour (2010), Time for a fresh start, London: The Police Foundation

³ Ministry of Justice, Prison and Probation Trust performance statistics 2011/12. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/251272/prison-costs-summary-12-13.pdf



PREJUDICE AND LACK OF INFORMATION

IN PERFORMING SOCIAL OUTREACH THROUGH SPORT, AN ORGANISATION LIKE THE PREMIER LEAGUE WHICH USES FOOTBALL AS A TOOL HAS A HEAD START ON BOXING. MANY PEOPLE FEEL THAT THEY CANNOT APPROVE OF A SPORT WHICH HAS AT ITS ESSENCE THE AIM TO PUNCH ANOTHER PERSON. HOWEVER, TO UNDERSTAND BOXING OR ANY MARTIAL ART IN THIS NARROW SENSE IS TO MISUNDERSTAND NOT ONLY NATURE OF BOXING BUT ALSO ITS WIDER APPLICATIONS. IN THE CONTEXT OF THIS REPORT, THE TERM 'BOXING' REFERS BOTH TO TRADITIONAL AMATEUR CLUBS AS WELL AS PROJECTS THAT UTILISE THE SPORT AS PART OF A WIDER SOCIAL MISSION.

In addition to misunderstanding the nature of boxing there is also a propensity to overestimate the risks attached to it. The conflation of amateur boxing, and the multiple usages it has, with professional boxing is the overwhelming reason for prejudice against the sport. Although boxing's amateur and professional domains do overlap, they are very different sports.

In spite of this, there have been attempts by the BMA to abolish boxing as a whole, not on the basis of mortality but on what they see as the connection between boxing and brain damage. Although recognising later that traumatic brain injuries in amateur boxing were "far less clear cut"⁴, the BMA still proposed a total eradication of the sport. However, in 2007, the BMJ published a systematic review of all research associating amateur boxing with 'chronic traumatic brain encephalopathy', which contradicted this stance. It stipulated, "although the quality of evidence supporting or refuting the hypothesis was poor, the association between amateur boxing and chronic traumatic brain injury is not strong"⁵.

In comparison to sports such as American football and rugby, boxing is much safer. Research conducted into brain related injuries in American football found "that a total of 497 brain injury-related fatalities occurred among American football players during the period from 1945 through 1999. The causes of death were brain injuries in 69% of the cases, cervical spine injuries in 16%, and other injuries in 15%"⁶. Amateur boxing, on the other hand, was in 1996 ranked by the National Safety Council as the safest contact sport in America. Shorter bouts, headgear requirement and medical checks all contribute to the much greater safety of amateur boxing.

Either through prejudice or misinformation, the tendency to portray boxing as 'dangerous' has obfuscated the greater harm of non-participation. The relative risks attached to those who engage in boxing and those from similar backgrounds who might want to, but do not will be looked at in more detail later in the report. There is also a wide misunderstanding of the realities of boxing and boxing training; who participates in the sport and why; what percentage of those boxing go on to compete at amateur level; what percentage go on to compete at a professional level; and the differences between the amateur and professional sport.

But it is when any risks of boxing are put into context against the other activities that many would-be or could-be boxers are otherwise partaking in, that the picture of the net benefits of boxing becomes clearer.



⁴ British Medical Association, 1993, The Boxing Debate.

⁵ Loosemore, M. 2007, 'Amateur boxing and risk of chronic traumatic brain injury: systematic review of observational studies', BMJ Research

⁶ Cantu, R.C & Mueller, F.O. 2003, 'Brain injury-related fatalities in American football, 1945-1999', *Neurosurgery*, 52(4)

FATALITIES RATE PER 100,000 PARTICIPANTS



REPORTED INJURY RATE PER 1000 HOURS OF PARTICIPATION IN TRAINING OR COMPETITION⁷



BOXING IN BRITAIN - THE REAL PICTURE

MILLIONS WITNESSED THE BOXERS OF TEAM GB ENJOY UNPRECEDENTED SUCCESS AT LONDON 2012, BUT THE EXTENT TO WHICH BOXING ALREADY PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN BRITISH LIFE MAY COME AS A SURPRISE. ACCORDING TO SPORT ENGLAND, 164,300 PEOPLE AGED 14 YRS+ PARTICIPATE IN A BOXING RELATED ACTIVITY AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK, OF WHICH 39,400 ARE FEMALE⁸.

Boxing has seen an exponential rise in its use in schools. As of 2009, 10%⁹ of schools offered it as a part of their sports curriculum; this can be either contact or non-contact. The extent of this feat is all the greater when one considers that boxing was only reintroduced to the curriculum in 2007, following its ban in 1962. What is perhaps more remarkable is the distribution of the sexes in the makeup of the sport. Since England Boxing of England lifted its 116-year ban in 1996 on female participation, it is a sport that has become fairly equal in

its composition. This is notable in the rise in female participation from October 2011 to October 2013, from 23,300 to 39,400. Nicola Adams's gold medal at London 2012 shows how far female boxing has come in such a short space of time.

Although Boxing is primarily viewed as an elite sport, a result of conflating amateur and professional discussed earlier, in reality it is a grass roots activity that cannot be detached from community it serves. England Boxing (formerly the Amateur Boxing Association), which was founded in 1880 to represent the sport, estimates there are around 19000 members of staff, largely voluntary, serving 904 clubs across the UK. Moreover, although the 'ring' symbolises everything about boxing, only 25% of those who box go onto compete in the ring. Boxing is predominantly a sport of technique, discipline and control, and less about fighting than is publically perceived. It is this technical aspect,

the art of boxing, which has enabled its adoption within broader fitness regime. 1.2 million people participate in 'boxercise', a training exercise based on the concepts used in boxing, every week.

FROM THE INFORMAL TO THE FORMALLY STRUCTURED

It is important to distinguish between different settings and impacts of individual boxing groups. As alluded to in the opening, the reflex to dismiss boxing as simply a dangerous sport is based on a misconception. Moreover, it shows a misunderstanding of the wider ranging social contexts boxing clubs inhabit, and the goals they attempt to fulfil. This report divides settings (apart from those boxing activities offered as a discrete package within another statutory setting, e.g. boxing classes at school) into three broad groups.

⁷ British Journal of Sports Medicine, 2006, A prospective cohort study of injury in amateur and professional boxing. http://www.sportengland.org/media/226709/1x30_sport_14_factsheet_APS7_final.pdf

⁸ http://www.sportengland.org/media/226709/1x30_sport_14_factsheet_APS7_final.pdf

⁹ Evidence on physical education and sport in schools', June 2013, Department for Education



THE BENEFITS OF BOXING

i) HELPING SOLVE ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND GANG CULTURE

BOXING HAS A REPUTATION FROM HOLLYWOOD E.G. ROCKY, TO THE STREETS OF NEARLY EVERY LOCAL TOWN, FOR PROVIDING A WAY OUT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE VEERING DRAMATICALLY OFF THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW, INTO DRUGS, CRIME AND GANGS. THERE IS MUCH TRUTH TO THIS STEREOTYPE. BOXING CAN BE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL FOR THE HARDEST TO REACH CHILDREN: THOSE WITH SIGNIFICANT BEHAVIOURAL CHALLENGES, CHAOTIC LIVES, AND THOSE WHOM THE SYSTEM HAS ALL BUT GIVEN UP ON.

Where boxing succeeds where many other interventions fail is in engaging some of the most hard to reach individuals who consider other initiatives to be below them.

One of the attendees at Pedro Boxing Club is Celal Ozturk. Aged 17, Celal lives with his parents who speak little English due to originating from Turkey, and has a younger sister and brother which he says he helps take care of. He talks about what it's like growing up in the area around the club, and describes how there are groups and gangs hanging around the streets 'cussing' each other, using drugs and looking for fights. Celal says this is where he thinks he would have ended up if his father hadn't bought him to the club:

"When I came here first I had just argued with the coach as I was so angry I couldn't box. This is when I realised boxing and fighting aren't the same. Boxing is controlled and takes discipline, and I wasn't."

Joining Pedro Boxing Club has helped him learn to manage his temper and rise above things if he feels he's being provoked. The club leader, James Cook MBE, talks about how Celal has progressed as a young person as well as a boxer. James is confident Celal isn't getting into trouble outside of sessions because he stays after training, plays pool and talks about any problems or challenges he's having.

The founder of the Boxing Academy, which engages and develops students who have been excluded from mainstream education and other settings such as Pupil Referral Units, said that he had found other sports were far less effective than boxing in engaging those at the extreme end of anti-social behaviour. This appears to be because boxing offers a powerful and unique combination: a gritty, anti-authority image, the authoritative presence of coaches who have themselves often come from a similar background, the appeal of combat sport, the inherent focus on control, discipline and hard work, and the inclusive

and sociable environment of the gym. When it comes to engaging many of the hardest to reach young people, boxing can indeed be the right hook.

