

EMPIRE  
FIGHTING  
CHANCE

# FIGHTING FOR WHAT MATTERS

Our impact in 2024





**In particularly dark days of my family's lives, you provided a safe welcoming space that became the highlight of the week. I sat in the waiting room many times almost moved to tears watching the positive interactions between staff and young people. Seeing young people come out of sessions looking inches taller as their confidence grew. At the end of my son's sessions, he has changed his attitude to so many things. He feels he can do well at school, his mood has improved massively, and he is less anxious. School have fed back on all the positive changes, including his improved grades. Empire and all people who make it possible have felt nothing less than lifesaving to us as a family. We will never forget you and how you helped us.**

Mum of Oscar, 17



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# INTRODUCTION

2024 marked the 10th year of Empire Fighting Chance the charity. We have come a long way in the past decade. In 2014 we ran a small boxing project for our local community out of a spit and sawdust gym with a crumbling ceiling. Now, our boxing programmes reach over 10,000 young people in over 40 places across the UK. Despite our growth, we have never lost sight of who we are and what matters to us most. This was plain to see this past year in our drive to improve our work and give even more young people a fighting chance to realise their unique potential.

We did not celebrate our 10-year anniversary. Although we are proud of the past, our focus during 2024 was fixed on the present. We needed to step up our game to respond to the increasing numbers of young people in need of our support in Bristol and beyond. At the start of the year, we launched our Game Plan, which sets out five priorities to guide our efforts to transform our impact over the next few years.

In 2024 our focus was on our most important priority - to establish a global Centre of Excellence in Bristol. We ran knowledge exchanges to identify best practice nationally and globally, improved all of our boxing programmes, launched new projects and strengthened the expertise of our delivery team.

We don't want to be needed in another 10 years. Our city and country can stop young people needing to come to organisations like us. During the year we fought to catalyse change, including the creation of an independent office to lead Bristol's efforts to tackle youth violence. We also grew our national movement fighting the same fight. Forty boxing clubs and other organisations are now delivering our work across the UK.

We are grateful to everyone who has helped us during the past 10 years. We would not have got here without you. We hope that you enjoy reading our story of 2024.



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## WHO WE ARE

Empire Fighting Chance was born on Bristol's streets to fight the destructive impact of inequality on the lives of young people. Arising from the renowned Empire Amateur Boxing Club in inner-city Bristol, we have grown to become a leading Sport for Development charity. We use the power of boxing to give young people knocked down by life a fighting chance to rise up and realise their unique potential.

## WHO WE SUPPORT

We exist for young people who experience social and economic inequality. Despite the extraordinarily difficult circumstances they can face, we have yet to meet a young person without the potential to build a better future. But many get stuck. We target those who engage in destructive behaviours, such as disruptive behaviour in school, gang membership and substance misuse. Feeling excluded from mainstream services, young people don't get the support they need and are pushed into the Youth Justice System.

## WHAT WE DO

We have developed an alternative way of working with young people. We use a powerful combination of boxing and intensive, psychologically informed personal support, delivered by someone the young person trusts and who is fighting in their corner. Young people gain support in a way that's enjoyable and feels safe, encouraging them to turn up, engage and go on to make positive changes to their lives.

We use our model to:

- **Deliver:** we design and deliver programmes for young people that combine boxing and psychology.
- **Train:** we share our work with other organisations so they can deliver it in their local communities.
- **Fight:** we take what we learn from our work to inspire systemic changes that improve young lives.

We have developed four boxing programmes:

- **Box Champions:** boxing combined with mentoring delivered by a youth worker.
- **Box Therapy:** boxing combined with a therapeutic intervention delivered by a therapist.

- **Box Careers:** boxing combined with careers coaching and opportunities to gain skills and employment.
- **Box Juniors:** boxing sessions throughout the week, open to all young people.

## OUR IMPACT

We reach over 10,000 young people each year across the UK. Our work unlocks young people's resilience to overcome their challenging life experiences. Young people develop two superpowers so they can move forward with their lives – self-belief and emotional awareness. Young people harness these to improve their mental health, reduce their involvement in destructive behaviours, engage better with education and progress into employment.



**Empire has been there for my son and family through the worst year of our lives. My son started the programme avoiding school, with a diagnosis of anxiety, and was very low in mood. He was hanging around with some kids I was concerned about. I felt so afraid for him. Boxing and (coach) Marcus gave him self-belief and hope. He now believes he holds power over his future. His school attendance is now 96% and he has started to try and enjoy his classes. Please always remember what you mean to us. We will never forget you.**

Parent of Ashton, 14



# HOW WE PACK A POWERFUL PUNCH

On the face of it, our work is based on a simple concept. Young people box while talking to a trained professional to gain support to improve their lives. But there is far more to Empire Fighting Chance than meets the eye. We mix six magic ingredients together to create an effective and scalable model for transforming young people's lives.

