

A young man with short, curly hair is shown in a boxing stance, wearing black boxing gloves and a dark jacket. He is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. The background is a blurred gym setting with posters on the wall. The entire image has a purple color overlay.

**EMPIRE  
FIGHTING  
CHANCE**

**OUR IMPACT  
IN 2021**

# Empire Fighting Chance

*“Sometimes I genuinely don’t think I’d be stood here without Empire.”*

Kassia, aged 17

*“What Empire does is magical. The lessons that Jake has learnt through Empire will stay with him through life. It’s given him the confidence to be himself and that’s massive, it’s everything.”*

Dad to Jake, aged 16

*“Empire Fighting Chance has been something that he has absolutely loved about school and you have really helped us to change his attitude towards fighting and violence.”*

Housing caseworker, Bristol City Council



## CONTENTS

|                             |    |                          |    |
|-----------------------------|----|--------------------------|----|
| INTRODUCTION                | 4  | DONTAE DAVIS             | 26 |
| WHO WE ARE                  | 7  | WORKING WITH FAMILIES    | 28 |
| WHY IT WORKS                | 8  | EXPANDING EMPIRE         | 30 |
| TRANSFORMING BOXING THERAPY | 11 | INCREASING OUR INFLUENCE | 32 |
| GROWING CAREERS AND BOXING  | 15 | OUR SUPPORTERS           | 34 |
| OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS       | 16 | OUR FUTURE PLANS         | 36 |
| YOUNG PEOPLE’S STORIES      | 19 | A FINAL MESSAGE FROM US  | 38 |

## INTRODUCTION

On 14 October 2021, a young man was stabbed to death close to our boxing gym in inner-city Bristol. His name was Dontae, an 18-year-old we had worked with over several years to overcome the many challenges that come with growing up in a deprived neighbourhood. This tragedy has made us even more determined to fight the impact of deprivation on the lives of young people so that others will not suffer the same fate as our young friend. **We have dedicated our 2021 Impact Report to Dontae Davis.**

Empire Fighting Chance combines non-contact boxing and intensive personal support to challenge and inspire young people from deprived neighbourhoods to realise their unique potential. We seamlessly weave in personal support while young people learn to box, using the sport as a platform to mentor, deliver therapy and offer careers support.

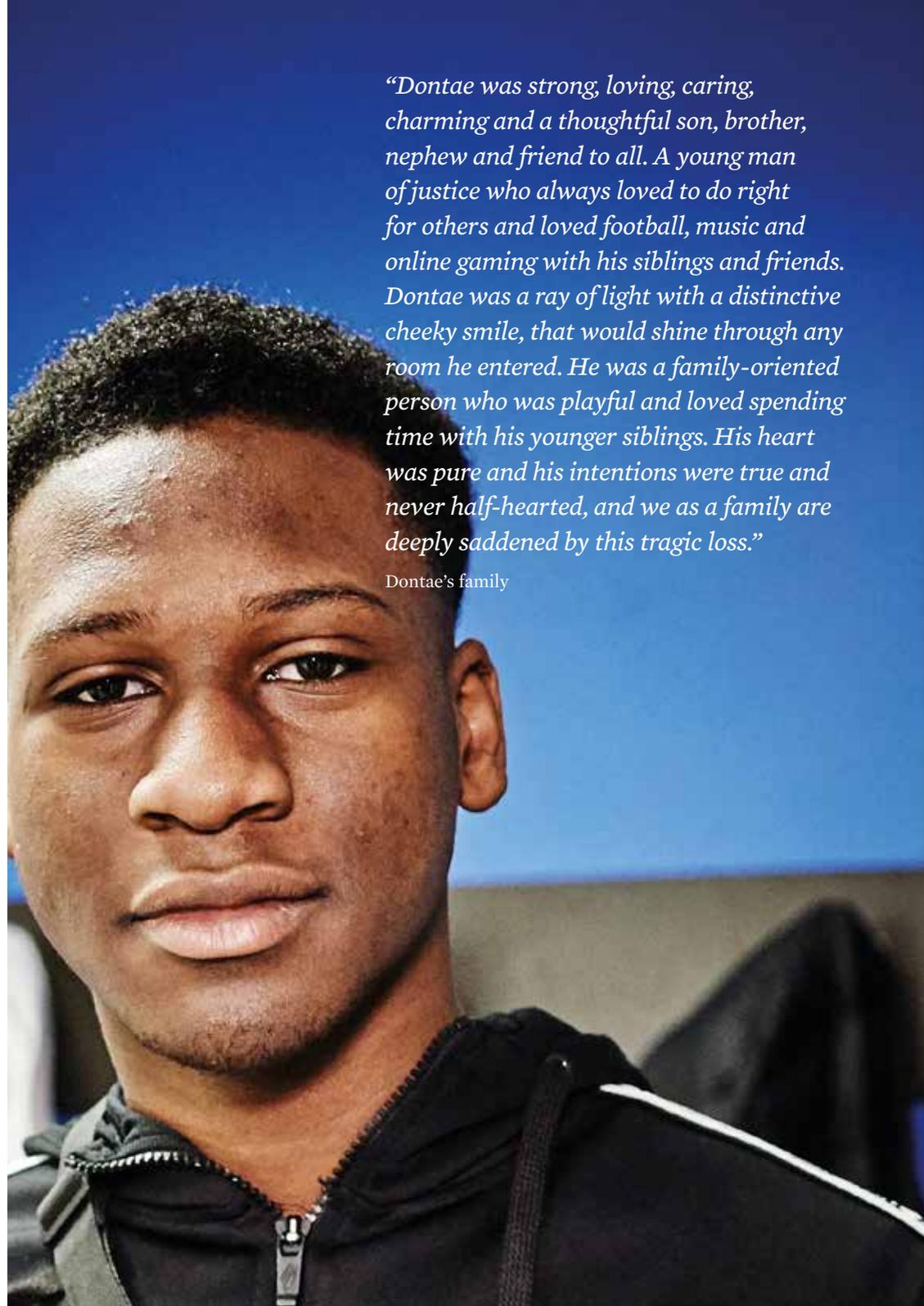
During the past year the deprived neighbourhoods in which we work have been hit hard by COVID-19. As more families were plunged into poverty, more young people have been coming to us, and with more complex needs. With a mix of enterprise and hard graft, we overcame the challenges of operating in a global pandemic to deliver our work to more young people than ever before in our 15-year history.