Abdul Guthmy, aged 18, also attends Pedro ABC. In December 2011 he was pictured in the Evening Standard as one of the "12 Most Wanted" from the London Riots. Abdul was born in Kenya and moved to England when he was just a year old. It was at the age of 13 when Abdul first started getting into trouble. With two older brothers making a living dealing drugs and Abdul being bullied for being small at school, he turned to being part of a gang and fighting to stick up for himself. A few weeks after he joined Pedro ABC, the August 2011 riots broke out. Abdul found himself caught up in it with his friends on Mare Street.

From the moment Abdul entered the boxing gym for the first time, he said he felt like that was where he was supposed to be. However, Abdul still found himself choosing to mix with the wrong crowds, something he says was due to a lack of positive role models in his life. With the help of James Cook, Abdul has changed his life which has seen him change his friendship group, stay at college and win the North East Championship Boxing Trophy. "James has been fantastic", he says. "He is my boxing coach, my mentor and my friend. Boxing has had a massive impact on my life." He talks of attending university, which he thanks the coaches at Pedro for, making him see he needs more than just boxing to achieve.

Pedro Boxing Club is a great example of a club in one of the most challenging areas of the country, making a real difference to young people who would otherwise be in serious danger of being sucked into a life of gangs and drugs.

Young people growing up in the estate where the club is located live in fear of travelling beyond two streets due to serious anxiety of being stabbed or beaten up. There is pressure to join gangs, hang about on the streets, and many of the older kids are

THE BOXING LANDSCAPE

INFORMAL INTERVENTION – THE SIMPLE CLUB

PEDRO ABC, HACKNEY

www.pedroclub.com

Pedro Amateur Boxing Club is part of Pedro Youth Club (Est. 1929), one of the oldest youth clubs in London, sits at the centre of Hackney's postcode wars. Whilst it may not formally use boxing as an intervention for at risk young people, it does, like so many clubs, do a vital job in engaging gang members and other young people.

SEMI-FORMAL – THE SIMPLE CLUB "PLUS"

FITZROY LODGE ABC, LAMBETH

www.fitzroylodge.co.uk

An amateur boxing club which runs taster sessions and competitive training for men and women. Partnered with a charitable organisation called Carney's Community, which actively engages young people to reduce offending and antisocial behaviour, Fitzroy Lodge offers something more formal than the average boxing club, but still engages many young people in the same way as most other clubs.

Annual running costs: £20,000.

Income: Supported by members subscriptions and donations.

Attendees per year: 170, plus 120 at Carney's Community sessions.

Staff and volunteers: 27 volunteers; no paid staff.

FORMAL – BOXING AS A FACILITATOR

FIGHT FOR PEACE ACADEMY, NEWHAM

www.fightforpeace.net

Combines boxing and martial arts with education, youth support services (mentoring), employability advice, youth leadership and personal development to support young people living in communities that suffer from crime and violence to realise their potential. Actively seeks hardest to reach individuals. All project activities are free of charge for all young people aged between 11 and 25.

Annual running costs: £670,000.

Income: Supporters include Big Lottery, Laureus Sport for Good Foundation, Sport Relief, Credit Suisse and the Mayor of London.

Attendees per year: Over 800.

Staff and volunteers: 14 full time staff, 17 coaches and youth workers, and 23 volunteers.



unemployed and making a living by selling drugs. With a lack of provision for young people, Pedro is standing alone in offering a positive alternative to the problems faced in the area.

"The Pedro Club is engaging with the young people who are seriously at risk of being sucked into the various gangs in the area, most of which are led by men in their thirties who recruit kids as young as ten." says PCSO James Severs, of Kings Park Safer Neighbourhood Team. *"I am aware the club struggles with capacity due to volunteer commitment but it is important to keep the club alive in this area."*

Similarly, Fight for Peace (FFP) has been empirically validated as a cost-effective way of altering anti-social behaviour. More than 1,300 young people have accessed FFP since January 2012, compared to 442 in 2010. The project, which was previously backed by Big Lottery Fund, aims to engage with 2,400 young people over the next three years. The success of the project is clear from its statistics - in 2012, 94 per cent of FFP education learners were not in education, employment or training (NEET) at the time of recruitment and 93 per cent progressed on to further education, training or employment.

Moreover, in a systematic review of in 2012, young people receiving intensive mentoring support reported that as a result of attending FFP they are less likely to commit a crime and be a member of a gang (71%); will now think before they act (77%); feel calmer (71%) and feel more confident and ambitious (94%). Research by Ecorys in 2012 estimated that across the 800 participants in 2011, FFP resulted in 175 crimes being avoided, delivering £1,059,471 worth of savings to society.

There is also the fact that boxing, like any other sport, is simply a diversionary activity. In 2009, the Audit Commission cited research which revealed that seven out of ten teenagers believe that anti-social behaviour occurs because young people

are bored, and six out of ten say there isn't enough to do in their area; in this context any sport can potentially play a powerful role in diverting young people away from errant behaviour¹⁰. Boxing clubs may reduce crime and anti-social behaviour simply by offering young people something to do. It is notable that seven out of ten teenagers believe that anti-social behaviour occurs because due to boredom, and that a fifth of school pupils aged 11-15 who had taken drugs gave their reason as *"I had nothing better to do."* We also acknowledge that sport is not the only option when it comes to engagement; for some young people drama, art or music may be more appealing. A study by the Australian Institute of Criminology conducted in 2003 highlighted that *"providing an activity where previously there has been none is more important than the type of activity provided."*¹¹

But there is also evidence that, in varying degrees depending on the nature of the setting, there is a positive input from the activity of boxing that benefits participants. How boxing makes an impact is in behaviour change. More comprehensive interventions go further than offering a distraction from boredom by proactively seeking to change behaviour and offer practical and emotional support to participants. During evidence sessions, five key themes emerged from both coaches and boxers, and those studying the impact of boxing. The most powerful exponents of these five points were the boxers themselves, who were able to give an insight into how they saw boxing, their club, and the effect it had on them.

1 "IT'S LIKE A FAMILY TO ME."

A safe, sociable and inclusive environment. In communities affected by crime and anti-social behaviour, boxing clubs can offer a secure environment in which young people can integrate with peers and socialise with individuals from different geographical areas and cultural backgrounds. For many, it is the first time they have

felt part of a group or a family, with someone looking out for them. This is a positive alternative to the 'family' a gang can offer. As a sport, boxing often appeals to those who have been bullied and victimised, including girls who have suffered sexual or physical abuse, as well as those with tougher personalities or issues with aggression.

2 "PEOPLE RESPECT YOU IF YOU GO TO THE BOXING CLUB."

Winning the respect of peers. Young people find it easier to become involved in boxing compared to other youth-focused interventions because it is often perceived as a suitably anti-establishment sport which carries a particular 'street cred'. Once involved in the sport, successful competition in the ring allows individuals to win the respect of their contenders as well as their peers and seniors. By doing so, individuals are less inclined to seek acceptance and demonstrate prowess through participation in gangs, and instead are influenced by a positive peer-pressure from other members of the club, in an ethos that expects a certain level of discipline and behaviour.

3 "IT'S A WAY TO LET GO OF MY FRUSTRATION."

A chance to let off steam. Combat sports can appeal to those seeking adrenaline and motivated by a sense of risk. Through boxing, individuals are able to channel their aggression positively in a structured environment, thereby letting off steam and exorcising frustration and negative experiences. Training in the gym also offers a diversionary activity. Not only does the sport occupy idle minds, and possibly idle fists, in the evening, but, as one coach put it, his participants are too tired after a training session to contemplate making trouble.

4 "HE'S LIKE THE DAD I NEVER HAD."

The influence of positive role models. Coaches and senior members play an extremely important role both in terms of setting expectations of behaviour and by offering support and advice as mentors. These senior figures are seen as credible authority figures, not only due to their physical presence but also because they often have similar backgrounds to those they are training. For many, these are the only positive male role models they have encountered in their life.

5 "I'VE LEARNED HOW TO WALK AWAY FROM A FIGHT."

Personal development. Like any sport, boxing rewards commitment and hard work. As an individual sport, boxing teaches self-motivation and is particularly dependent on discipline and control – attributes which all help individuals to conduct themselves more positively outside the boxing gym. For many, the attention of a coach is the first time anyone has taken any notice or given any care to their personal development, and boxing the first time they have ever experienced delayed gratification in the virtuous circle of discipline, effort and then reward.