**“**  
**I can just forget about my life outside and just punch.**  
**”**  
Amal, 14

**“**  
**I struggle being around people, but not here.**  
**”**  
Emma, 15

**“**  
**It feels like I have a family that really genuinely care about me.**  
**”**  
Angelica, 21

**IN AND OF THE COMMUNITY**

- Born and bred in the community
- Physical presence in the community
- Leadership and staff representative of the community

**AUTHENTIC AND CREDIBLE BOXING**

- High-quality boxing training to be attractive to young people
- Mental and physical health benefits of boxing
- Use of boxing to build trust and share psychology

**PSYCHOLOGICALLY INFORMED**

- Trusted relationship with a young person
- Physical and emotional safety
- Use of relevant and evidence-based psychology

**IN THEIR CORNER**

- Unconditional support for young people
- Positive image of young people
- Platforms for youth leadership within and beyond Empire

**CONNECTIONS AND INTELLIGENCE**

- Wide range of routes into and out of Empire
- Intelligence from our work and streets to drive continuous improvement
- Strong relationships with families of young people

**ENTREPRENEURIAL AND ADAPTABLE**

- Responsive to meet the changing needs of young people
- Sources of income that give us flexibility to do work we believe in
- Calculated risks to overcome complex issues

# TEN YEARS OF IMPACT

# 47,576

young people reached over 10 years



## 2014

Empire Fighting Chance charity is formed



## 2015

Move into The Mill in Easton



## 2016

Start working in South Wales



## 2017

Launch of Box Careers



## 2018

Launch of Box Therapy



## 2019

Harry and Meghan, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, visit The Mill



## 2021

Partnership with England Boxing begins to share Empire's work with boxing clubs



## 2020

Empire fights back against the Covid-19 pandemic, doing whatever it takes to support young people



## 2022

October Club raises £820,000 for Empire in one evening



## 2023

Empire joins the Peace in our Cities global violence prevention network



## 2024

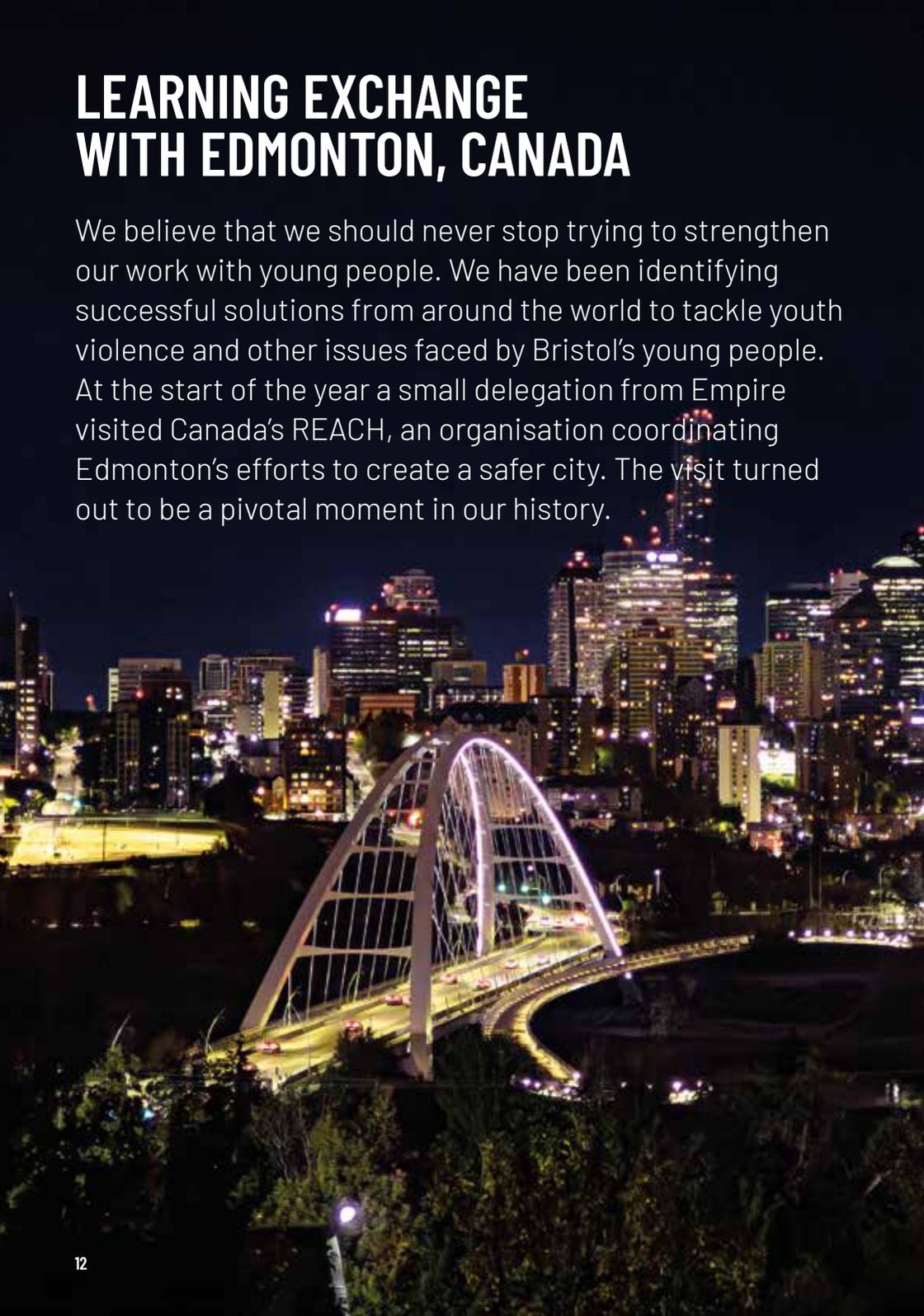
Partnership with Matchroom Boxing begins to support 100 boxing clubs

THE STORY CONTINUES



# LEARNING EXCHANGE WITH EDMONTON, CANADA

We believe that we should never stop trying to strengthen our work with young people. We have been identifying successful solutions from around the world to tackle youth violence and other issues faced by Bristol's young people. At the start of the year a small delegation from Empire visited Canada's REACH, an organisation coordinating Edmonton's efforts to create a safer city. The visit turned out to be a pivotal moment in our history.