We left 2021 in a much better place than when we started it. We have better programmes and a stronger team and we are working in more locations across the country. We enter 2022 excited by the year ahead. In partnership with England Boxing, we will be training multiple boxing clubs across England to deliver our work in their deprived neighbourhoods.

Our successes this year are the result of a collective effort. We are very grateful to the many organisations and individuals whom we have worked alongside to make our achievements possible. We hope you enjoy reading our story of 2021 and look forward to working with you all in the future to continue to transform young lives.

*“Dontae was strong, loving, caring, charming and a thoughtful son, brother, nephew and friend to all. A young man of justice who always loved to do right for others and loved football, music and online gaming with his siblings and friends. Dontae was a ray of light with a distinctive cheeky smile, that would shine through any room he entered. He was a family-oriented person who was playful and loved spending time with his younger siblings. His heart was pure and his intentions were true and never half-hearted, and we as a family are deeply saddened by this tragic loss.”*

Dontae's family





## WHO WE ARE

Empire Fighting Chance was born on the streets of Bristol in 2006 to fight the impact of deprivation on young people's lives. Rising from the Empire Amateur Boxing Club in inner-city Bristol, we have grown to become a national charity using a pioneering approach that harnesses the power of boxing to transform young lives.

### Who we support

We exist to support young people who face disadvantage and adversity. COVID-19 has intensified their struggles, with poverty rising in the deprived neighbourhoods in which we work. Faced with conditions that are toxic to wellbeing, young people struggle with their mental health. Their distress is often expressed in ways that can lead them into trouble rather than care and support, including poor behaviour in school, substance misuse and gang crime. Their multiple, complex issues prevent young people from engaging in education and employment and accessing traditional support services.

### What we do

We use a powerful combination of non-contact boxing and intensive personal support to transform the way young people think and behave. Our talented team of coaches and therapists facilitate safe and enjoyable exercises for young people to learn how to box and use natural gaps between them to offer personal support.

### We deliver three programmes:

- Training with the Champions, a programme that combines boxing, mentoring and psychological support to give young people skills, knowledge and inspiration to make positive changes in their lives

- Boxing Therapy, a pioneering therapeutic approach that features a therapist seamlessly weaving therapy into a boxing session to help young people to manage feelings, behaviours and situations
- Boxing Careers, which integrates boxing with a range of careers activities to support young people on their journey into work and a healthier, brighter future.