Of these characteristics, the most important seems to be the role of coaches and seniors in establishing a constructive environment based on hard work, respect and discipline. The inquiry was repeatedly told that setting clear expectations of behaviour is an important factor, and we heard a number of anecdotes about coaches and seniors ringing round the homes of their younger members during the 2011 riots to ensure they weren't getting into trouble, or to determine why they had missed a training session. Through these actions, senior figures are demonstrating their commitment to the wellbeing and development of their mentees, as well as setting clear rules and boundaries, and this undoubtedly has a positive impact on a young person with an unstable or chaotic home life.

FIGHT FOR CHANGE, LONDON

IN 2009, FIGHT FOR CHANGE (FFC) WAS SET UP BY REBECCA DONNELLY. THE IDEA STEMMED FROM REBECCA'S EXPERIENCE WORKING IN THE YOUTH AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR AND HER YEARS AS A BOXER.

With the help of local boxing club coaches and volunteers the FFC community boxing programme was launched and attracted an assortment of young men and women. This included tagged criminals on pre-release, gang members referred by the local Youth Offending Team, young people from the local community, youth groups and many more. These members were put through their paces twice a week by our coaches and volunteers. This soon grew and working with statutory and voluntary sector partners, FFC now provide a programme of non-contact and fitness-related activities from our Fight For Change Academy based at The Black Prince Community Hub Sports Complex, as well as its hub site in Merton and Croydon. The location is ideally situated to where youth crime

and anti-social behaviour is rife, but nonetheless will enable the organisation through its work to raise aspirations and provide pathways to achievement.

Fight for Change has found the benefits of boxing and boxing-related activities to be wide ranging:

- It engages disadvantaged individuals and communities.
- It helps young people turn their lives around.
- It teaches respect, discipline, healthy living, physical and mental wellbeing.

However, the FFC programme provides added opportunities for participants to gain appropriate qualifications that will qualify them for employment and educational opportunities.

<http://fight4change.org.uk/>

ii) EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT

UNLIKE BOXING, RUGBY HAS NEVER FACED THE PROHIBITIVE MEASURES TO CURB YOUTH PARTICIPATION. IN FACT, IN MANY SCHOOLS ACROSS THE UK, RUGBY IS A COMPULSORY PART OF THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM. THIS IS IN SPITE OF RUGBY'S OBVIOUS AND DOCUMENTED DANGERS – ACCORDING TO A STUDY, "ONE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL IN AUSTRALIA REPORTED 125 RUGBY-RELATED CERVICAL SPINE INJURIES TO CHILDREN UNDER-15 YEARS OF AGE OVER A 3-YEAR PERIOD"¹².

In 1962, boxing was banned in schools, but it was reintroduced in 2007. Although progress was slow to begin with, the benefits of boxing are beginning to be felt and quantified in a number of settings with schools. As of 2009, 10% of schools offered boxing as part of their curriculum, and headteachers who have introduced boxing into their school, report significant improvements in both behaviour and academic achievement.

Dame Sharon Hollows, Principal of Charter Academy said: *"The introduction of non-contact boxing to the Charter Academy has been fantastic and the sport has had a very positive impact on our students."*

"On a practical level it has improved levels of fitness and helped students to learn about a healthy diet. It has also had a noticeable impact on students' confidence across a range of subjects, helped to bridge social and academic gaps within the school and led to the development of friendships between students who otherwise may not have mixed. It has been a new experience for the students but both the boys and girls are enjoying learning it along with other key skills such as working with others, problem solving, research, discussion and improving their own learning."

¹⁰ Audit Commission (2009), 'Tired of Hanging Around, Using Sport and Leisure Activities to Prevent Anti-social Behaviour by Young People', London: Audit Commission

¹¹ Morris, L; J. Sallybanks; K. Willis and T. Makkai (2003), 'Sport, physical activity and anti-social behaviour in youth', Trends and issues in crime and criminal justice, no. 249. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology. www.aic.gov.au/publications/current%20series/tandi/241-260/tandi249/view%20paper.html. Last accessed 22 January 2013

¹² Browne, G.J. 'Cervical spinal injury in children's community rugby football', BJSM, 2006, 40:68-71

BOXING AND EDUCATION

CHARTER ACADEMY, PORTSMOUTH

THE CHARTER ACADEMY IN PORTSMOUTH HAS BEEN ONE OF THE SCHOOLS AT THE FOREFRONT OF BOXING IN EDUCATION.

Charter Academy is a secondary school in Portsmouth for 11-16 year olds. It opened in September 2009 and introduced non-contact boxing into the school through an initial trial with the Boxing Awards Programme. Boxing Awards is modular non-contact programme, delivered by qualified boxing tutors and is designed to promote health and fitness and contribute to increased self esteem and confidence. The trial was a success and boxing is now offered in a number of ways at Charter Academy including:

- Breakfast Club Boxing Sessions
- On the PE Curriculum
- Twice-weekly after school club
- On the curriculum as part of the ASDAN CoPE (Certificate of Personal Effectiveness) Qualification

The school is one of the first in the UK to include boxing in the curriculum as part of the of the GCSE-equivalent ASDAN CoPE Qualification, and in 2010, sixteen Year 11 students passed the GCSE-equivalent ASDAN CoPE (Certificate of Personal Effectiveness) using boxing-related tasks to gain credits towards the qualification.

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MOUNT CARMEL CATHOLIC COLLEGE FOR GIRLS

MOUNT CARMEL CATHOLIC COLLEGE FOR GIRLS ISN'T THE MOST OBVIOUS SETTING FOR BOXING, BUT WITH HELP FROM COACHES AT ISLINGTON BOXING CLUB, THE SCHOOL NOW HAS A THRIVING CLUB OF ITS OWN.

Sport England's Satellite Club scheme enables boxing clubs to link up with other community organisations and support them to encourage more young people to take up sport. Such was the popularity of the project at Mount Carmel, the school decided to set up its own club, with support from the coaches and volunteers at Islington.

Islington is one of London's most popular, successful and inclusive boxing clubs and trains a number of national champions, but also has a track record of good work in its local community. The project beat 1000 other London clubs to win Sport England's inaugural Satellite Club of the Year award.

Nicola Haines, head teacher at Mount Carmel, said: *"It is important to encourage young people in terms of their well-being, health, fitness and confidence. In particular, my thanks to Anthony Wright, who has been an excellent coach."*

RYE TOWN COLLEGE

OVER 30 YOUNG PEOPLE, MANY OF WHOM WERE INDIFFERENT TO SPORT, TOOK UP BOXING AS A RESULT OF A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN A BOXING CLUB AND ITS LOCAL COLLEGE.

With support from Sussex County Sport Partnership and England Boxing, Rye College partnered with Rye Town Boxing Club to set up boxing sessions attracting both boys and girls from the school and local community. Within three weeks, over 30 young people had enrolled at the after-school boxing sessions, with six going on to join Rye Town Boxing Club.

Mr Farlow, PE teacher at Rye College, said: "It has been a huge success with pupils making the most of the after-school club.

"It has allowed other students who are not too keen on the usual 'invasion games' to access another sport, and more importantly, at no cost to them.

"We have received loads of great feedback from parents, staff and pupils about the club, facility and coaches, which is great advertisement for our school, Rye Town Boxing Club, Active Sussex and the town of Rye."

There is a common preconception which sees academic achievement and sport as an 'either / or' equation. Children are either academically inclined, or not so, and spend more time on the sports field. However, anecdote, and increasingly evidence are showing that children who do more physical activity and sport at school have better behaviour, and, perform better academically. As a paper into the benefits of education stated, there is *"evidence from this large-scale population study confirms the long-term positive impact of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity on academic attainment in adolescence"*¹³.

There is a wealth of evidence that suggest that boxing can provide a nexus between an excluded pupil and the re-establishment of their education. Moreover, it is clear that this is not only more economical but producer greater results for those pupils. The report Teenage Kicks qualifies this further in it research into the success of places such as the Boxing Academy. It noted that pupils of the Boxing Academy *"are more likely to achieve qualifications than their peers in Pupil Referral Units, and less likely to reoffend. What's more, the Boxing Academy costs half as much to run as a traditional Pupil Referral Unit, despite achieving better results"*¹⁴. In addition to this, The Laureus Sport for Good Foundation calculated that every £1 invested in the Academy generated £3 of value for society¹⁵. The Academy has been widely recognized for these achievements. In July 2011 the Boxing Academy received an award from the Centre for Social Justice for its innovative work in addressing the causes of poverty, turning lives around and reversing social breakdown.