## VISIT TO EDMONTON

REACH Edmonton is recognised as a world-class Office of Violence Prevention – a body that leads and coordinates a city's efforts to reduce violence. During five jam-packed days we held meetings with REACH's staff, visited organisations working to improve community safety, participated in workshops to exchange learning and met with Edmonton's Mayor and Chief of Police.

## TWO TAKEAWAYS

1. Everything we saw and heard in Edmonton reinforced our belief that an independent coordinating body could be game-changing for Bristol's efforts to reduce youth violence.
2. Our work is now ready to be shared with other cities outside of the UK. Multiple organisations across Edmonton expressed an interest in adapting our work for their communities.

## GOING GLOBAL

Later in the year we hosted the CEO of REACH Edmonton, Jan Fox, to showcase our work in Bristol and help us to advocate for our city to create an Office of Violence Prevention. During Jan's visit we agreed that Empire Fighting Chance and REACH would collaborate to bring our work to Edmonton through training organisations from across the city. Empire is going global in 2025.



**Empire Fighting Chance are one of the best organisations we have partnered with. We have had great value in our knowledge exchange. They have expertise in working with youth to help them exit gang life or avoid it entirely. They understand the value of wraparound programming customised to the context of each young person. This expertise would help us expand our ability to offer proactive support to Edmonton's most vulnerable youth. We are confident that their programmes could have a huge impact across our city.**

Jan Fox, REACH Edmonton, Canada



# INNOVATION FOR IMPACT

We must keep evolving to keep up with young people's changing needs. This year we launched two new projects. Like all of our work, both were built upon boxing and psychologically informed support. We thank local funders Medlock Charitable Trust and the Commissioner's Crime Prevention Fund for funding our innovation.

## PROJECT 38

We piloted an intensive project offering wraparound support for individuals involved in or at high risk of involvement in gangs. Empire's Violence Reduction Consultant performed the role of 'Violence Interrupter', a role used in gang programmes across the world. He picked up individuals from their neighbourhoods and took them to our gym up to six times a week. He mentored them, drawing on his lived experience of gangs, and connected them to a range of other support, including Box Champions, career opportunities and practical life skills such as healthy eating.

**36** young people participated in Project 38

**11** young people moved into employment, education or training

## TOMMY'S EMPIRE EXPERIENCE

Tommy, 20, was on the periphery of a gang and had been assaulted by an older gang member for not avenging the death of his friend, who had been murdered on the streets. Tommy expressed a passion for cooking and a dream to be a Michelin star chef. We helped Tommy to access the 'How to be a Chef' programme run by Square Food Foundation. Tommy is now in full-time employment as a chef.

# BOX LEADERS

We piloted a new boxing and leadership programme for young people. We used boxing to bring to life leadership skills such as decision making and integrity and give young people an opportunity to practise them in a way that felt enjoyable and safe. The project culminated in young people using what they learned to design and lead their own boxing sessions. They further developed their leadership skills through a project of their choice that had social value. Projects included a fitness class for the local community, volunteering for WaterAid at the Glastonbury Festival and helping us run our school holiday programme.

**24** young people participated in Box Leaders

**8** young people secured employment or work experience

**“My time on Box Leaders was truly empowering. From lacking in personal confidence when I started, to building my skills toolbox to the point where I feel confident about running my own boxing session! The skills and qualities I have gained have helped me across all aspects of my life. Box Leaders was exceptionally useful for my own personal development and has given me a new sense of confidence.”**

Mariella Miller-Davies, 19



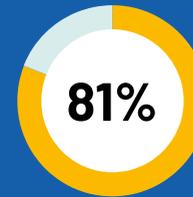
# BOX CHAMPIONS

## HOW IT WORKS:

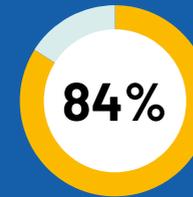
A coach trains young people to box while mentoring them. Coaches draw on boxing drills, games and metaphors to share Empire's psychological principles for healthy thinking and positive action.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2024

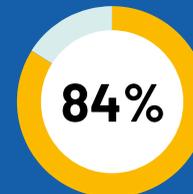
- Piloted a playful version of Box Champions for 8-11-year-olds to unlock their resilience through fun boxing games.
- Stepped up our outreach work, delivering Box Champions in communities across Bristol.
- Introduced clinical supervision for all coaches to improve their practice and the quality of our work.



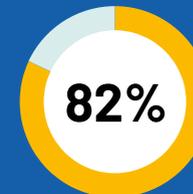
felt more resilient



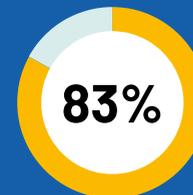
stopped getting into trouble



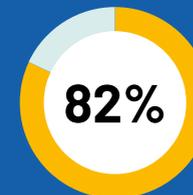
are more confident



felt better about themselves



feel more able to achieve their goals



are more motivated

**In 2024...**

1,678 young people participated in Box Champions.

“

I used to think I couldn't do things, but now I think I can.

Kian, 12

”

“

Titus (our coach) made her feel so important. He remembered things they had talked about and things she liked. He also made her believe in herself and encouraged her to push herself.

