

Supporting Families Against Youth Crime



An evaluation of the Box Up Crime programme
in partnership with the London Borough of
Redbridge.

September 2021



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Box Up Crime attendees at a community boxing session at the Chapel Road site in Ilford.

Executive Summary

i2 media research limited was commissioned by The London Borough of Redbridge in September 2019 to conduct a qualitative evaluation of the Box Up Crime programme and their partnership with Redbridge.

After receiving a grant from the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government Redbridge has been working with families at risk of their children being drawn into gang affiliation and crime; they have been in partnership with the social enterprise Box Up Crime since January 2019.

The purpose of this evaluation is to:

- Understand the impact and value of the Box Up Crime programme as a preventative measure for young people becoming gang affiliated and involved in crime
- Identify attitudes and behaviours that may indicate the effectiveness of the programme in decreasing the risk of young people becoming gang affiliated and involved in crime
- Gain insight into the characteristics of the programme that make it effective

Following a hiatus due to Covid-19, between February and July 2021, i2 media research conducted a series of interviews and a short survey of 27 Box Up Crime attendees.

The broad interview findings were that:

Box Up Crime is a valuable resource for young people

They like the welcoming and friendly atmosphere, they have noticed positive changes in theirs and others' lives since attending Box Up Crime and they appreciate the supportive staff and young leaders.

The data collected from the survey showed similar sentiments: young people commented on the positive impact Box Up Crime has had on their lives.

56% of respondents said they would be taking part in a negative activity, including criminal activity, if it weren't for Box Up Crime.

When asked about their feelings since joining Box Up Crime

100% of the young people surveyed gave positive responses.

In comparison, when asked how they felt before joining Box Up Crime

68% of young people surveyed gave negative responses.

The Family Outcomes Survey data provided by Redbridge showed that

81% of families had an increased score by the end of the intervention

with the average score increasing by nine points.

These findings speak to the effectiveness of Box Up Crime and the family interventions in supporting young people and their families against being involved in crime.

Research background, aims and methods

Research Background

The Families Together Hub at the London Borough of Redbridge is leading an intervention which aims to target vulnerable children and young people (CYP) considered at risk of gang membership and crime.

With funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Redbridge has partnered with the social enterprise Box Up Crime to deliver this intervention to at least 100 families between 2019-2020. Through early intervention and voluntary engagement with Box Up Crime, children and young people are supported before the need for statutory service involvement.

i2 media research Ltd. based at Goldsmiths, University of London, has been commissioned by Redbridge to conduct a qualitative evaluation of Box Up Crime and its work with the borough's Family Intervention Team.

Research Aims & Methods

i2 media research have conducted exploratory research to:

- Better understand the potential **impact and value of the Box Up Crime programme** as a preventative measure for young people becoming gang affiliated and involved in crime
- Identify measurable **attitudes and behaviours that may indicate the effectiveness of the programme** in decreasing the risk of young people becoming gang affiliated and involved in crime
- Gain insight into the **characteristics of the programme that make it effective**, to inform best practice in implementing the service.