THE BOXING ACADEMY

THE BOXING ACADEMY HAS PROVIDED FULL-TIME EDUCATION IN NORTH AND EAST LONDON SINCE 2007 FOR OVER 150 STUDENTS WHO WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE BEEN PERMANENTLY EXCLUDED FROM SCHOOL, AND HELPED THEM PROGRESS TO FURTHER EDUCATION, TRAINING OR EMPLOYMENT.

During school term times, the Academy runs a daily timetable from 9:30am until 2.45pm for students aged between 13 and 16. Each class has seven students, and each class (or 'pod') has its own mentor who is a boxer. Parents are given daily feedback on attendance, and receive a weekly conduct report. A system of reward and recognition is in place, with the top student for each week receiving a cash prize of £10. Over 90% of attendees have graduated onto further education, training or employment.

One student, Carlos, joined when he was 14 following a number of fixed-term exclusions



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from school. Carlos enjoyed the boxing training and discovered that it helped him to focus. The guidance of the coaches helped him to change his attitude: *"Boxing teaches you discipline... you get your energy out there, so when you go into lessons you are more chilled out. Of course boxing teaches you to fight better, but it also teaches you to avoid fighting."* Carlos completed the Academy course with GCSEs in English and Maths, and a Merit in BTEC Level 2 Sport. He went to college to study a Level 3 Diploma in Sports.

Reproduced with the permission of the Boxing Academy www.theboxingacademy.co.uk

THE BOXING ACADEMY

The Boxing Academy is not an isolated example of boxing's success in this area. The base-line annual cost of sending a pupil to a pupil referral unit is £8,000; this does not consider regional, local differences in supplementing pupils. The actual figure can be, and in many cases is, much higher. Compare this to the average annual -cost of sending a pupil through the Fight for Peace programme; just over £800.

This works out at nearly 90% of the cost as PRU and with greater results. Furthermore, when looking at the wider social impact of FPP the Sport Scores calculated that, like the Boxing Academy, *"Fight for Peace has delivered at least £2,504,457 of additional social benefit over the past 12 months. With the cost of the project running at £580,000, this delivers a benefit to cost ratio of £4.32 for every £1 invested"*¹⁶.

The Government says that schools are now free to use their budgets on whichever interventions they think most effective. This presents an opportunity for sport in general, and boxing in particular, to make its case directly to education providers and professional bodies, in terms of what it can offer in behavioural and academic improvement. The lack of a central determining body and a more fragmented audience to which boxing and sport must pitch suggest that there is likely to be some variation in take-up. However, the opportunities provided by schools' new freedoms should be seized proactively.

¹³ Booth JN, et al. 2014, Br J Sports Med; 48

¹⁴ Teenage Kicks: The Value of Sport in Tackling Youth Crime'

¹⁵ Teenage Kicks: The Value of Sport in Tackling Youth Crime'

¹⁶ Sport Scores: the costs and benefits of sport for crime reduction



iii) HEALTH AND WELLBEING

THE PHYSICAL HEALTH BENEFITS OF DOING SPORT ARE WELL DOCUMENTED, SO THIS INQUIRY WAS NOT PRIMARILY FOCUSED ON WHAT BOXING CAN DO FOR HEALTH, THOUGH THE BENEFITS ARE CONSIDERABLE.

The impact boxing can have on mental health is far less well documented, but is striking. There is an established link between the social challenges of the type described above and mental health problems – depression, for example, is considerably more common amongst those who are struggling financially – and boxing clubs are now starting to deal with both. The link between boxing and the mind is now being put into practice in innovative and progressive interventions in mental health.

Dr Tamara Russell, Director of the Mindfulness Centre of Excellence, has worked extensively with Fight for Change, and has broken down the positive link between boxing and the mind into three key areas.

Firstly, the boxing environment, gym and coaches provide a psychologically rich experience for young people who may not

be having developmentally appropriate psychological needs met in their home, school or social context. Primarily, the boxing centre provides a safe and consistent container in which young people can begin to develop their identity within a positive peer environment. In contrast to the street (or school) environment, the gym allows each child to find their own unique pace and skills with a structure that provides appropriate challenge and guidance. Young people can be pushed just outside of their comfort zone in order to explore their true potential and be allowed to fail and try again without punishment or derision. The consistent and disciplined environment of the boxing gym provides enough stability to allow the young person to be flexible in their exploration of identity at an often critical period (late adolescence and the transition into adulthood).

Secondly, the boxing training provides a chance for young people to face and experience their fears in a contained way. This may be experienced in their first visits to the gym (worries and doubts about whether they can do the boxing or fit in), right up to moments when they face their fears in the ring. This training provides a chance to experience fear in the body, and work through it, seeing that it is possible to face

fears and not be overwhelmed by them, and it can be generalised to other feared situations outside the gym (for example at job interviews or when dealing with difficult relationships). Boxing with others also develops interpersonal skills such as turn-taking and communication, and provides training in self-mastery and confidence.

Lastly, working with the physical body gives the young people the chance to see directly the effects of their own efforts. By this we mean they can see, week by week, changes in the body as they grow fitter, changes in speed, power and accuracy as they master techniques and improve. Psychologically, this is a direct observation of how they have acted to change themselves and their experience. For individuals who might feel hopeless, isolated and “done to” this chance to see how they can act to change and improve their experience is an essential step to any further self-development steps (such as engaging with training and/or employment).

In Bristol, this link is being put into practice as boxing is being used as part of a wider approach to tackle social and psychological issues. Empire Fighting Chance takes a holistic approach to the issue.

EMPIRE FIGHTING CHANCE, BRISTOL

<http://www.empirefightingchance.org/>

THE CHARITY EMPIRE FIGHTING CHANCE WAS OFFICIALLY INCORPORATED AT THE END OF OCTOBER 2013. IT FORMALISES AND BUILDS ON SEVEN YEARS OF EXPERIENCE OF RUNNING AND MANAGING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMMES BY THE EMPIRE AMATEUR BOXING CLUB IN BRISTOL.

The charity delivers a number of activities both independently and through partnerships with other agencies. It uses the reputation of the boxing club to engage people, and then offer a holistic, fully integrated approach to tackle the complex set of problems that are experienced in the local community, including mental health problems, as well as gangs and poor employment and education opportunities.

Specific activities include mentoring, education support, job and skills training, leadership development, personal development, therapy and gang interventions.

One participant, who suffered from severe mental and physical health problems, describes his experiences:

“I have rapid cycling bi-polar disorder with bouts of anxiety.”

“Depression robs the individual of any appreciation of the future, of possibilities and changes in circumstance. Perceiving that you are having a bad year begins to narrow down to a bad month, week and then day – every day. Apathy builds; there are often no aspirations beyond the next meal. The ability to plan ahead or set ambitions beyond short term goals becomes almost impossible.”

“Being treated for depression involves receiving medication to initially stabilise your condition so that an assessment can be made. Beyond initial diagnosis a holding pattern is established, neither getting worse or better but always taking medicines. The medication led to increased weight gain, a passionless existence devoid of highs and lows, and a remaining apathy.”

“Unhappy with being out of work, unfit with seemingly no chance of changing circumstance, I decided to give boxing a try. I'd previously had some personal training at another gym and knew that I needed to get out of the house.”

BOXING FOR ME HAS BEEN TRANSFORMATIVE.

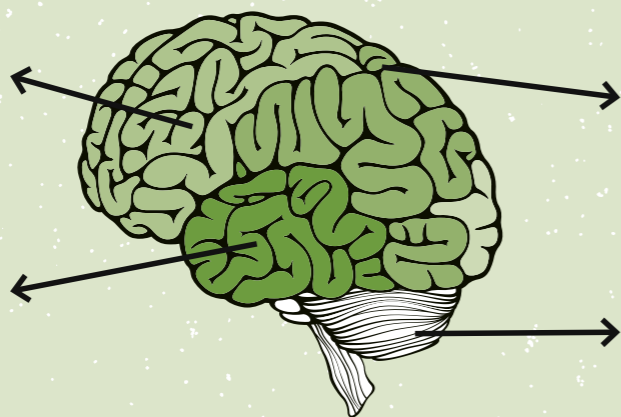
“I can remember being three stones overweight (technically obese) and trying very hard to complete ten press-ups all the while being encouraged by Lee Haskins (a European Champion). That is the way it has always been - no posturing, posing or aggression from any other member in the gym. I find the other boxers (both professional and amateur) really kind, courteous and humble. They don't drink, they train hard and genuinely encourage all abilities just to work up a sweat and enjoy training. The gym is the real deal - pictures of past and present champions adorn the walls - I've also met a few when they have come to train.”

“There are some key ingredients to boxing that make it an ideal springboard for getting back into good health.”

BOXING AND THE MIND

Attention, focus and concentration are required when boxing - these develop lobe regions related to attention and inhibition.