Mum of Chloe, 14

”



**“My son has major trust issues and struggles to do anything without me or his dad with him. Elaine (Box Therapist) worked so hard to build up a trusted relationship with him and this has shown him that when in the right environment he can achieve anything.”**

Mum of Mason, 9

# BOX THERAPY



enjoyed  
Box  
Therapy



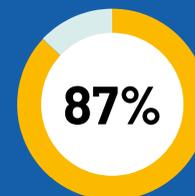
improved  
their mental  
wellbeing

**In 2024...**  
329 young people participated in Box Therapy.

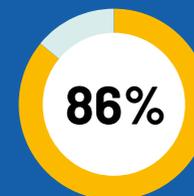
## HOW IT WORKS:

A young person and a therapist use boxing to build a trusted alliance and as a therapeutic tool and means of communication.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2024

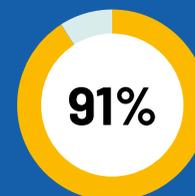


felt more likely  
to achieve their  
goals

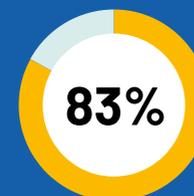


felt  
more  
confident

- Refined our Box Therapy approach by focusing on the unique benefits that boxing brings to therapy, such as overcoming the power dynamic normally at play.
- Successfully piloted Box Therapy training with therapists nationwide, which shared our knowledge of delivering Box Therapy.
- Broadened the skills within our Box Therapy Team and developed a more robust induction to give new therapists time to develop their boxing skills and personalise their approach.



felt  
calmer



felt more  
resilient

“

It's not like other career support I've had where I've been pushed towards certain careers. My coach has given me lots of different opportunities to look at and explore, but always supports me in thinking about what I want to do for a career.

Mikal, 21

”



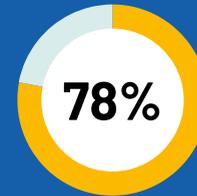
# BOX CAREERS



**64** individuals earned one or more qualifications through us



**65** individuals progressed into employment, training or further education



felt more informed about their career choices

## In 2024...

**153** young people participated in Box Careers.

### HOW IT WORKS:

During boxing sessions, a young person receives career coaching to unlock their resilience and develop a career pathway. Young people are then offered opportunities to develop skills and progress towards employment.

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2024

- Worked with multiple local companies to provide opportunities for young people, including Boston Tea Party, Dick Lovett, Extract Coffee, Foot Anstey and Turner and Townsend.
- Offered City of Bristol College and other local colleges an alternative to mainstream careers support for their students.
- Collaborated with Square Food Foundation to give young people qualifications to work in the food industry.

# THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

In 2024 we reached

**10,435** young people

We supported

**3,170** young people ourselves

We trained boxing clubs and sport and youth services to support

**7,265** young people

## OUR REACH

### DIRECT DELIVERY SITES

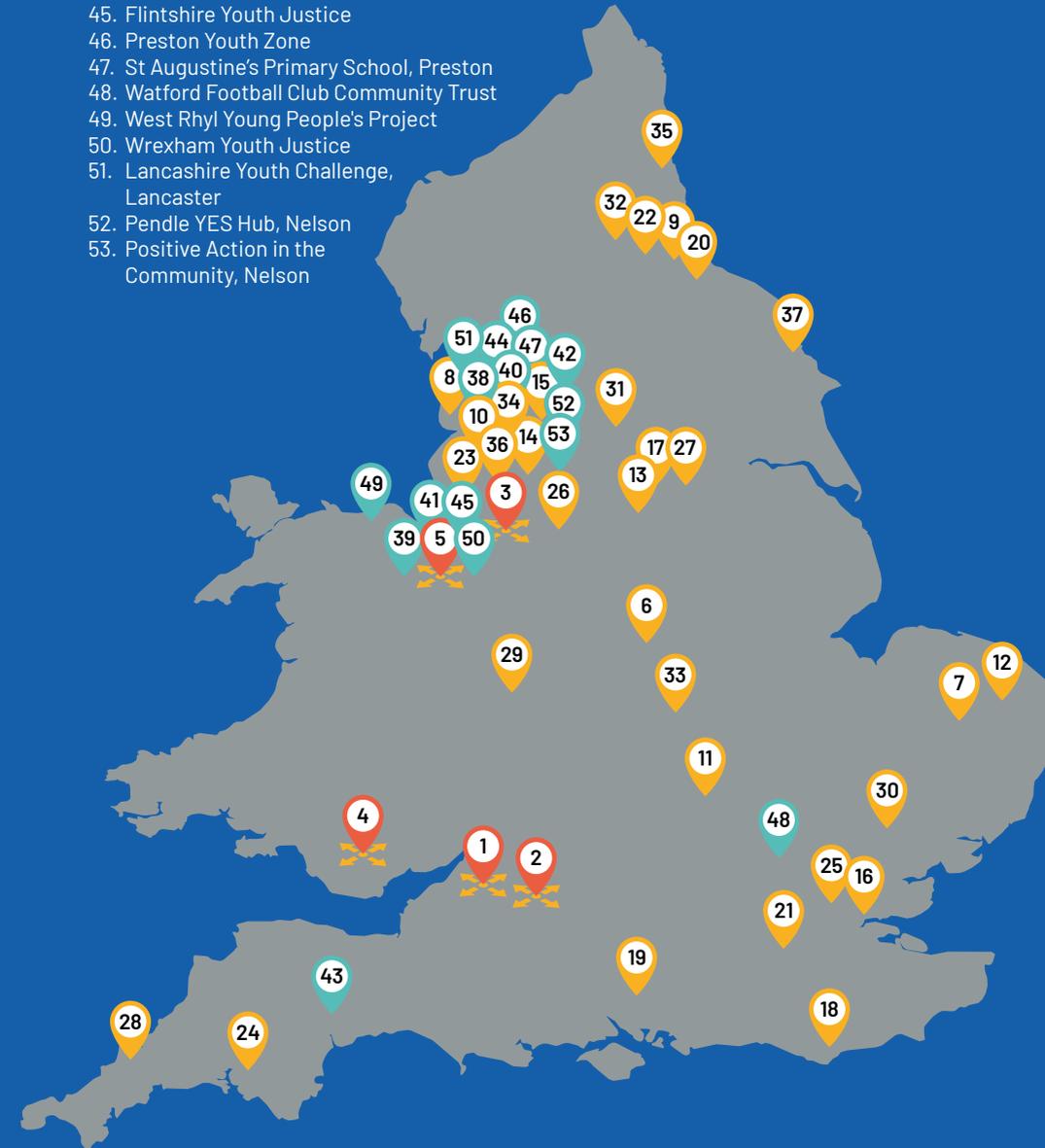
1. Bristol
2. Bath & Somerset
3. Cheshire
4. South Wales
5. Wrexham