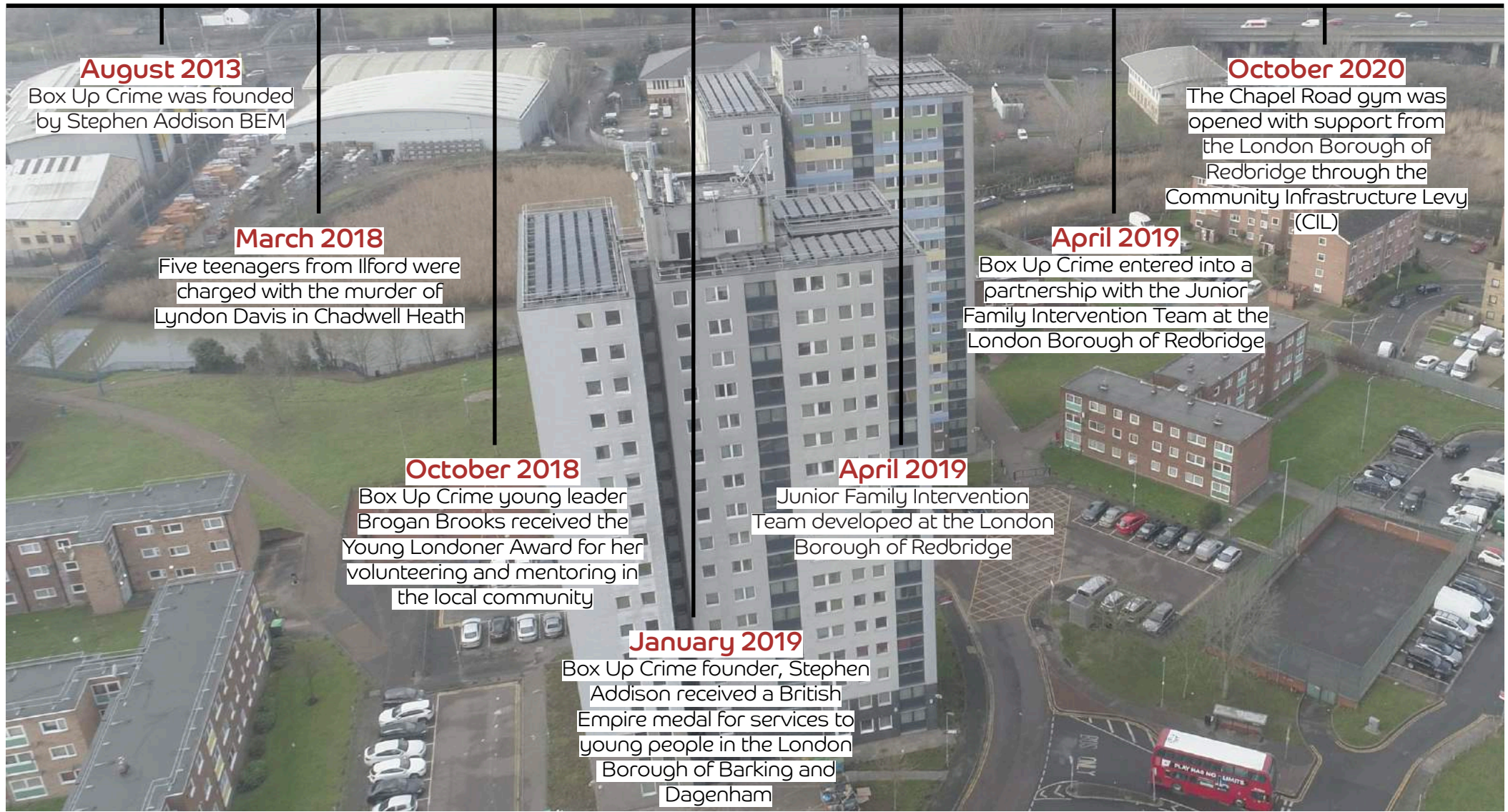
i2 media research have taken a mixed-methods approach to evaluating the impact of the programme. The primary methods used were qualitative: five interviews and a survey involving a sentence completion task were conducted. The data were thematically analysed to identify the recurring trends. Supplementary quantitative data has been provided by Redbridge and Box Up Crime to support the evaluation.

The research seeks to answer the following:

- Which outcome measures are considered most relevant and important in determining the 'effectiveness' of the project?
- What characteristics of the project are most/least engaging for young people, and why? How might these be improved?



Timeline - Box Up Crime in Redbridge



Introduction

Junior Family Intervention Team

The Junior Family Intervention Team (Junior FIT) at the London Borough of Redbridge started in April 2019. The aim was to reduce gang and serious youth crime by intervening during the early years of children's lives. The Junior Family Intervention Team provides intensive whole family support for children and young people vulnerable to sexual and criminal exploitation. Interventions are tailored to meet the specific needs of a child with the emphasis on encouraging them to engage in a diversionary activity. A team of one senior practitioner, 4 Junior FIT workers and 2 sessional workers provide support to young people and their families.

Referrals are accepted directly from schools or professionals through the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) offer, using the existing Families Together Referral Form and internally via the daily divert meetings with the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). The team work closely with schools, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and other internal statutory partners such as the Child Protection Assessment Team (CPAT). The team escalate safeguarding risks when appropriate.

The support requested from referrals has been diverse and included;

- Safety planning around self-harm/suicidal ideation and improving low self-esteem
- Interventions around behaviours that may lead to offending (managing emotions, actions & consequences, friendships & associations, substance misuse, risks of CCE/CSE, consent and healthy relationships, weapons awareness and victim awareness)
- Support around vulnerability to CCE/CSE, online safety, relationships and substance misuse
- Support around low school attendance
- Mentoring
- Improving/strengthening relationships between child and parent
- Positive activities (Box Up Crime, sports and fitness training)

Most of the support is delivered through 1 to 1 sessions which are tailored to meet the needs of the children/families. (Learning styles/SALT/neglect assessments as well as child/parent assessments are completed). Restorative Justice is offered and delivered to families/schools.