Reading and interpreting others' bodily postures and intentions are an essential building block for social cognitive skills. The superior temporal sulcus codes for bodily posture and feeds information into the frontal lobe to help us make inferences about others intentions - a vital skill for smooth social interactions.



Motor co-ordination and bodily awareness help with both cognition and emotion regulation - boxing training primes somatosensory cortex and primary and secondary motor areas.

Timing and co-ordination of movement trains the cerebellum - also implicated in the temporal ordering of thoughts.

iv) POLICING AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

IT IS NOT A COINCIDENCE THAT A SPORT THAT IS STILL FROWNED UPON BY SOME ASPECTS OF THE ESTABLISHMENT ENTAILS RISK, AND IS BASED ON PHYSICAL RESILIENCE AND FIGHTING SEEMS UNIQUELY ABLE TO BREAK THROUGH TO THOSE INVOLVED IN CRIME AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR. AS FORMER GANG MEMBER, WHO WENT ONTO REPRESENT ENGLAND AS BOXER IN THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES, JOVAN YOUNG PUT IT: “BOXING IS THE ONLY THING THAT'S ACCEPTABLE FROM THE GANG'S POINT OF VIEW. WHEN I GOT INVOLVED IN BOXING, THE GANG MEMBERS SAID TO ME 'LEAVE US BEHIND, JOVAN. GO AND GET A FUTURE FOR YOURSELF'”.

The cost savings that can be delivered by interventions that engage young people through sport struck the panel. In Tired of Hanging Around, the Audit Commission

concluded that £113 million could be saved each year if one in ten young offenders received effective support to divert them away from criminal activity. The 2009 report stated that a young person who exhibits behavioural problems from a young age and is dealt with through the criminal justice system would cost the taxpayer around £207,000 by the age of 16. Amateur boxing clubs which help individuals to break this vicious cycle of offending cost very little in comparison: Fitzroy Lodge ABC (see above) costs approximately £20,000 a year to run.

Some police forces have made full use of what many would say is boxing's unique outreach potential. 60 police community clubs operate across England and Wales. Today these clubs provide much-needed leisure activities, including boxing, for an estimated 4,000-5,000 disadvantaged young people in inner cities and other deprived areas. One such club is Yate ABC.



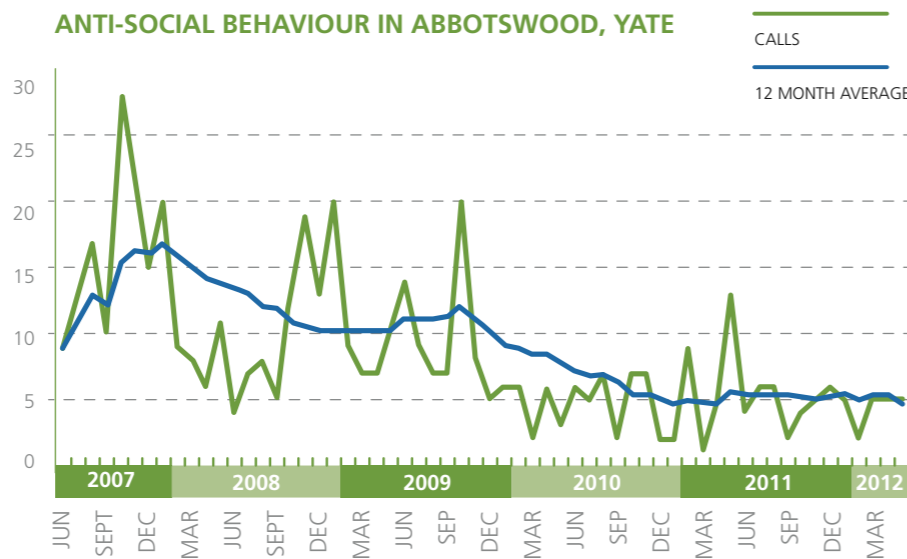
YATE ABC

YATE ABC NEAR BRISTOL IS A BOXING CLUB THAT HAS MADE A REMARKABLE SOCIAL IMPACT IN A DIFFICULT ENVIRONMENT. THE ABBOTSWOOD AREA OF YATE, WHERE THE BOXING CLUB IS BASED, WAS HIGHLIGHTED BY LOCAL POLICE AS AN ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR HOTSPOT IN DECEMBER 2007 AND A DISPERSAL ZONE (A DESIGNATED AREA THAT POLICE CAN DIRECT INDIVIDUALS TO LEAVE) WAS ESTABLISHED. IN JUNE 2008, WHEN THE DISPERSAL ZONE EXPIRED, A BOXING CLUB WAS SET UP IN THE AREA IN CONJUNCTION WITH LOCAL POLICE FROM THE COMMUNITY TO COMBAT THE LEVEL OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR STILL FURTHER AND GIVE YOUNG PEOPLE IN YATE A ROUTE OFF THE STREETS AND OUT OF PETTY CRIME.

As the graph below shows, the establishment of a boxing club in June 2008 coincides with a gradual but significant decline in the number of antisocial behaviour calls received by the local police.

Even allowing for seasonal "spikes" in calls, the twelve month rolling advantage shows a steady downward trend in the volume of calls since the presence of the Dispersal Zone (December 2007 to June 2008) and of a boxing club thereafter. Although we cannot necessarily attribute the decline entirely to the boxing club, the relatively small area measured

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN ABBOTSWOOD, YATE



and the fact that the police were involved in setting up the club, would suggest that it did have a meaningful impact on anti-social crime in the local area.

Yate ABC is not a well-off club. Its facilities are very basic and its only income is from boxers' subs and occasional tournaments; all of the coaches are volunteers. The club has twenty regular seniors and twenty regular juniors and

focuses, like so many, on fitness, discipline and self-confidence. The relationship between the junior boxers and the coaches is strong and lends a more pastoral angle to the work of the club. Despite limited resources, Yate ABC is a great example of boxing making a real difference both to individuals and to a local community – the relationship between the club and the local police has made a lasting and positive impact.

Other clubs do not have a formal connection to the local police, but still do great work in tackling antisocial behaviour. In South Yorkshire, mosques are involved in vital work with boxing in local communities.

LEYBURN ROAD MOSQUE, SHEFFIELD

FIFTEEN MOSQUES IN SOUTH YORKSHIRE INTRODUCED BOXING AS AN ACTIVITY TO PEOPLE AGED BETWEEN 11 AND 30 THIS YEAR, AS A RESULT OF A PROJECT SUPPORTED BY ENGLAND BOXING AND SPORTIVATE.

Aimed at young people attending mosque after school or at weekends, the project has seen over 2000 people in the region engaged in boxing. Supported by coaches from local clubs, the mosques run sessions on site, with one Sheffield mosque taking things a step further by forming its own boxing club. Set up by former pro boxer Issrar Asif and

supported by Wajid Naseer, a youth leader at the mosque, One Nation Community Centre is open all day long and also runs sessions for women only. By providing a diversion for young people in the local community, the club has had a huge impact and is set to affiliate to England Boxing this season.

Wajid said: "Anti-social behaviour was a concern for local residents, who were witnessing some youngsters taking drugs or hanging around on street corners and forming gangs. Police time was being wasted as officers were forced to focus on nuisance behaviour,

and there were concerns that not enough was being done to alleviate the situation.

"In July 2012 official figures suggested that 125 anti-social behaviour orders had been handed out in this area alone. A year later that number had declined to 66. The gym is a positive step in the right direction. Boxing provides a great diversion for young people and gives them an opportunity to use their energy in a more positive manner."

One Nation has recently been selected to pilot a project funded by Sported aimed at empowering volunteers within clubs.

However, to effect demonstrable, lasting behaviour change in an individual requires a more formalised approach. As explained previously, organisations like Fight for Peace and the Boxing Academy are different to the average traditional boxing club, and use the sport as part of a formal wider mission to support and develop young people. More than this, boxing is starting to be used as a part of the rehabilitative process.

Given the instinctive reactions against boxing that were outlined earlier, it is easy to understand the opposition that many would have towards allowing boxing in the criminal justice system. Much of this is understandable. However, for the reasons we have outlined earlier, boxing can be an incredibly powerful tool for turning lives around, and to keep boxing of any form away from some of the hardest to reach and most disengaged people in society

would be a huge missed opportunity to better protect society from re-offending by violent criminals.

Indeed, boxing does already play a role, albeit a patchy one, in our prisons and young offenders' institutions (YOIs), and this can provide a useful, practical and sensible model to harness the power of boxing in a safe way to help reduce reoffending and improve prisons' behaviour.