### BOXING CLUBS

6. Atlas Boxing and Fitness Club, Leicester
7. Attleborough Boxing Club, Norfolk
8. All Champs, Lancaster
9. Billingham Boxing Academy, Teesside
10. Birch Green Boxing Club, Skelmersdale
11. Bletchley Boxing Community Hub
12. Broadside Warriors, Norwich
13. Brendan Ingle Foundation, Sheffield
14. Collyhurst and Moston Amateur Boxing Club, Greater Manchester
15. Clayton Amateur Boxing Club, Accrington
16. Dagenham Amateur Boxing Club, East London
17. Dinnington Community Boxing Club, Rotherham
18. Eastbourne Boxing Club, Suffolk
19. Eastleigh Amateur Boxing Club, Hampshire
20. East Middlesbrough Amateur Boxing Club, Middlesbrough
21. Epsom Boxing Academy, Surrey
22. Fight Fitness Guru, County Durham
23. Lee Jones Amateur Boxing Club, Liverpool
24. Legends Boxing Gym, Plymouth
25. Limehouse Boxing Academy, London
26. Macclesfield Boxing Club, Macclesfield
27. Millennium Amateur Boxing Club, Rotherham
28. Newquay Boxing Academy, Newquay
29. Priory Park Boxing Club, Dudley
30. Rayne Boxing Club, Essex
31. Sanctus Fitness and Boxing Gym, Bradford
32. Seconds Out Boxing Academy, County Durham
33. Team Shoe-Box, Northampton
34. Technique Boxing Club, Blackburn
35. Tyneside Boxing Club, Tyneside
36. Wildcard Boxing Club, St Helens
37. Westway Boxing Club, Scarborough

### YOUTH AND SPORT PARTNERS

38. Active Lancashire
39. Active Wrexham
40. Archbishop Secondary School, Preston
41. Aura Sports Development
42. Creative Football, Blackburn
43. Exeter City Football Club
44. The Foxton Centre
45. Flintshire Youth Justice
46. Preston Youth Zone
47. St Augustine's Primary School, Preston
48. Watford Football Club Community Trust
49. West Rhyl Young People's Project
50. Wrexham Youth Justice
51. Lancashire Youth Challenge, Lancaster
52. Pendle YES Hub, Nelson
53. Positive Action in the Community, Nelson



# YOUNG PEOPLE'S STORIES



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# ANTONIO'S STORY

**Antonio, 15, experienced significant trauma from witnessing repeated incidents of domestic violence in his early years and being placed into care. After moving back home with his mum and stepdad, he had become involved with a gang who encouraged him to act violently towards others. At school, his aggressive behaviour had led to multiple fixed-term exclusions. After being arrested for a violent outburst, Antonio was on a final warning with the police before he faced entering the criminal justice system.**

When Antonio first started Box Champions, he engaged well with our boxing exercises but refused to talk to our coach Courtney about anything other than boxing technique. As Antonio's relationship with Courtney grew, he started to open up. He discussed the feeling of belonging that gang involvement gave him and confessed to carrying a knife to feel safer and stronger than those around him. We helped him to recognise that he was out of his depth and that he needed to remove himself from the gang.

We encouraged Antonio to identify his abilities and hobbies that made him happy. He shared that music and writing rap verses were things he was good at. Antonio began to write music as an outlet to talk about his life and inspire other young people. Antonio felt comfortable enough to share a rap he had written about a friend who had been stabbed and killed.

Antonio left the gang and started attending school more regularly. He had a more positive relationship with his mum and began speaking to her about what he had experienced.

**“ I love being able to talk about my feelings with my coach and being able to let my frustration out on the punch bags instead of bottling it up. ”**

Antonio

# JORDAN'S STORY

**Jordan, 20, had received a scholarship to a prestigious local college but fell into a cycle of drug dealing to keep up with his affluent classmates. His addiction to the drugs that he'd been dealing, cocaine and ketamine, forced him to drop out and be admitted to rehab. He began suffering from depression and his relationships with family and friends broke down. Unemployed, and fresh from rehab, he felt he was in a negative spiral with no way to move forward with his life.**

After he joined Box Careers, our coach Chris started working with Jordan to build belief in himself to overcome the challenges that he was facing. By improving his boxing technique and fitness, Jordan started believing in his abilities. We explored with Jordan the Empire Principle of Growth Mindset – that we can all develop over time, no matter what our past experiences have been.