### Our impact

We reached 4,936 young people this year across the United Kingdom. We cannot change the hand that young people have been dealt. Instead, our work gives young people an opportunity to harness their talents to flourish in their challenging world. Our sports-based approach means young people gain support in ways that feel natural, encouraging them to turn up, trust us and go on to make positive changes in their lives. Despite the chronic adversity that they endure, the young people we support are returning to school, exiting gangs, getting work and feeling healthier and happier.

*“There should be an Empire Fighting Chance at the back of each school!”*

Parent/carer of 17-year-old

## WHY IT WORKS

Boxing is at the heart of our work and its most extraordinary feature. The sport offers young people a fun, meaningful experience that they can be proud to tell their friends and family about. Boxing also has several unique features that we have built our work upon. As boxing is popular throughout the world and requires little equipment, our sports-based approach has proved ripe for scaling up.

### Encourages participation

We use the enjoyment and street credibility of boxing to attract young people to our work and encourage them to turn up each week. Boxing also overcomes the stigma associated with traditional forms of support: rather than access a service or see a professional, young people obtain support while participating in sport.

### Builds trust

We use boxing to gain young people's confidence and to break down barriers to honest communication with our staff. As young people focus on a physical activity, such as hitting a punch bag, they relax, drop their guard and open up to us.

### Improves physiology

Our physical exercises change young people's brain chemistry, improving their mental health. Exercise releases the 'feel-good' chemicals serotonin, endorphins and dopamine, creating happier moods. The sport also reduces anxiety through improved regulation of cortisol, the stress hormone.

### Boosts self-belief

We use boxing to improve young people's self-esteem and self-confidence, building blocks for making positive changes to how they think and behave. As fitness and boxing skills increase, young people feel better about themselves and their abilities. More often than not, young people start their programme with their head down and finish it standing tall.

### Develops vital skills

Discipline, attention and focus are required in our boxing exercises, and young people carry these skills with them from the boxing ring into school and other areas of their lives. Boxing also teaches young people to read other people's body postures and intentions, serving to develop social skills.

### Inspires changes

Boxing helps young people to switch off from the outside world, clearing their minds so that they are open to new possibilities. Gaps between our exercises present natural opportunities for us to support, challenge and inspire young people to make changes in their lives.





## TRANSFORMING BOXING THERAPY

Boxing Therapy takes mental health services out of clinics and into deprived communities to reach some of the UK's most vulnerable young people. Our pioneering programme combines non-contact boxing and therapy from a therapist who is also a trained sports coach. After piloting Boxing Therapy for three years, we were ready to take it to the next level. We built a team of Boxing Therapists, redesigned the programme and scaled it up across the various locations in which we work to support 348 young people.

### Knocking down barriers

Young people from deprived neighbourhoods face powerful barriers to obtaining mental health support. In the communities in which we work, poor mental health is often considered a weakness and not talked about. Young men, for example, face pressure to 'man up' and be strong and silent. If a young person does find their way to a mental health service, they often discover that what they are offered does not work for them. Few want to sit in a room with somebody they barely know and start talking about their life.

### Out of clinics and into communities

We created an alternative approach, one that is enjoyable for young people and builds trust between them and their therapist, the key to unlocking therapeutic change. Based in a boxing gym or other setting in the community, our Boxing Therapists seamlessly weave

clinically informed interventions into a boxing coaching session. Boxing Therapy does not have the stigma of clinic-based therapy, and it gives young people something they can do alongside their therapist while talking about their life.

### An asset-based approach

Despite the adversity that they face, we have yet to meet a young person without talents and strengths. When redesigning Boxing Therapy this year we grounded our new 12-week programme in two therapeutic approaches that share our 'asset-based' approach – Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and Solution-Therapy. In the first session our therapists ask young people what their best hopes are from coming to Boxing Therapy and then help young people to discover and use their talents to achieve them.

*"This programme has been life-changing for my son and our family. He has learnt strategies to channel his frustrations and anger and has become more confident to talk about his feelings with others."*

Parent of 10 year-old

## TRANSFORMING BOXING THERAPY CONT.

### Changing lives

By scaling up Boxing Therapy this year, we have accumulated much more evidence to demonstrate that the programme achieves positive changes for young people. We know from the stories and data that we have collected that young people are improving their mood, feeling less anxious, managing their anger and stopping self-harming, among many other things. We share knowledge and tools with young people so that they can manage their mental health and ensure the benefits of our programme last for a lifetime.



are more optimistic about their future



feel they have been dealing with problems well



feel better about themselves



feel they've been able to make up their own mind about things

*“M’s sessions are going really well. She has built a really good relationship up with her (therapist); she finds it easy to be able to open up and talk to her and feels very comfortable doing this. She is managing school better. I have noticed that she does not fly off the handle like she used to; she will stop and think before reacting to a situation.”*