Since 2019 Junior FIT has been in partnership with Box Up Crime, a social enterprise which uses boxing as a medium to engage young people and deter them from crime and gang affiliation.

Data

Between 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2020 there were **200 referrals** to Junior FIT. Junior FIT worked with **221 families** with **353 children** in the financial year 2020/21 and completed **97 whole family assessments**. Junior FIT referrals over the last year have mainly come from; schools, CPAT diverts/step-downs, the police and healthcare services.

Introduction

Box Up Crime

Box Up Crime provide free boxing, mentoring and creative activities for young people, aged 7 to 18, who are considered at risk of gang membership and committing crime. The model is innovative, making use of pop up gyms to set up instantly in community areas such as schools, halls and town centres rather than traditional boxing gyms. Founded by an ex-gang member, Stephen Addison BEM in 2013, Box Up Crime are passionate about giving children and young people a way out of crime and gangs. Rebuilding Misguided Dreams, the Box Up Crime motto, is exemplified in their emphasis on young people being disciplined, focused and having a positive mindset in order to avoid criminal activity and raise their aspirations.

Box Up Crime also work with parents/carers and the local workforce to understand the dangers and risks surrounding gang crime in the area.

As well as avoiding criminal activity, the programmes offered at Box Up Crime are designed to build self-esteem and develop trust between the young people themselves, schools, police and their communities.

The following are services and programmes that Box Up Crime currently offer:

PROJECT ROADS

This project aims to provide **Real Opportunities Advice, Direction and Support**, through a 10 week mentoring programme where young people are able to go on a unique journey of self-discovery and are able to be mentored by a 'positive older' – a positive older role model. This programme is aimed at young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) or at risk of being NEET, and who may otherwise not be engaged in positive activities.

This is Box Up Crime's flagship programme which has been funded by the The Mayor of London's Young Londoner fund to run in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham.

BOX UP MENTORS & THE REAL ME

These two programmes are in partnership with schools, working with students at risk of exclusion to help tackle behavioural issues.

Box Up Crime have a large pool of mentors who are DBS checked, trained in conflict resolution, safeguarding and data protection. They are experienced in working with young people who are involved in or at risk of being involved in

criminal activity, serious youth violence or social isolation. The mentors have good knowledge of the issues facing young people in the local area and are aware of any potential opportunities. The mentors draw from their experience and have their own positive testimonies to share.

The Real Me mentoring programme takes young people between the ages of 11 and 18 on a journey of transformation over 10 weeks. Over the 10 weeks there are 18 specially crafted, co-created sessions which allow the young people to build core traits such as confidence, resilience and emotional intelligence.

DEVELOPMENT HUBS

Development hubs are creative spaces for young people to learn new skills, whilst evolving into positive leaders. Box Up Crime offer a wide range of extra-curricular activities (such as music production and t-shirt printing) in order to raise aspirations whilst exposing young people to new pathways.

COMMUNITY SESSIONS

Free community sessions are opportunities for young people to attend on a weekly basis and enjoy fun, motivational boxing sessions whilst receiving mentoring and guidance from positive role models who lead each session.

Recommendations

The key recommendations for Box Up Crime and the Junior Family Intervention Team at Redbridge are the following:

- The Junior Family Intervention Team should **continue to partner with Box Up Crime** as it's a much valued resource by over 1,000 young people in the borough
- **Additional space** would help young people achieve their boxing ambitions and help the project reach more young people in need
- **Additional funding** to scale up programmes where an increase in demand has been evidenced (e.g., community sessions)
- **Quantitative research** to establish which beneficial factors of Box Up Crime make the most difference to young people's lives
- **Mapping the Box Up Crime approach** so that other groups can adopt a similar model where there are young people at risk of engaging with gangs and criminal activity
- **A joined-up approach with other local councils** to share data, learnings and best practice on the Box Up Crime model – to see whether scale up in more communities could take place.