As Jordan's confidence improved, he began to take part in various careers activities. We helped him create a CV and he visited Bristol Bears Rugby and local car dealer Dick Lovett. Impressed with his attitude, Dick Lovett invited Jordan back for work experience.

Jordan now felt that he was ready for employment. With Chris's support, he started applying for jobs. His application for a role in sales and training was successful, and Jordan secured his first job.

**“ Empire has helped me to get back on my feet by motivating me to get a job and to have regular exercise. It has also helped me with challenges in my personal life, by having a way to deal with your emotions through boxing and having someone to talk to. ”**

Jordan

## KORA'S STORY

**Kora, 15, was experiencing anxiety and anger and at risk of exclusion from school. Kora had stopped participating in sports and started to express her negative emotions in destructive ways, such as violent fights. There was concern that Kora's escalating behaviour would quickly lead to a criminal record.**

Kora joined Box Therapy. Initially, she felt uncomfortable discussing what was going on for her with our therapist Hannah. But using boxing to build trust, Kora started opening up. She described her life as having little value, which was what had caused her to start engaging in antisocial behaviour and vandalism. She had been labelled the 'naughty kid' at school and was using that to justify her behaviour.

Kora enjoyed the physical activities. Her boxing technique improved significantly over the 12 weeks. Noticing this made her proud of her achievement, and she started recognising her strengths. Kora used the space to release her emotions and to become more aware of them. She used what she had learned outside the gym. Now when she was feeling angry and frustrated, she chose to walk away rather than lash out.

By the end of her time with Empire, Kora was feeling happier and more confident, resilient and positive about her future. She was attending school more regularly, had stopped getting into trouble and had improved relationships with her family and teachers.

“

**It gets my anger out, and I like just being able to talk. It's helped me not fight any more.**

Kora

”

## NICCO'S STORY

**Nicco was referred to us after he brought a knife into school, leading to him being questioned by the police. Along with violent outbursts towards his family and friends, Nicco had overdosed twice recently. Having been diagnosed with ADHD and anxiety, Nicco had previously been excluded from school. There was no other support available to Nicco, and he felt that there was no way out.**

Nicco joined Box Champions and was paired with our coach Matt. Boxing was the perfect outlet for his extreme outbursts, with Nicco using the training and discipline to channel his aggression. Matt helped him to recognise that, if he relaxed while he was doing the exercises, the decisions he would make under pressure would be better. Together, they worked through how Nicco could apply this to his violent outbursts.

Matt helped Nicco to recognise that there was nothing wrong with the negative emotions that he was experiencing. The weight lifted from his shoulders, as Nicco had thought there was something very wrong with him. Nicco then started to grasp the benefits of waiting for his moods to pass before reacting. Nicco would proudly share with his coach how he was reacting more positively to challenging situations.

By the end of his programme, Nicco felt less anger about situations happening in his life and more confident in himself and in handling challenges. In his last session, Nicco told Matt that 'I'm much calmer, and I haven't had any angry outbursts in ages. Life at home has got much better because of it.'

“

**He has gone from being involved in two knife incidents, and two overdoses, to no incidents. He is 100% less violent. He went from having such bad social anxiety he couldn't leave the house, to loving exercise and being part of a group. He attended Empire's holiday sessions and met young people with similar stories, and he's flourished. Nothing worked for him until Empire. To see our child before and to now see the difference in him is remarkable.**

Nicco's mum

”

# BUILDING A NATIONAL MOVEMENT

We are growing a movement of organisations fighting the same fight. This year we trained another 10 organisations and 48 individuals to deliver our work in their local area. We prioritise boxing clubs as they are often in the heart of communities experiencing inequality and offer the perfect home for our boxing programmes. Working alongside England Boxing, we have supported 32 clubs across all nine regions of the country. Since 2022 boxing clubs have raised over £2.5m to deliver social programmes locally. Here we share the story of one of our outstanding partners, DC Boxing from South Yorkshire.

## OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH DC BOXING

DC Boxing was one of the first clubs on our two-day orientation programme at our gym in 2022. Since then, we have offered DC Boxing training for staff to deliver Box Champions in their local area as well as ongoing support for the club to put down robust foundations so that their social programmes can reach their full potential. This has included helping DC Boxing to develop a sustainable business model and to understand and report on the impact of their programmes on young people's lives.



## DC BOXING'S BIG ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2024

- Achieved charitable status
- Became an England Boxing Amateur Club
- Opened a boxing gym in Dinnington High School to deliver Box Champions
- Worked in **12** schools and pupil referral units
- Supported **6,000** young people
- Secured over **£30,000** in funding through school sales



**The impact that the relationship with Empire has had on DC Boxing has been huge. The partnership has helped us to take our organisation to the next level. The success of Box Champions propelled our schools programme. DC Boxing is now not only surviving but growing sustainably and moving in the direction that we want to take it – to be leading in boxing fitness alternative provision in northern England.**

Ian Huddleston, CEO of DC Boxing



# PARTNERSHIP WITH MATCHROOM BOXING

In October 2024 Empire Fighting Chance agreed a groundbreaking major partnership with global sports promoter Matchroom Boxing. Our partnership will support 100 amateur boxing clubs across the UK over the next three years. Thanks to a sizeable six-figure contribution, courtesy of the Matchroom Charitable Foundation, we will, together, change the lives of thousands of young people across the country.