Parent/carer

Measured by the Edinburgh Warwick Scale





96%

felt more motivated and confident about their career



84%

have improved skills for work



84%

have improved career-planning skills



*“Coming here, to Gloucestershire, gave me the opportunity to do the job I love. Having this job means I wake up feeling like I have something meaningful to do; it has given me a purpose in life.”*

Steven, who secured employment at Boston Tea Party and as live-event steward with Gloucestershire Cricket Club

## GROWING CAREERS AND BOXING

The extraordinary events of these past two years have made it even harder for a young person from a deprived neighbourhood to get a job. In 2021 we experienced a significant increase in demand for our Careers and Boxing programme. We responded by improving and scaling up our unique, physically active approach to boosting young people’s employment prospects. By working alongside a range of employers and other partners, we were able to support 299 young people in making progress towards employment.

### Box Careers

In 2021 we scaled up our entry-level employability project, which shifts young people’s attitudes about careers so that they are ready to start on their path to employment. Our Careers coaches facilitate non-contact boxing exercises while weaving in psychologically informed messages that challenge young people to think differently about themselves and their futures. For example, we teach young people about the ‘growth mindset’ and how all of us have the potential to develop new skills.

### Sports-based qualifications

During the past year, 79 young people gained a qualification from us to boost their confidence and employability. We are a registered AQA centre and launched several AQA awards with a low hurdle of entry, including Streetwise with Money (financial management) and Strength and Conditioning (personal fitness). Those gaining the latter qualification progressed on to another of our courses that qualifies them to work as an assistant gym instructor.

### Heavyweight Hustle

We successfully piloted a new experiential enterprise project. Groups of young people worked together to develop a new venture while learning new skills, such as in communication and financial management. Groups of young people designed an Empire Fighting Chance T-shirt and water bottle. The success of the project has inspired us to work alongside a specialist enterprise provider to take it to the next level.

### 1:1 personalised career support

Throughout the year our Careers coaches helped young people to identify career interests, visit employers, write CVs, apply for jobs, gain work experience and settle into their new job or course. We created a new section on our website to share opportunities for jobs and apprenticeships for young people. We drew upon partnerships with several employers such as Bristol Waste, Boston Tea Party, Avon and Somerset Fire Service and Gloucestershire Cricket Club to give 121 young people opportunities for employment, apprenticeships and work experience.

## OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS

In 2021 we reached

4,936

young people

We supported

3,549

young people directly ourselves  
and trained new partners to  
support an additional

1,387

young people

### YOUNG PEOPLE IMPROVED THEIR MENTAL AND PHYSICAL WELLBEING

84%

are more confident

82%

feel better about  
themselves

78%

are happier

86%

are fitter

79%

are calmer

71%

find it easier to tell  
people how they are  
feeling

### YOUNG PEOPLE DEVELOPED POSITIVE ATTITUDES

81%

are more  
determined

78%

are more  
motivated

77%

feel more able to  
achieve their goals

### YOUNG PEOPLE REDUCED THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN RISKY, ANTISOCIAL AND CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR

70%

are no longer  
committing  
anti-social or  
criminal acts

72%

are better behaved  
in school

72%

are less likely to be  
part of a gang

### YOUNG PEOPLE IMPROVED THEIR RELATIONSHIPS

71%

find it easier to  
make friends

70%

improved their  
relationships with  
their family

68%

improved  
relationships with  
adults

YOUNG PEOPLE'S STORIES



*“I feel stronger. I feel a bit prouder of who I am. I have a lot more strength to say what I want to, and to do what I need to. I am hopeful that now I have let go of my anger, I can have a lot more fun.”*

Ela



IMAGES IN THIS SECTION ARE FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY AND NOT RELATED TO INDIVIDUAL STORIES

## ELA'S STORY

“I came in to the room and found him with his hands wrapped around her throat. After I had calmed her down. She told me he had got the knife, and she showed me the biggest meat knife, and he had held it to her throat.” Ela was seven years old when the events described by her mother, Louise, happened to her.

That night proved to be the final straw for Louise, a culmination of growing violence towards Ela from her old brother that had started the day she was born. Shortly after the strangulation, he left the family home. Ela's physical scars healed but the emotional ones remained. Louise was particularly worried that Ela would grow up accepting violence from men.

Louise turned to our Training with the Champions programme. We paired Ela with a female coach to give her a positive female role model. Heather helped Ela to understand that every emotion and feeling she was experiencing was normal and focused on building her self-worth so that she could stand up for herself.