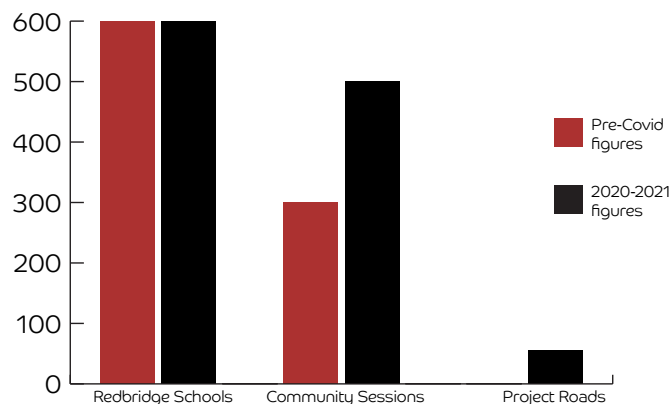


Box Up Crime Attendee Demographics

Attendance Figures

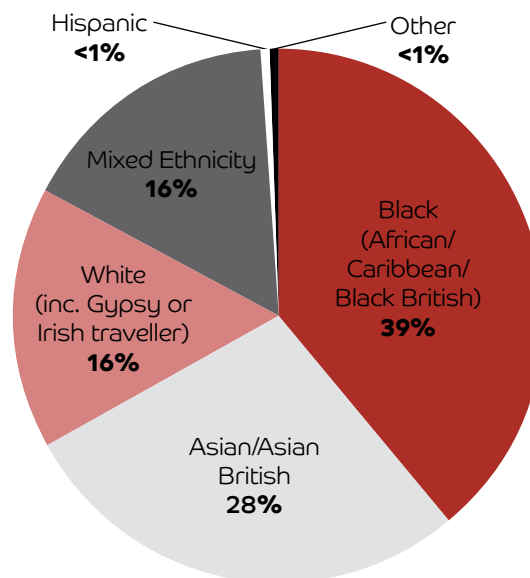
Prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic, Box Up Crime worked with around **900 young people** annually. The organisation reached **600** young people through work in Redbridge schools and **300** young people through the community sessions.

Currently, (between 2020 and 2021) Box Up Crime work with **1,155 young people**. The organisation still works with **600** young people through work in Redbridge schools, **500** young people through the community sessions, which is a **67% increase** on the pre-Covid figures and **55** young people through the newly created Project Roads programme.



Ethnicity

The pie chart below shows the ethnicity of attendees recorded by Box Up Crime.



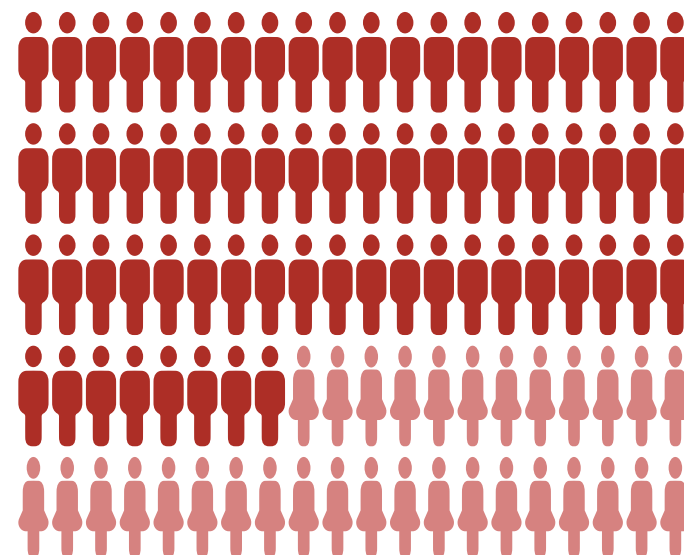
For comparison, below is the ethnic make-up of the London Borough of Redbridge.

Black (African/Caribbean/Black British) **8.8%**
Asian (inc. Asian British) **41.7%**
White (inc. Gypsy or Irish traveller) **42.6%**
Mixed Ethnicity **4.1%**
Hispanic **<1%**
Other **2.1%**

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2011

Gender

68% of Box Up Crime attendees are male and **32%** are female.



Family Outcomes Survey (FOS)

The Junior Family Intervention Team at Redbridge provided a number of family interventions between 2019 and 2020. These interventions were aimed at families with children who were vulnerable to being drawn into youth crime and gang affiliation.