BOXING IN PRISONS

THE FIRST EXAMPLE OF BOXING'S ROLE IN THE PRISON SYSTEM WAS AT ASHFIELD PRISON AND YOI IN THE WEST COUNTRY, WHICH RAN A BOXING ACADEMY FOR ITS YOUNG OFFENDERS FROM 2005 UNTIL THE PRISON'S CLOSURE IN MARCH 2013. THE ASHFIELD PROGRAMME ENGAGED 18 PEOPLE AT A TIME AND OFFERED A 3 MONTH, NON-CONTACT BOXING PROGRAMME FOCUSING ON HEALTH AND FITNESS, RUN BY LOCAL BOXING CLUBS, INCLUDING BROAD PLAIN ABC.

Stewart Stacey, the Head of Physical Education at Ashfield, recalls that there was not a single incident of violence at a boxing academy session and there were very strict criteria for young offenders to join the programme – any participant had to demonstrate first class standards of behaviour, which resulted in an improving standard of behaviour across the board.

As with the example of Yate ABC, Ashfield shows once again the powerful combination of

local boxing clubs and state institutions – Broad Plain also ran some sessions with HMP Bristol – and they provide a strong model that could be rolled out more widely.

More recently, HMP Doncaster has also used boxing as part of its rehabilitation programme. The prison, in conjunction with the Policy Community Clubs of Great Britain (PCCGB), runs the Contender Plus programme, which, rather than teaching prisoners to box, focuses on boxing coaching and training others. Over an 8 week period, the prisoners involved in the programme complete their Level 1 Coaches Award (and associated First Aid and Child Safeguarding qualifications), and, upon their release, they are placed into an England Boxing affiliated boxing club in their local community, where they will assist and coach young people.

Again, the criteria for entry to the programme are very strict – prisoners must meet a variety of criteria linked to their offences and their behaviour, and all must be nearing the end of

their sentences. Additionally, the Ministry of Justice has placed a further requirement that all participating prisoners must have no violence related offences. Despite these restrictions, the programme has seen a number of prisoners successfully complete the course, going on to become actively involved with their local boxing clubs, and not reoffending. One prisoner in particular used the programme to work with young people through the delivery of courses focusing on gang violence and knife crime.

However, both PCCGB and HMP Doncaster have had concerns that the boxing project is not targeting those prisoners that it could best benefit, and so it has been temporarily suspended due to a lack of suitable candidates. Both organisations feel that the Ministry of Justice's requirement that no prisoners with violence-related offences can take part is a huge missed opportunity, since it is those with violence and aggression problems that stand most to benefit from boxing.

Whilst strict criteria are absolutely necessary for programmes such as those at Doncaster and Ashfield, it could certainly be argued that the ban on violent offenders is not making best use of the potential of the programme to turn lives around and reduce reoffending – indeed, if those offenders that have taken part are so low risk, then the chance of their reoffending was probably minimal anyway.

Boxing has huge potential to make a positive difference to offenders (probably the most difficult members of society to reach), but this is currently being massively unexploited – properly managed programmes, like those run at Ashfield and Doncaster, could be of

huge benefit if rolled out more widely, in more prisons and to more prisoners.

However, currently, only non-violent offenders are permitted to do boxing in prison or the YOI. Whilst the reasons for this are entirely understandable, evidence from this report suggests that in depriving those who have anger and violence issues from the outlet of channelling that aggression through the skill and discipline of boxing, society itself may be missing a major opportunity, not only in rehabilitating individuals, but in making them less likely to re-offend and making our country safer.

There is no doubt that extending the facility to learn to box to violent offenders would court some controversy. However, the causes of this controversy would be based on popular perceptions of boxing, not on the evidence of the effect of the sport on those inclined towards violence, such as have been investigated in this report. Society may have to make a choice between doing the initially counter-intuitive, controversial thing which could make our streets safer and turn around individuals' lives, or continue in doing the popular thing, which may be 'safe' politically, but make our streets, and the lives of those who live in them, less safe.

PART 2 SO WHAT CAN WE DO?



WE HAVE HIGHLIGHTED THE EVIDENCE AND SUGGESTED REASONS WHY, BOXING SHOULD BE REGARDED AS AN EFFECTIVE APPROACH TO COMBAT CRIME AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE, AND IMPROVE EDUCATION AND HEALTH OUTCOMES. THANKS TO PROJECTS LIKE THE PREMIER LEAGUE'S 'KICKZ' PROGRAMME, THE CONTENTION THAT SPORT MORE GENERALLY HAS AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY IN YOUTH POLICY IS ALREADY WIDELY ACCEPTED.¹⁷

The Centre for Social Justice argues that "the history of public policy shows that government policy towards sport and disadvantaged youth has long assumed that sport can have a beneficial effect and that it can serve as a context for youth work."¹⁸ A poll conducted in 2011 also revealed that more people (38%) believe the Government's main priority for sport funding should be to maximise its contribution to cutting crime and improving education, than for any other area.¹⁹ However, in 2009 the Audit Commission concluded that, while sport has an important role to play in

preventing anti-social behaviour, "councils, children's trusts and crime and disorder reduction partnerships lack the performance data to make intelligent commissioning decisions about new or repeat schemes."²⁰

In the light of the benefits that boxing can provide, the inquiry also looked at how the sport could be better used so as to deliver better outcomes in public policy, and what it would need to do to gain the traction of more established projects such as those run by The Premier League.

England Boxing should work together with funding bodies to promote the widespread use of tools like this in order to strengthen the evidence base for boxing as a tool for reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and improving education and health outcomes.

Those the inquiry spoke to emphasised that the form of measurement used to monitor impact will be partly dependent on the approach taken by the organisation in question. While the impact of a club like Yate ABC can be judged by the fall in crime figures, the success of a larger organisation

like Fight for Peace is recorded by measures relating to the personal development of the participants as well as the numbers completing education and training courses. As the cases in this report indicate, the existing evidence base shows there is good reason to be very confident about the effectiveness of projects that use boxing.

SO WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

- England Boxing should work with partners across sport to find the most effective mechanisms for the most 'frictionless' data-gathering.
- England Boxing should then actively work with clubs to support them in using data-gathering systems.
- England Boxing should also work towards organising a central repository for this data, for use in assessing the impact of the sport as a whole, and of individual clubs.

1. GATHERING THE DATA

THERE IS EVER GROWING EVIDENCE TO SUPPLEMENT THE VAST WEALTH OF ANECDOTE THAT BOXING, LIKE ALL SPORT, IS A VERY EFFECTIVE MECHANISM IN TURNING AROUND LIVES. BUT ITS POTENTIAL IS NOT BEING TAKEN UP AND EXPLOITED. THIS IS BECAUSE OF ACTIVELY NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS ABOUT WHAT THE SPORT IS, AND THE EFFECTS IT HAS ON THOSE WHO PARTICIPATE IN COMBAT SPORTS; BUT IT IS ALSO ABOUT SIMPLE LACK OF AWARENESS OF THE IMPACT OF THE SPORT ON LIVES.

This can only be remedied through better gathering of data, better evaluation and transmission of that data in a format amenable to politicians, the public sector, and commissioners of services. The data currently does not exist because in general, boxing clubs (as other sports clubs) are bad at gathering it. Many boxing coaches went into boxing to get away from paper-heavy activities, some suggest there is a propensity for boxers to find administration and paperwork particularly difficult, and the aim of the club is boxing, not data gathering. Moreover, the major limitation facing clubs is that volunteers and paid coaches typically lack the time, expertise and financial resources to collect and interpret

data about their work. There is a need to empower these individuals to demonstrate their impact to enable them to access funding more easily.

To demonstrate impact requires information, and collecting relevant data is becoming less onerous through the development of technology. In this era of smart phones and tablets, it is increasingly easy to replace burdensome paperwork with much more accessible methods of capturing information.

'Upshot', which has been developed by the Football Foundation as a user-friendly monitoring and evaluation tool, is just one example of a system designed to go just this.



UPSHOT®

MANAGE | MONITOR | EVIDENCE

Upshot is an online monitoring and evaluation system developed by the Football Foundation. The software was created with the aim of allowing data to be captured without imposing a significant burden on the coaches and volunteers delivering programmes.

The software offers a range of tools to support the administration of community projects:

- **Management:** Users can keep track of participants, organise tasks and keep a diary.
- **Monitoring:** A dashboard allows targets to be automatically monitored and statistical reports to be generated easily and quickly.
- **Evaluation:** Users can create and analyse surveys, store evidence, generate maps of participants and produce written summaries of evidence.