Despite Ela's difficult start to life, she is beginning to feel that she has the chance of a life lived fully and without fear: “I feel stronger. I feel a bit prouder of who I am. I have a lot more strength to say what I want to, and to do what I need to. I am hopeful that now I have let go of my anger, I can have a lot more fun.”

## MOLLY'S STORY

Molly is an 11-year-old referred to Boxing Therapy by her Barnardo's Project Worker. Molly had experienced early childhood trauma, including witnessing fights between her parents and her mum's previous drug use. She had experienced a turbulent year during the pandemic, disengaging from school and moving out of her home to live with her dad.

In her first session, Molly explained that she struggled with feelings of "anger" and wanting to "fight people". So the main focus of Molly's 12-week programme was to help her to identify the first signs of anger and to develop emotional regulation techniques to manage it. Early on in her journey, Molly identified that boxing was a useful and enjoyable way of supporting her mood: "When you're boxing, it means you can't focus on any of the other thoughts that might be bothering you and it clears your head."

Since leaving Empire Fighting Chance, Molly is back attending school regularly and plans to continue using boxing as a way of supporting her mental wellbeing. Her dad bought her some boxing gloves, a skipping rope and a punch bag so that she can practise at home any time she wants. On her final session she presented her therapist with a card stating "Thank you. I loved the sessions so much".

*"When you're boxing, it means you can't focus on any of the other thoughts that might be bothering you and it clears your head."*

Molly

## JOSH'S STORY

Josh is a 19-year-old who was referred to Boxing Therapy by Bristol City Council. Previously in childcare arrangements, Josh now lives in supported living. He was diagnosed with first-episode psychosis and had various traumatic experiences during his time in care. Josh felt overwhelmed by his thoughts and used drugs to cope with this.

In his first session Josh identified his goals from the programme to better be in control of his thoughts and find a purpose in life. Initially he found it hard to talk but engaged well with the boxing, helping him build confidence and to open up. Josh began to share his thoughts of not being worth anything, which he linked to when his parents put him into care.

We used 'cognitive diffusion' techniques to help Josh to 'untangle' himself from damaging thoughts. For example, Josh spent time on the bags practising noticing and allowing thoughts, without holding on to them so tightly that they feel as if they form his identity. Some sessions were affected by Josh's drug use that day, but he continued to speak more and more honestly.

By the end of the 12 weeks Josh felt better able to manage his feelings. He began classes in English and Maths to help him gain qualifications towards his desired career of being a (sports) coach, which he believed would give more purpose to his life. Josh also completed our Strength and Conditioning coaching course, gaining an AQA award to help him achieve his career goal.

## SERENA'S STORY

Serena, 17, had seen four different counselling services following the tragic event of her older brother committing suicide. She is studying Sports coaching at South Gloucestershire and Stroud College. As part of the course, Serena was expected to complete work experience in a sporting environment. We offered her the opportunity to gain work experience with us.

Serena worked closely with our Careers Team to identify and start working towards her career goals. She recognised that she wanted to support young people struggling with their mental health using sport. We trained Serena to deliver Training with the Champions, which not only gave Serena coaching skills but also improved her mental health through learning its content. Serena no longer feels the need to attend counselling.

Serena demonstrated excellent coaching skills and so we recruited her as a part-time Junior coach. She has another year of studying at college and then she has ambitions of going to university. We will be helping Serena to research courses and apply.

*"Since the passing of my brother, I found it hard to open up about my feelings. The way the counsellors spoke to me wasn't the way I wanted to open up and speak. I love working at Empire; it's like one big family. I love feeling a part of the community and knowing I am making a difference to the young people. I originally wanted to become a counsellor but, seeing the way Empire work, I want to work the same way."*

Serena



# DONTAE DAVIS

2003 – 2021

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Dontae was a kind and caring young man. Like most of the young people that we see, he struggled with the challenges of growing up in a deprived neighbourhood. We worked with Dontae over several years as he battled adversity to get himself a college place and a part-time job on the turnstiles at Bristol Rovers.

On 14 October 2021 Dontae's life was tragically cut short by senseless and unnecessary violence. Dontae was stabbed to death on a street in inner-city Bristol. He was only 18. It hit all of us hard. We send our love and condolences to the Davis family, and to all those who were lucky enough to know Dontae. Rest in peace, Dontae from your Empire family.