**This partnership with Empire Fighting Chance not only enables us to help clubs to survive but also assists thousands of young people to thrive. This partnership will have a significant impact on the lives of many, and we are delighted to be involved.**

Eddie Hearn, Chairman at Matchroom Sport

## MATCHROOM BOXING

Founded in 1987 by Barry Hearn, Matchroom is a global leader in sports promotion, known for delivering high-profile boxing events worldwide. Matchroom has expanded its reach internationally under the leadership of Barry's son, Eddie Hearn, transforming the brand into a powerhouse in the boxing industry. The company is recognised for its innovative approach to event promotion, engaging fans through high-energy productions and top-tier bouts featuring world-renowned fighters like former unified heavyweight champion Anthony Joshua and undisputed lightweight champion Katie Taylor.

matchroom.

**We are grateful for Matchroom's generosity and long-term commitment to helping us transform boxing clubs across the UK and beyond. Boxing holds a unique position within communities: people who might never walk into mainstream support services find their way through the doors of Empire Fighting Chance and our partner clubs. Through our network, we're getting young people back to school, reducing poor mental health and helping them exit gangs. Our work saves lives, and alongside Matchroom, we have the chance to forever change the boxing landscape.**

Jamie Sanigar,  
Co-founder of Empire Fighting Chance



## THE PARTNERSHIP

Over the next three years, Empire Fighting Chance and Matchroom will work with around 100 amateur boxing clubs across the UK. We will provide the clubs with the resources to deliver our work in their local communities and to develop sustainable business models. In turn, we expect the partnership to enable us to reach 70,000 young people, increase the sustainability of amateur boxing clubs and raise their profile as community changemakers. We are excited by the scale of impact our partnership can achieve.

# FIGHTING FOR A BETTER SYSTEM

We became far more outspoken this year, standing up for young people and the injustice that they face. Our focus was on something close to all of us at Empire. In the past two years four young men we have worked with have been stabbed to death on the streets. We believe that Bristol failed them. We raised awareness of how youth violence is driven by unmet needs and offered our city a solution to help stop young people dying on our streets.

## SHIFTING FROM A CRIMINAL TO A SOCIAL JUSTICE APPROACH

At the start of the year Bristol was under the national spotlight with the deaths of young people in the city.

This led to much local and national media coverage. We used this as a platform to speak about the issues that lead a young person down a path towards violence. Of the tens of thousands of young people that have come through our doors, we have yet to meet a single one who would have chosen that path. Their choices and responses are shaped by their daily struggles, including lack of opportunity, hopelessness and fear.

## TAKING YOUNG PEOPLE'S VOICES TO THE ROYAL PALACE AND DOWNING STREET

In August, a young person who went through one of our programmes and became an Empire coach visited Clarence House for a round-table discussion on how to decrease youth violence in the country. Serena, 20, met the King,

Prime Minister and actor and anti-knife crime campaigner Idris Elba. Serena has an acute understanding of youth violence and was close friends with a young person who died as a result of knife crime. She shared her experiences and views on what needs to be done to tackle youth violence. Later in the year Serena attended the first Knife Crime Summit at Downing Street, hosted by the Prime Minister.

## PUSHING FOR AN OFFICE OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION FOR BRISTOL

No single institution can tackle youth violence on its own. The scale and complexity of the issue mean we must all work together. Throughout the year we pushed hard for Bristol to have an independent Office of Violence Prevention, something cities across the world have successfully used to create safer places to live. We developed a proposal for an independent body to coordinate efforts to prevent and reduce youth violence, and mobilised decision makers behind it.



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**Everyone got an opportunity to listen to what we young people have to say about what's going on and how we can make a change. I spoke about growing up in Bristol and how Empire Fighting Chance steered me in the right direction when living in a city with a lack of opportunity for young people. It's a good thing for them to hear it direct from us.**

Serena Wiebe, Empire coach

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# OUR FUTURE PLANS

As we leave behind our 10th year as a charity, our minds are fixed firmly on the future. The escalating challenges faced by young people who experience inequality compel us to keep moving forward. We will improve what we do, innovate and increase the number of young people that we reach. We have three priorities to guide us during the year ahead.