Upshot has been developed for use by delivery and funding bodies both within and outside of the sport sector. It is currently used by over 100 organisations, including local authorities, universities and charities.

www.upshot.org.uk

2. PAYING THE BILLS

ANOTHER REASON MANY CLUBS ARE NOT INVESTING TIME, MONEY AND EFFORT IN DATA-GATHERING ACTIVITIES IS BECAUSE THEY ARE QUITE SIMPLY STRUGGLING TO PAY THE BILLS. AT A TIME OF CUTBACKS, MANY LOCAL AUTHORITIES ARE RAISING THE RENT ON PREMISES, AND WITH RISING FUEL BILLS, CLUBS WHICH ARE NOT ABLE TO CHARGE THEIR MEMBERS A HIGH FEE CAN STRUGGLE.

This is a tragedy. When the average club can cost just £25k per year to run, can train around 60 people, and save the State the inordinate costs of a young person going onto the criminal justice system, this is a priceless resource that we need to better exploit.

While generating evidence about the impact of boxing is important, so too is the provision of practical support when it comes to using that evidence to apply for funding. It was made clear to the inquiry that volunteers need a lot more help and guidance in this respect than they currently receive. The role of coaches is one of the most important aspects of boxing, and

therefore the last thing needed is their time being devoured by form-filling in the pursuit of external support. Furthermore, the point was made during the inquiry that the majority of boxing coaches are likely to have been attracted to sport precisely because it did not involve paperwork. Indeed, many come from disadvantaged backgrounds themselves and do not always have the skills to write complex bids or write up supporting evidence and calculations. To address this lack of resource and knowledge, all amateur clubs should have access to help and support in the form of a development officer. There are clubs whose leaders routinely struggle to complete paperwork and identify funding opportunities: having a person on the end of a phone who can offer advice and direction would be a huge boost in these circumstances.

The example of the Club Funding Officer initiative in Leicester demonstrates how valuable external support can be. We recommend that England Boxing should seek to extend this support by ensuring every club has access to a regional officer.

Contributors to this inquiry also highlighted problems with the external funding environment which serve to further limit the ability of volunteers to access funding easily. As the case of Broad Plain ABC illustrates, the funding landscape is difficult to navigate and unduly burdensome for clubs that rely on volunteers. From the point of view of an amateur club, there is a need for greater clarity and consistency across funding streams both in terms of the objectives of funding as well as the measurements used to assess impact. Organisations which offer funding should be sympathetic to the predicament of volunteer-led organisations, for example by engaging in person rather than relying on written applications.

¹⁷ For a detailed summary of the research see: Sport and Recreation (2012) Game of Life pp. 111-132.

¹⁸ Centre for Social Justice (2011) More Than A Game, p. 25.

¹⁹ CSJ/YouGov, cited in Centre for Social Justice (2011) More Than A Game, p. 40.

²⁰ Audit Commission (2009) Tired of Hanging Around, p. 3.

CLUB FUNDING OFFICERS

By Daniel Allen, England Boxing Club Support Officer

BOXING CLUBS ARE TRADITIONALLY RUN BY A COMMITTEE OF VOLUNTEERS, WHO DEDICATE THEIR SPARE TIME TO DEALING WITH THE DAY-TO-DAY TASKS REQUIRED TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO TAKE UP THE SPORT. IN THE VAST MAJORITY OF CASES, VOLUNTEERS TEND TO HAVE A PERSONAL CONNECTION TO THE CLUB, EITHER AS MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY OR AS RELATIVES OF MEMBERS. WHILE THESE INDIVIDUALS ARE THEREFORE USUALLY PASSIONATE, COMMITTED AND LOYAL, IT DOESN'T NECESSARILY MEAN THAT THEY HAVE ALL THE QUALIFICATIONS OR EXPERTISE REQUIRED DEVELOP THE CLUB. WITH THE MAJORITY OF VOLUNTEERS ALREADY STRETCHED TO FULL CAPACITY, AND OFTEN WITHOUT EXPERIENCE IN COMPLETING FUNDING APPLICATIONS, THE RESULT IS THAT CLUBS OFTEN FAIL TO FULFIL THEIR POTENTIAL.

This needn't be the end of the story, however. In the East Midlands a number of boxing clubs have benefitted from the support of Club Funding Officers – volunteers specialising in finding and writing bids for external funding with the support of a regional England Boxing officer. As a regional officer for England Boxing, I've been able to establish a network consisting of clubs, local authority representatives, a voluntary agency, the university and local colleges in order to find suitable candidates for this new role. The initiative is particularly suited to students, who are constantly assessed on their writing, research and critical analysis skills. Gaining a placement with a boxing club gives them a valuable opportunity to apply their knowledge in a practical setting, as well as boost their CV and employability. In return, boxing clubs benefit from the contribution of a proactive individual who is willing and able to go the extra mile to access much-needed funding.

Club Funding Officers have already made a difference in Leicester. The support offered by a Club Funding Officer when it comes to writing bids, interpreting eligibility criteria and obtaining relevant information from clubs has made a real difference. During the two-month pilot of the scheme, five out of the eight participating clubs were awarded funds totalling £7000 from Sported and the Central Social and Recreational Trust. This success has built confidence within the network and the intention is to expand the scheme even further, and I'm pleased to say we have been inundated by applications. For continued effectiveness, it's crucial that boxing clubs buy into the idea and offer their Club Funding Officer incentives, such as free membership and training opportunities. The coordinating role of the national governing body is also key, to ensure that all officers have the support they need.

BROAD PLAIN ABC

THE RIVERSIDE YOUTH PROJECT IS A VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION AND REGISTERED CHARITY BASED IN BRISTOL THAT ENCOURAGES YOUNG PEOPLE TO REACH THEIR POTENTIAL BY INVOLVING THEM IN SPORT AND EDUCATION PROJECTS. IT WAS SET UP BY DENNIS STINCHCOMBE MBE IN 1984 AND PROVIDES THE OPPORTUNITY TO GET INVOLVED WITH ACTIVITIES SUCH AS FOOTBALL, BASKETBALL, AND BOXING. THE BROAD PLAIN POLICE ABC, WHICH OPERATES AS PART OF THE PROJECT, IS THE WESTERN COUNTIES CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN BOXING, WITH OVER ONE HUNDRED YOUNG BOXERS AT ALL LEVELS, SOME OF WHOM HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO BOX ABROAD. UNDER DENNIS'S LEADERSHIP, THE CLUB HAS RECEIVED NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR THE POSITIVE IMPACT IT IS HAVING ON YOUNG PEOPLE FROM INNER-CITY AREAS OF BRISTOL WHO MIGHT OTHERWISE LACK DIRECTION AND FOCUS.

Despite the club's undoubted success, however, the funding outlook for the future is both

complicated and insecure. Dennis paints a bleak picture of the difficulties of applying for and acquiring funding, particularly for a small organisation such as Riverside. He spends many hours applying for different pots of funding, large and small – a process he describes as “a tedious and time consuming job” in that every application requires filling in reams of paperwork and most end up being unsuccessful anyway. Smaller projects like this one are at a huge disadvantage compared to larger charities, which can employ paid fundraisers and bid writers to organise and co-ordinate their applications. This is not a luxury that Broad Plain enjoys, and Dennis says that the club is forced to live month-to-month and is just keeping its head above water.

The funding problem doesn't just stop at the time spent filling in applications. Dennis also highlights the demanding requirements put upon the club on the rare occasions that a bid is successful. Clubs like Broad Plain have to deal with huge delays in actually receiving the funds, as funding organisations often require

further paperwork to be filled in to prove the worth of the money on the ground – this often necessitates lots of number crunching and recording of statistics before any funds will be released to the club. On numerous occasions over the last few years, delays like this have prevented Riverside from being able to pay their staff. This situation is further complicated by the fact that each funding stream requires different information, so organisers like Dennis spend even more hours on paperwork rather than doing what they want to do: running successful clubs.

The funding landscape is difficult enough given the current economic situation – Riverside has this year lost £68,000 due to funding changes and £10,000 for youth work from Bristol City Council. These funds were specifically used to target the most at risk young people in central Bristol, many of them truants, in care, or involved in crime and gangs. The difficulties of applying for, acquiring and sustaining funding mean that successful boxing clubs like Broad Plain face a constant battle to survive.

SO WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

- England Boxing should provide regional club funding managers to guide clubs to get funds.
- England Boxing and other sporting bodies should work with the voluntary sector to support the creation of a “simplicity kitemark” – that is, a recognised and certified level of simplicity for funding applications.