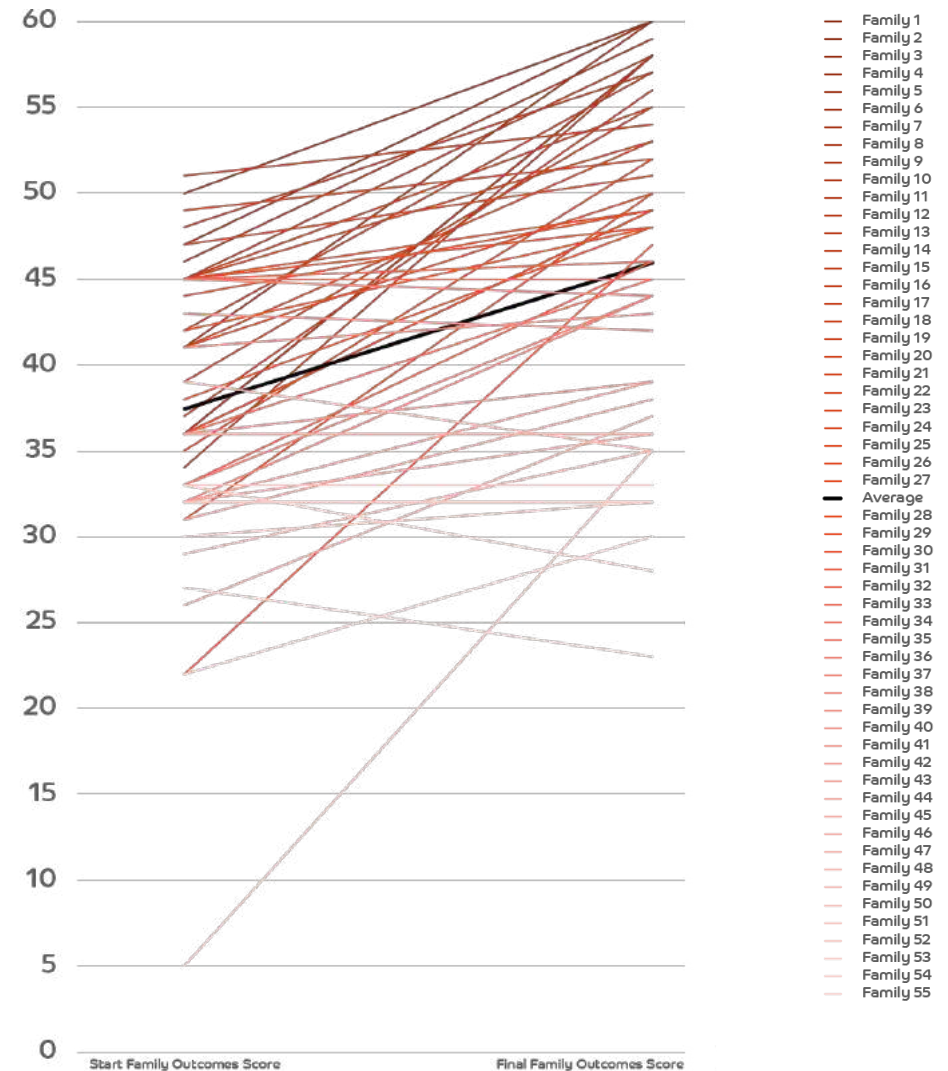
To measure the success of the interventions, Redbridge use the Family Outcomes Survey (part of the Common Assessment Framework) which is completed by parents at the start and end of the intervention. This identifies the strengths and needs of the family and support is provided to equip parents and carers to fully support their children.

A higher score indicates:

1. A better understanding of their child's strengths, needs, and abilities
2. A better understanding of their rights and better ability to advocate for their child
3. A better ability to help their child develop and learn
4. Having more support systems
5. Better knowledge of and access to services, programmes and activities in their community

On average, families scored **37** (ranging from 5 to 51) at the start, and **46** (ranging from 23 to 60) at the end of the intervention.

81% of families had an increased score by the end of the intervention. The average increase was 9 points.



Case Study

In February 2021 i2 media research conducted a 35-minute interview with a young person who has been involved with Box Up Crime for several years. During the interview, the young person was incredibly positive towards Box Up Crime, describing it as "an organisation of God's work" and saying that it's "transforming lives".

Throughout the interview, the young person explored themes such as personal development, wellbeing and positive thinking. Accepting a paid role as a young leader at Box Up Crime has enabled this person to change their lifestyle, stay out of trouble on the streets and become a positive role model to other local young people.

When asked about **what makes Box Up Crime good**, they described it as "fun" and having "everything that a young person needs" - a place where "relationships are built and pathways are opened". Both Box Up Crime locations have a range of facilities for young people. The premises on Chapel Road in Ilford have boxing facilities and the premises on Ripple Road in Barking have a music production studio, a classroom, and an in-house t-shirt printing space.

In terms of pathways being opened, the young person mentioned that they have aspirations of competing in the 2024 Paris Olympic Games. They were featured in a local newspaper for their equestrian achievements. Competing in the Olympics is something the young person wanted to do but didn't know how to do it. They said, "I didn't have that push behind me that Box Up gave me to do it", mentioning that they were not encouraged to pursue their dreams in any other contexts such as at school.