## 1. ESTABLISH OUR GLOBAL CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

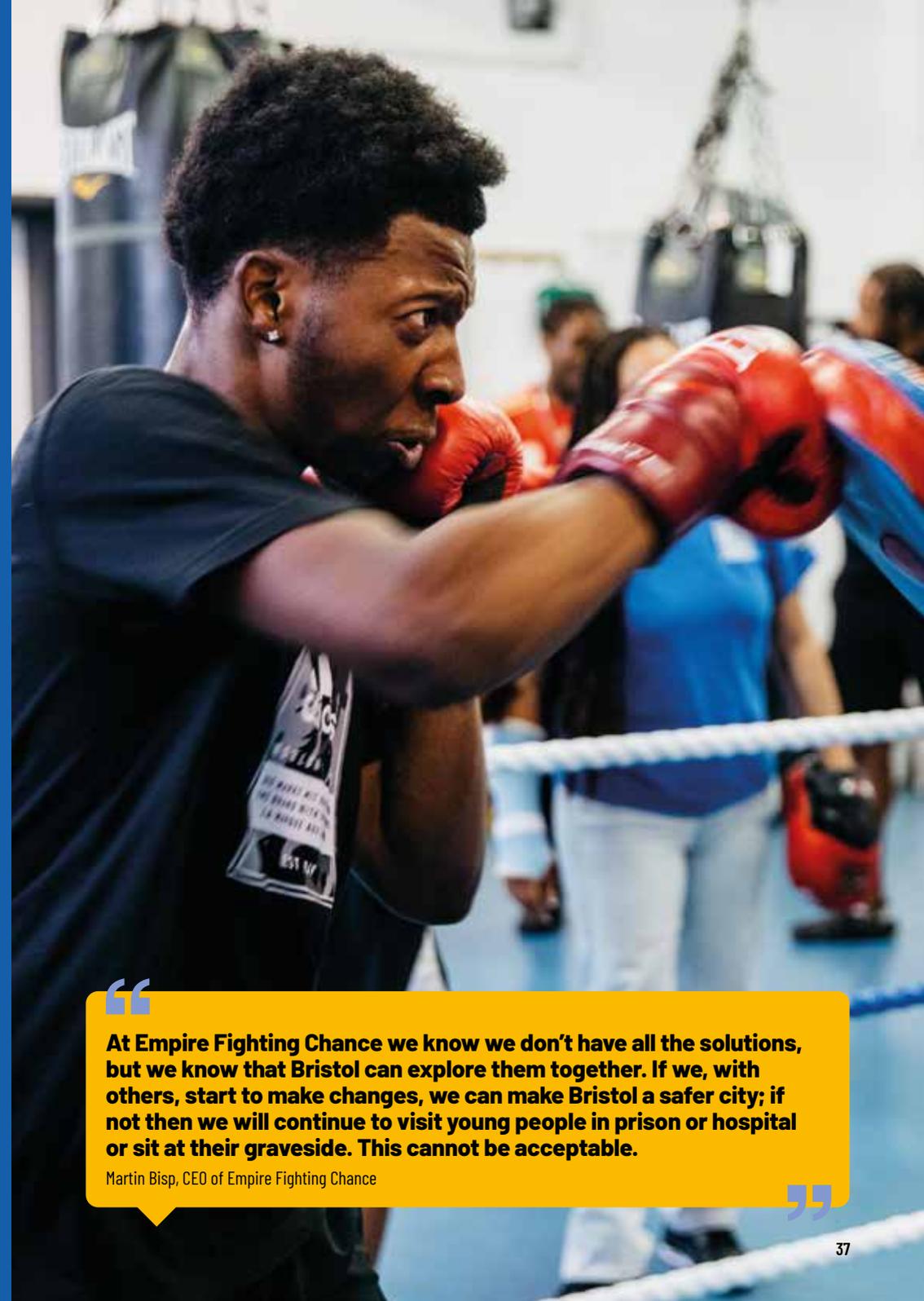
We will continue to improve the quality and impact of our work in Bristol so that our programmes for young people reach their full potential. Priorities for the year ahead include a major extension to our boxing gym and developing a more intensive and impactful careers programme.

## 2. GROW A MOVEMENT FIGHTING THE SAME FIGHT

We will expand our network of trained partners who are delivering our work for young people in their local area. Working in partnership with Matchroom Boxing, we will share our work with even more boxing clubs up and down the country. We will also start working in at least one other country.

## 3. BRING THE FIGHT TO DECISION MAKERS

We will inspire changes that make a difference to young lives, drawing on our growing movement and the powerful voices of young people. Our number-one priority is to secure approval and funding for an independent Office of Violence Prevention in Bristol.



**At Empire Fighting Chance we know we don't have all the solutions, but we know that Bristol can explore them together. If we, with others, start to make changes, we can make Bristol a safer city; if not then we will continue to visit young people in prison or hospital or sit at their graveside. This cannot be acceptable.**

Martin Bisp, CEO of Empire Fighting Chance





## A FINAL MESSAGE FROM US

Thank you to everyone who has supported Empire Fighting Chance during 2024. Our achievements this past year were only made possible through your kindness and commitment to our work. We look forward to working with you in 2025 as we continue our mission to transform young people's lives through boxing.

### THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

3SIXTY Real Estate, AE Dance and Fitness, Anderson Financial Management, Artworks Solutions, Bernard Sunley Foundation, Binlets Ltd, Brandwells Construction, Bristol Beer Factory, Bristol Boxing, The B R Body Trust, Bris-Tek Events, Bristol Round Table, The Burden Trust, Burges Salmon Charitable Trust, Charles Hayward Foundation, Children in Need, Chimo Trust, Clothmakers Foundation, Comic Relief, Dame Violet Wills Trust, The Better Sleep Clinic, Garfield Weston Foundation, Greggs Foundation, Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner, Hargreaves Foundation, Henry Smith Charity, The Hodge Foundation, Impetus Trust, Innox Foundation, J&M Britton Charitable Trust, John James Bristol Foundation, The John Thaw Foundation, The Lovett Foundation, Masonic Charitable Foundation, Medlock Charitable Trust, Mobius Works, Newby Trust, The Nisbet Trust, The October Club, The Underwood Trust, Oasis Schools, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Prudence Trust, Raise Your Hands, RedRock Consulting, Société Générale, S Powers Foundation, St James's Place Foundation, Stone Family Foundation, Subway Pasco Group, Swire Family Foundation, Tuixen Foundation, Tyler Grange, Van Neste Foundation, Vast, and West of England Combined Authority.

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