*“When Dontae first came to the gym, he was a shy but troubled young boy. Over the years, through the ups and , we worked hard together on the challenges he was faced with. It was amazing to see his progression into a confident young man. He was one of us and will be sorely missed by everyone in the Empire family.”*

Courtney Young, Coach Supervisor, Empire Fighting Chance

## WORKING WITH FAMILIES

We recognise the fundamental role that parents and carers play in the lives of the young people that we work with. This year, we firmly established our Family Liaison Team as a vital component of our work. The team establish a positive relationship with parents/carers to gain their commitment to our work with their children, offer practical and emotional support and help to create healthier relationships at home.

### Chaos and complexity

The young people that we support are some of the most vulnerable in the UK. However much they might enjoy coming to our sessions, their chaotic lifestyles and other issues make it challenging for some to turn up to them consistently. We have found that the best way to improve young people's attendance and punctuality is to establish a positive relationship with their families and to have plenty of contact. The work of our Family Liaison Team has helped us to achieve an impressive 83% completion rate across our programmes.

### Bringing families together

COVID-19 has placed considerable strain on families, creating tension in the home. Our Family Liaison Team has played a vital role in creating healthier family relationships. We encourage parent/carers to see their children in a more positive light by helping them to recognise improvements they are making at home and feeding back progress that we are seeing. This contrasts sharply with their normal experience of receiving negative feedback on their children. We also perform a pastoral care role, listening to the issues experienced by parents/carers and providing advice and support.

*“My daughter joined your programme six weeks ago. We have had endless issues, with school and schoolwork, home life, self-harming and low self-esteem. The transformation has been nothing short of extraordinary. Her confidence has grown to the point where she came out and discussed the very issue at the heart of the problem, a sexual assault that no one was aware had happened. She now has a future, and she wants to be part of it. Empire Fighting Chance is, in a word, epic.”*

Parent/carers



## EXPANDING EMPIRE

Our work offers towns and cities across the UK a ready-made solution for the devastating effects of poverty on young people's lives. In 2021 we took a major step forward by launching a partnership with England Boxing to train and support boxing clubs in places across England in delivering our work. We ended the year transforming young lives in multiple locations across South West England, Central England, Northern England and Wales.



### Scaling up through collaboration

We are scaling up our work by combining our expertise with the local knowledge and credibility of local organisations. We are training and supporting them in delivering our work in their deprived neighbourhoods.

Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, 15 organisations delivered our programmes during 2021, including Exeter City Football Club Community Trust and Young People Cornwall. Our amazing partners are making great strides. For example, Wrexham Youth Justice opened their very own boxing gym to deliver our work to young offenders as an alternative to a custodial sentence.

### A growing footprint

Our partners delivered our programmes to 1,387 young people in 2021. Empire Fighting Chance is now transforming young lives in the following regions:

- Central England, including Gloucestershire and Worcestershire

- North Wales, including Denbighshire and Wrexham
- Northern England, including Cheshire
- South Wales, including Cardiff, Newport, Torfaen and Vale of Glamorgan
- South West England, including Bristol, Cornwall and Devon.

### Partnering with boxing clubs

In September we agreed a partnership with England Boxing to train boxing clubs to deliver our programme. Clubs are often based in deprived neighbourhoods and offer the perfect setting to deliver our boxing-based programmes.

We invited applications from affiliated England Boxing clubs from across the country. We received many applications, including from clubs in Blackburn, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Sheffield, Dudley and Swindon. We will be training our first cohort of boxing clubs in February 2022.

*“With the huge impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had, there has never been a more important time for us to help young people through the challenges they face. As hubs of their respective local communities, boxing clubs are in a unique place to help with this, and the expertise provided by Empire Fighting Chance will equip them with specific knowledge of how to do that.”*

Charlie Ford, England Boxing's Head of Community Development

## INCREASING OUR INFLUENCE

By working at the street level for 15 years, we have developed a deep understanding of what it is like to be a young person raised in a deprived neighbourhood and what changes are needed so that they can overcome their adversity. We have been growing our influence among policy makers and practitioners to shine a light on the struggles young people face and to promote solutions such as community-rooted approaches and greater investment in youth services.

### Empire in the news

The more noise that we can make about our work and the issues it tackles, the more likely that policy makers and practitioners will hear and listen to us. So, in 2021, we stepped up our efforts to gain media coverage.