The other positive aspects of Box Up Crime described by the young person were:

The holistic approach to personal development and wellbeing

Regarding their attendance of the Box Up Crime gym the young person said that when they attend "you're not just doing boxing and you're not just changing your body, but you're changing your mind, physically, mentally, and financially. You're not spending money that you're not meant to spend, you're training" rather than "excessive eating" or "going outside and looking for things to do".

The culture of positive thinking and visualisation

The young person mentioned that at Box Up Crime they have learnt to "visualise greatness and what you visualise determines reality". Similarly, they said that "Box Up is showing you that there's an ending of light at every single tunnel" and that "it doesn't matter how dark the tunnel is. There's always a light".

The opportunity to be a young leader and mentor young people

The young person said, "I get to mentor young people, change young people's lives around from my past experiences and teach people the right pathway to go and show them that they're gonna be great".



Case Study

Comparatively, the young person had little to say about **what makes Box Up Crime difficult or challenging**. The main areas for improvement were:

Box Up Crime expanding their reach

The young person said that "Box Up needs to be everywhere" and that "it needs to be worldwide, but it needs to happen now because the world needs it now".

Box Up Crime being on film

The young person is keen for Box up Crime to be "captured on a camera" so "the world can see how people change their lives because actions speak louder than words". They advocated for video footage of people in various stages of personal development, "how they started and the end".

"I was doing things that I shouldn't have been doing. I changed my life round with Box Up. There's so many people that have changed their lives round with Box Up. Young people don't listen to their parents as much as they listen to their friends, if you were honest. And if you've got a friend that's showing you the best way in life, giving you wisdom, then I think that's the best thing that could happen really".

The young person commented on the positive changes for adults as well as for young people in Redbridge saying: "It's not just transforming young people's lives; it's transforming lives around because there's adults that come into the gym and there's young people that come into the gym".

"Every person that comes into Box Up has goals, and their goals are achieved at Box Up Crime".





Box Up Crime's young leaders at the Chapel Road site in Ilford.

Short Interviews

A series of short interviews were conducted by Box Up Crime staff in May 2021. Attendees shared their views on various aspects of Box Up Crime from first impressions to wider benefits of Box Up Crime on the local community.

As seen in the longer interview, all of the interviewees express positive sentiments towards Box Up Crime. The organisation is very credible with young people and have clearly paid attention to young people's needs. The interviewees confidently articulate the changes they've seen within themselves and others that they believe to be due to Box Up Crime.



First impressions

"It was like **good vibes, good energy**. It was nice to be around the people there."

"I just enjoyed the atmosphere, **the vibe, the friendliness of the people**...It was something that I really appreciated."

"I **was actually quite surprised** because I've actually never been part of something like this. Like, my first session was something that I really enjoyed."

"It came to my school when I was in year 8 and then I **actually got interested in it** so I went to their community sessions every Thursday and it was good."



Motivation to attend

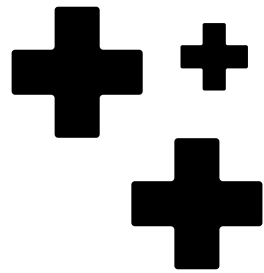
"Before I came to Box Up, I **was in a dark place**, I was in a very sticky situation and I was telling myself that

something's gotta change, I need something to happen in my life, something that I can be a part of, something to pull me away from the stuff that I was getting into and when Box Up hit, I was like yeah, this is the one, this is the place."

"I **wanted to change how my behaviour was at school** because it was very bad and I wanted to stop fighting so I thought I'd come to boxing to get my anger out."

"I **wanted to stop being idle**, stop wasting time doing what's not necessary."

Short Interviews



Personal benefits of attending

"I normally work out just to ease my mind, so when I

want to just calm down I just go to Box Up."

"I have more motivation and more confidence in life."

"It helps me focus and it gets my anger out."

"I've changed as a person, my grades at school have got higher and I've stopped fighting."

"I socialise a lot with other people, obviously I get my fitness up as well."

"I've noticed that I've been a lot more patient with people, I've been a lot more understanding. I've been taking a lot of things into consideration. I've realised that some things are very important and that I shouldn't take everything as a joke."



Wider benefits

"Some of the people that I go to school with, they come to Box Up too, before Box Up they were always getting in trouble, always getting into arguments, but now they're

always smiling, always making jokes, interacting with other people."

"Some people have stopped fighting that I know or even if I didn't know them, they've just stopped fighting or being bad in general."

"More people coming together, so, more people interacting with each other and everyone just getting along."



Learnings

"What I've learned is that there are many opportunities in life and if you don't take action, you're not gonna get what you want. So here at Box Up, I've learnt to grab

opportunities with both hands, so whenever I see something that may benefit me and benefit the others around me, I make sure I work to the hardest to try and grab this opportunity and make the most of it."