3. CLEVERER COMMISSIONING

THE FUNDING ENVIRONMENT ALSO OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES AS WELL AS CHALLENGES, AND THE PUBLIC SECTOR HAS A CRUCIAL ROLE TO PLAY IN THE WAY THAT IT PROMOTES THE POSITIVE ROLE THAT A SPORT LIKE BOXING CAN PLAY IN EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND COMMUNITY SAFETY. FOR EXAMPLE, THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION'S REFORM OF THE ALTERNATIVE PROVISION MARKET PRESENTS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR BOXING PROVIDERS TO BE COMMISSIONED BY SCHOOLS TO WORK WITH PUPILS WHO ARE AT RISK OF LEAVING THE EDUCATION SYSTEM – THE EXAMPLES OF THE BOXING ACADEMY AND FIGHT FOR PEACE SUGGEST THAT BOXING CAN MAKE A VERY EFFECTIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AND NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE EDUCATION WORLD TOWARDS A ROYAL COLLEGE OF TEACHING SHOULD FURTHER THE PROMOTION OF EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE.

Further opportunities lie in youth justice and offender rehabilitation, as well as in this Government's expressed desire to open up procurement and commissioning of services – the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012, for example, requires public authorities “to have regard to economic, social and environmental well-being in connection with public services contracts”²¹. Arguably, there has never been a better time for boxing and sport to engage with government bodies – it is now up to both sides to make it happen.

This does not mean to say that there are not significant limitations to the engagement between sport provision and the public sector, and there is certainly much more that the Government can do to promote the benefits of sport and achieve real results across the board in achieving better health outcomes, safer communities, lower crime, and greater discipline in schools and prisons. Parliamentary questions to the Home Office²², the Department of Health²³, the Department for Education²⁴, the Ministry of



Justice²⁵, and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport²⁶, all of which have an obvious stake in sport policy, show a lukewarm attitude to the benefits of boxing, with some positive statements about boxing but little, if any, initiative to back them up. On one level, this is not surprising, given the Government's welcome commitment to devolution of power to individual bodies (schools, Clinical Commissioning Groups, police forces etc.), but a negative knock-on effect of such decision making structures is that, too often, there is not a forum for sharing best practice.

At Haringey Boxing Club, its founder and club secretary, Gerry Willmott, is a serving police officer. Since 1999, the local youth offending team has been sending young people who are on bail to the club, if they express an interest in boxing. Whilst it is undoubtedly positive to see such relationships forged between clubs and local police and probation services, the legitimacy of clubs helping young offenders for free is questionable, especially when they represent much better value for money than many traditional interventions anyway.

Although there is still some way to go to enable smaller organisations to compete on an equal footing with large providers, even

now, sufficient data exists, and a sufficient number of users of boxing as a public service exist to be able to make a case to the public sector for commissioning purposes. Boxing, and sport as a whole, must become a lot better at presenting its case, and what it can offer, to public service commissioners, and professionals within those services.

Specifically, the blanket ban on violent offenders taking part in boxing programmes is a huge missed opportunity and should be reassessed.

SO WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

- England Boxing and other sporting bodies, as well as interested MPs, should make the case to date for boxing and sport straight to public sector commissioners and professional bodies e.g. medical Royal Colleges, Police and Crime Commissioners, Clinical Commissioning Groups etc.
- The Ministry of Justice and the National Offender Management Service should work with prisons, young offenders institutions, and England Boxing to encourage a wider rollout of non-contact boxing programmes for offenders. A limited pilot scheme offering non-contact boxing programmes to violent offenders should be initiated. This pilot should be rigorously monitored, and, if it proves to be demonstrably successful, rolled out gradually across criminal justice system.

²¹ Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/3/enacted>

²² PQ 169159 - <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmhansrd/cm130913/text/130913w0002.htm#13091339000696>

²³ PQ 169160 - <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmhansrd/cm130913/text/130913w0001.htm#13091339000633>

²⁴ PQ 169158 - <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmhansrd/cm130913/text/130913w0001.htm#13091339000613>

²⁵ PQ 161697 - <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmhansrd/cm130718/text/130718w0003.htm#13071896001128>

²⁶ 169161 - <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmhansrd/cm130913/text/130913w0001.htm#13091339000484>



4. SPORT AT THE CENTRE OF GOVERNMENT

ONE FURTHER PROBLEMATIC AREA SEEMS TO BE THE RESPECT IN WHICH THE MINISTER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR SPORT RESIDES IN DCMS RATHER THAN ACROSS THE OTHER DEPARTMENTS WITH A CLEAR INTEREST IN SPORT POLICY. IT MAY VERY WELL BE THAT A LACK OF CO-ORDINATION OF SPORT POLICY ACROSS GOVERNMENT IS HAMPERING THE WIDER AND MORE EFFECTIVE USE OF BOXING AND OTHER SPORTS AS DETAILED IN THIS REPORT. JUST AS THE SPORTING COMMUNITY NEEDS TO DO MORE TO ENGAGE WITH POLICYMAKERS AND FUNDING ORGANISATIONS, WE BELIEVE THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONSIDER THE EVIDENCE PRESENTED IN THIS REPORT AND ACTIVELY CONSIDER HOW AMATEUR BOXING CLUBS, AS WELL AS OTHER COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS, CAN BE MORE READILY ENGAGED AND SUPPORTED IN HELPING TO DELIVER POLICY OBJECTIVES SUCH AS IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND FOSTERING SAFER AND MORE COHESIVE COMMUNITIES.

An underlying reason why the benefits of boxing and other sports have not been fully exploited in the formation of public policy is because of the governmental structure, and tendency of departments to work in isolation – too often are MPs and other interested parties directed to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, instead of a potentially more relevant department. Sport and physical activity has a much wider role that is expressed through the last letter of DCMS, and this needs to be reflected across government.

With a minister responsible for sport in each of the relevant public service departments and the Minister for Sport acting as a government-wide champion for sport, the Government should aim for a cross-departmental approach to sport and physical activity. However, this is a notoriously difficult aim to achieve: many aspirational reports have pumped out this recommendation in the past, but it has not happened. This report suggests a less intimidating, and hopefully more realistic, incremental approach.

SO WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

- All government departments responsible for public services should designate one of their ministers as responsible for sport policy insofar as it pertains to that department. The Minister of Sport should work with them to encourage a more co-ordinated approach to sports policy.
- Each relevant department should conduct an audit of its physical activity and sport policy, detailing the impact of its policies on sport and physical activity, and the opportunities its policies create for using sport or physical activity as an intervention. These audits should be reported to the Minister for Sport and repeated on a regular basis, as determined by the Minister.
- In the longer term, it would be desirable to have the Government perform a sports impact assessment on all relevant policies, so that it can be publically acknowledged what affect government decisions have on sport and physical activity.



CONCLUSION

BOXING CAN BE A MECHANISM; 'THE RIGHT HOOK' FOR MANY OTHER SOCIAL INTERVENTIONS. IT IS ALSO MORE COST EFFECTIVE THAN MANY CURRENT ALTERNATIVES. SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE ALREADY EXISTS TO BACK THIS CLAIM UP.

In order to overcome both simple ignorance, and historical prejudice, the boxing world must do more to gather evidence of its impact. The Government needs to do more to structurally embed sport in its public services and their departments; and professional bodies, commissioners and local authorities need to do more to engage with boxing and sporting bodies to better exploit what sport, boxing and physical activity can do in realising their aims, with cleverer commissioning. Politicians, local authorities, and service commissioners may at times have to be brave and look at evidence, not popular or vocal opinion.

Evidence increasingly supports anecdote in showing that boxing can turn lives and communities around. Features of the sport such as the authoritative presence of coaches, the appeal of combat, the inherent focus on control, discipline and hard work, and the sociable environment of the gym all combine to make boxing a powerful tool to engage some of the hardest to reach individuals. Boxing is rarely given the recognition it deserves, however, and as a result clubs can find themselves struggling to obtain the support they need to continue making a contribution to their communities. In response this inquiry has considered some of the challenges that exist when it comes to demonstrating impact and navigating the external funding environment.

This inquiry has recommended that that local authorities and Members of Parliament seek to engage with organisations which are engaging with young people, and

have called on England Boxing to support evidence-gathering and ensure that every amateur club has support in the form of a regional funding officer. This report has underlined the importance of providing user-friendly monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to help volunteers demonstrate their impact, provided evidence of some mechanisms that currently exist and highlighted the challenges and opportunities that exist within the funding environment and in government sports policy.

In doing so, this report recognises and pays tribute to those individuals who make a difference to young people and communities through boxing, and hope that their admirable work will benefit from increasing support and profile, and a more energetic and pragmatic approach from government in harnessing the economic and social benefit they provide.

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The following Members of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Boxing served on the inquiry panel:

- Charlotte Leslie MP (Chair)
- Lord Addington
- Steve Barclay MP
- Kate Hoey MP
- Dr Phillip Lee MP
- Gerry Sutcliffe MP

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BOXING

The Right Hook