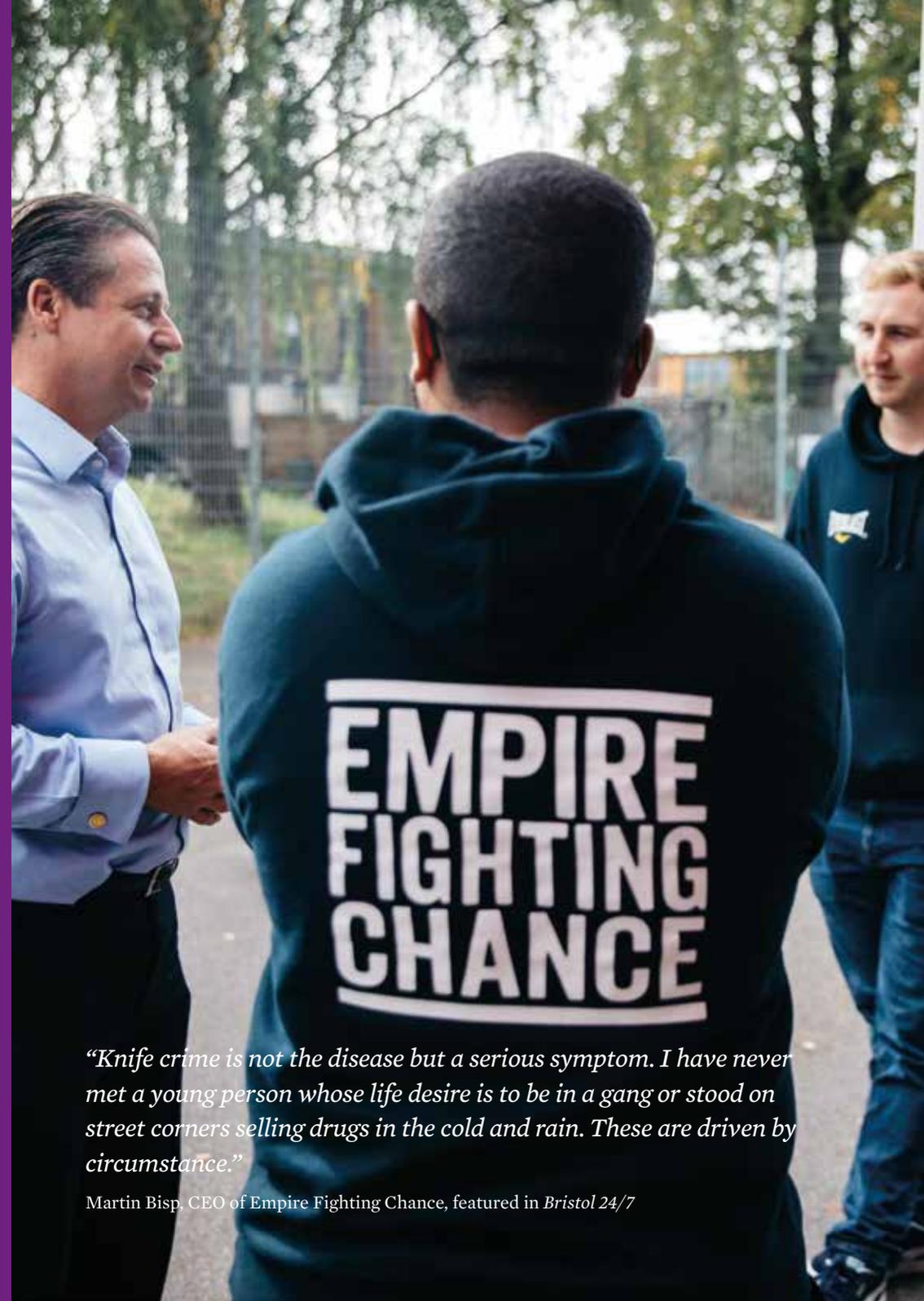
In February, for example, our work tackling youth crime featured in the *Daily Express*. In July, *The Big Issue* showcased our Boxing Therapy programme as a successful model for encouraging young men to access therapeutic support. They also gave our CEO Martin Bisp the accolade of being one of the top 100 Big Issue Changemakers of 2021 in recognition of our work during lockdown.

### Influencing practice

We extended our influence on those who work with young people. We collaborated extensively (including with the NHS and police forces), participated in networks (such as the Avon and Somerset Violence Reduction Steering Group), wrote thought pieces (including for *Children and Young People Now*) and spoke at events (such as at the City Gathering, which brings together 600 leaders across Bristol).

### Ministerial visit

In November we welcomed the Minister for Sport, Tourism, Heritage and Civil Society, Nigel Huddleston, to our gym in inner-city Bristol. A few days later the Minister promoted our work to over 100 leaders from sport for development organisations at the annual Sport for Development Coalition CEO Forum.