"To control myself and to think before I do actions."



Short Interviews



Praise for Box Up Crime

"Box Up, it pushes young people to become the best versions of themselves. It's a big thing, it's serious, it's not a joke. It's something that will benefit lots of people in the future."

"Everyone around, they're here to help you, they're very supportive, you're not on your own, everyone's here for you. It's just a friendly atmosphere, it's a good vibe, everyone's positive. You're just gonna feel welcome."

"Everything that happens in this place is special, from the boxing, from chilling with your friends, to life lessons that you learn here, it's just spectacular. It's top class."

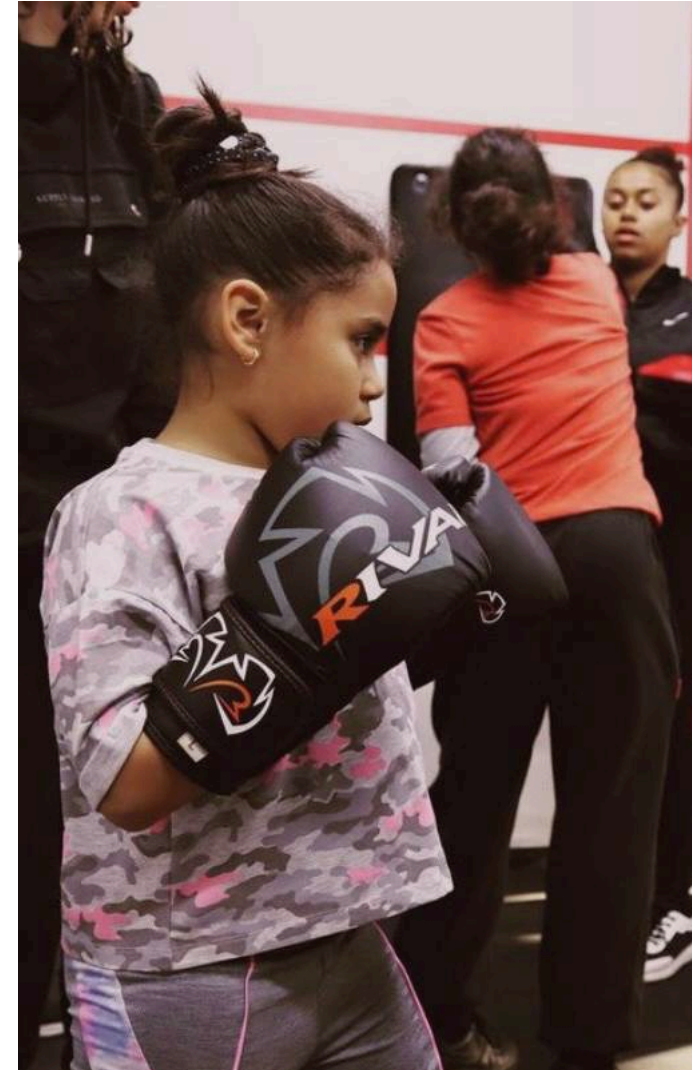
All of the young people interviewed found it difficult to name areas for improvement or challenges/difficulties they've encountered whilst attending Box Up Crime. Below are suggestions for improvement that were given.



Areas for improvement

"The amount of people in the space we're in, we're a bit too crowded so we can't really make the most of it."

"We need more locations."



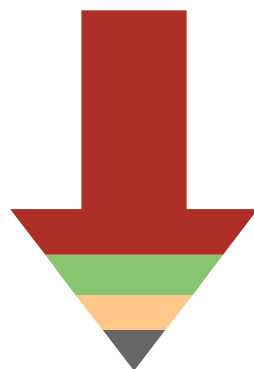
Survey Responses

In July 2021 a short six-question survey was conducted to understand young people's experiences of Box Up Crime. The survey was in the form of a sentence completion exercise and **respondents were able to write up to three responses per question**. 27 Box Up Crime attendees completed the survey.

The common themes throughout the survey were Box Up Crime having a positive effect on physical and mental health, Box Up Crime having a warm and welcoming atmosphere and more gym space being needed to improve the boxing experience overall.



Before I started at Box Up I felt...



When categorised into positive, negative and neutral,
68% of respondents gave a negative response, with the most common responses being:

1. Lacking in confidence
2. Anxious or nervous
3. Bored

11% of responses were positive, with respondents stating that they felt **good, happy or motivated** to join Box Up Crime.

10% of responses were neutral and the respondents said they felt as if they needed to improve general boxing, fitness or self defence skills.

The remainder of respondents responded with 'don't know' or didn't respond.

Now I've started at Box Up I feel...



In contrast, when asked about feelings since joining Box Up Crime

100% of respondents gave a positive response. and the most popular responses were:

1. Feeling fitter
2. Feeling happy
3. Feeling confident

Things I like about Box Up are...

The most popular aspect of Box Up Crime is the **positive atmosphere** with **63%** of respondents listing this as one of their three answers.

The second most popular aspect was the **staff** (including leaders and mentors) and **41%** listed this as one of their answers.

The third most popular aspect was Box Up Crime being **motivational** with **37%** listing this as one of their answers.

Survey Responses

Box Up would be better if...

Just under three quarters (74%) of respondents said that Box Up Crime would be better if there was more space.

The next most popular suggestion for improvement was if there was **more equipment**.

And the third most popular suggestion for improvement was **more sessions per week**.

At Box Up, I'd like more help with...

Almost all respondents (93%) said they would like more help with boxing technique.

The next most popular response was **nothing**.

And the third most popular response was **improving speed**.

If Box Up wasn't here, I'd be...

56% of respondents said they would be taking part in a negative activity, including criminal activity, if it weren't for Box Up Crime.

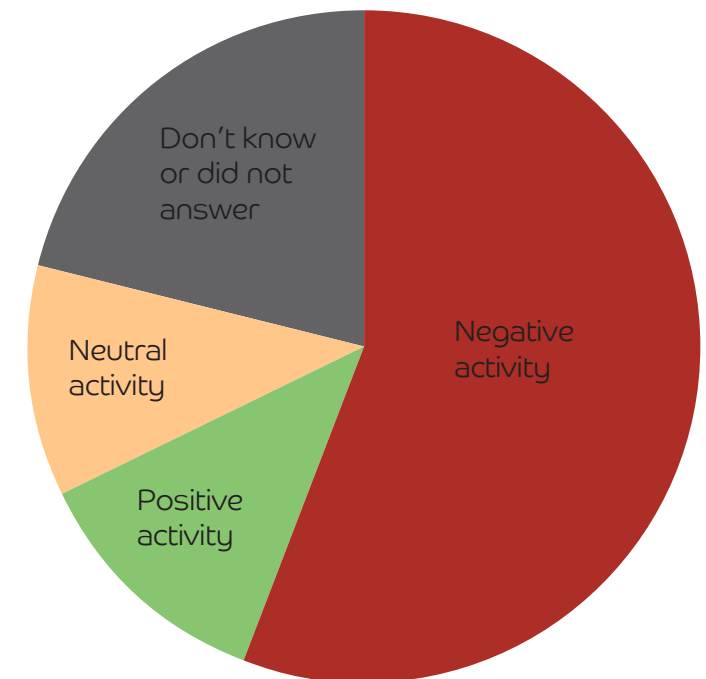
Respondents listed activities such as: **doing nothing at home, being in low spirits, not exercising and selling or using drugs**.

12% of respondents said they would be taking part in a positive activity such as playing another sport or looking for another emotional outlet.

11% of respondents said they would be taking part in a neutral activity such as using a digital device.

The remainder of respondents responded with 'don't know' or didn't respond.

A chart showing activities survey respondents would be taking part in if Box Up Crime didn't exist.



Conclusions

Box Up Crime has maintained its popularity in schools over the Covid-19 pandemic and the demand for community sessions has increased since Covid-19. This shows how much it is valued and needed by a growing number of young people and their families.

Box Up Crime is seen by young people as a contributing factor to their sustained positive progress in life rather than being engaged in a life of antisocial behaviour and potentially crime.

Box Up Crime in partnership with Junior FIT may be a positive contributing factor to higher FOS scores; although more data is needed to validate this.

Benefits to individuals

Box Up Crime contributes a range of benefits to individuals in terms of improving their mental and physical health, encouraging a positive outlook and raising aspirations.

Social support, particularly through mentoring and offering work opportunities, is a notable contributing factor in raising young people's aspirations, self-esteem and confidence.

Benefits to wider society

Young people appear to want to share their learnings and pass on their stories via peer-mentoring with other young people.

Box Up Crime creates a safe place for young people's development.

Although additional data is needed to validate this; the data collected in this evaluation are indicative of Box up crime being a contributing factor to young people achieving higher academic attainment, which in turn supports their ability to make a higher economic contribution to society longer-term. As stated in our recommendations a quantitative longitudinal analysis of Box Up Crime's impact on young people, is a necessary next step for scaling up the provision, gaining funder buy-in and validating its model.