*“Knife crime is not the disease but a serious symptom. I have never met a young person whose life desire is to be in a gang or stood on street corners selling drugs in the cold and rain. These are driven by circumstance.”*

Martin Bisp, CEO of Empire Fighting Chance, featured in *Bristol 24/7*

## OUR SUPPORTERS

We needed our supporters more than ever before to help us respond to COVID-19 and the growing demand for our work. We have been overwhelmed by the generosity of our supporters this past year, particularly as many have experienced challenging times themselves. We are very grateful to all those companies, funders and individuals who have helped us transform the lives of young people during 2021.



### Alex Beresford's game show winnings

In November, TV presenter and Empire Fighting Chance Ambassador Alex Beresford chose us as his charity beneficiary during his turn on *Celebrity Who Wants to be a Millionaire*. Alex won the charity an incredible £16,000! Not content with that, the following night Alex went on to play *Celebrity Catchphrase* and won the charity a further £2,200. We could not be more grateful to Alex for his incredible support and game show prowess.

### Corporate Golf Days

In September our corporate partner Mobius Works hosted a fundraising golf day, raising a fantastic £4,100 for Empire Fighting Chance. Later that month another of our wonderful corporate partners, The Pasco Group/Subway Bristol and West, raised a sensational £7,200 for our work at their inaugural charity golf day. As well as being incredible fundraisers, the Pasco Group/Subway Bristol and West have donated large amounts of food to families that we have been working with during the pandemic.

### Great Bristol Run

An awesome team of runners raised over £8,000 for the charity at the Great Bristol Run in September. We were very proud that one of our runners was Bristol's Mayor, Marvin Rees. Special thanks go to Tony Anderson of Anderson Financial, one of our key corporate supporters, who raised a staggering £5,240!

### Alfresco Disco and the Galleries

David Wait, General Manager of the Galleries shopping centre in Bristol, has been incredibly supportive of our work this past year. Alfresco Disco used the space at the Galleries in the summer to hold their music event and David very generously arranged for the fee of £5,000 to be donated to us.

### Fabulous funders

We are immensely grateful for the support of the following funders during this past year: Blagrave Trust, Charles Hayward Foundation, Children in Need, Comic Relief, Dulverton Trust, Esmeé Fairbairn Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation, The Henry Smith Charity, The Leathersellers', Lloyds Bank Foundation, National Lottery Community Fund, Newby Trust, Nisbet Trust, The Fore, Paul Hamlyn, Peter Harrison Foundation, Pilgrim Trust, Postcode Community Trust, Rayne Foundation, Société Générale, Southern Co-op, St James's Place, Stone Family Foundation, Tudor Trust, Tuixen Foundation, UK Youth and Youth Endowment Fund.

## OUR FUTURE PLANS

The impact of COVID-19 will reverberate around the streets of deprived neighbourhoods for some time to come. The global pandemic has made us even more determined to increase our impact on the lives of young people experiencing disadvantage and adversity. Within five years we aim to be reaching tens of thousands of young people across the UK. We have three broad priorities to guide us towards our vision during the year ahead.

### 1. Scale up our work

In Bristol and South Wales, we aim to support many more young people through delivering Training with the Champions, Boxing Therapy and Boxing Careers. Further afield, we will train and support boxing clubs to deliver our work in their towns and cities. We will offer boxing clubs an intensive package of training and ongoing support and create a powerful network so that they can share ideas, best practice and inspiration.

### 2. Improve our quality

We are driven by a relentless pursuit of excellence. During 2021 we created new ways to generate data and learning about our work. For example, we started gathering data from parents/carers and schools and

launched a randomised controlled trial with Manchester Metropolitan University. In 2022 we will use our more sophisticated data to make continuous improvements to our three programmes.

### 3. Increase our influence

Building on this year's successes, we will extend our influence on the public, practitioners and policy makers. We will use our grassroots experience of working with young people to focus on a small number of key messages that put a spotlight on the struggles they face and the solutions that are needed. One message will relate to knife crime. We owe it to our young friend Dontae, who was stabbed to death close to our gym in October, to prevent more young lives being wasted owing to deprivation.



## A FINAL MESSAGE FROM US

Thank you to everyone who has supported Empire Fighting Chance during 2021. Your generosity and commitment to our work are at the heart of our success. It never ceases to amaze and overwhelm us how so many individuals and organisations go out of their way to help our charity. We very much look forward to continuing to work with you in 2022 to transform the lives of young people.

For more information, call 0117 233 8700

or head to:

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