



INTRODUCTION

I-Box is a partnership between Islington CAMHS and In Your Corner. This was a pilot project running from October 2023 – August 2024. We offered two psychologically-informed boxing groups over the year, to young people who were already known to CAMHS, on the waiting list, or open to partner services (e.g. social care). We focused on young people who were experiencing behavioural and/or emotional regulation difficulties, and who might find it challenging to engage in clinic-based talking therapies.

I-Box aims to support emotional wellbeing by providing an accessible route to developing emotion regulation skills, confidence being in a group setting, peer relationships, and physical fitness. In Your Corner’s clinical model uses evidence-based ideas from psychological intervention delivered flexibly (e.g. drawing on CBT, DBT and attachment and trauma models), alongside non-contact boxing skills (e.g. skipping, shadowboxing, punching pads and bags, strength and conditioning work).

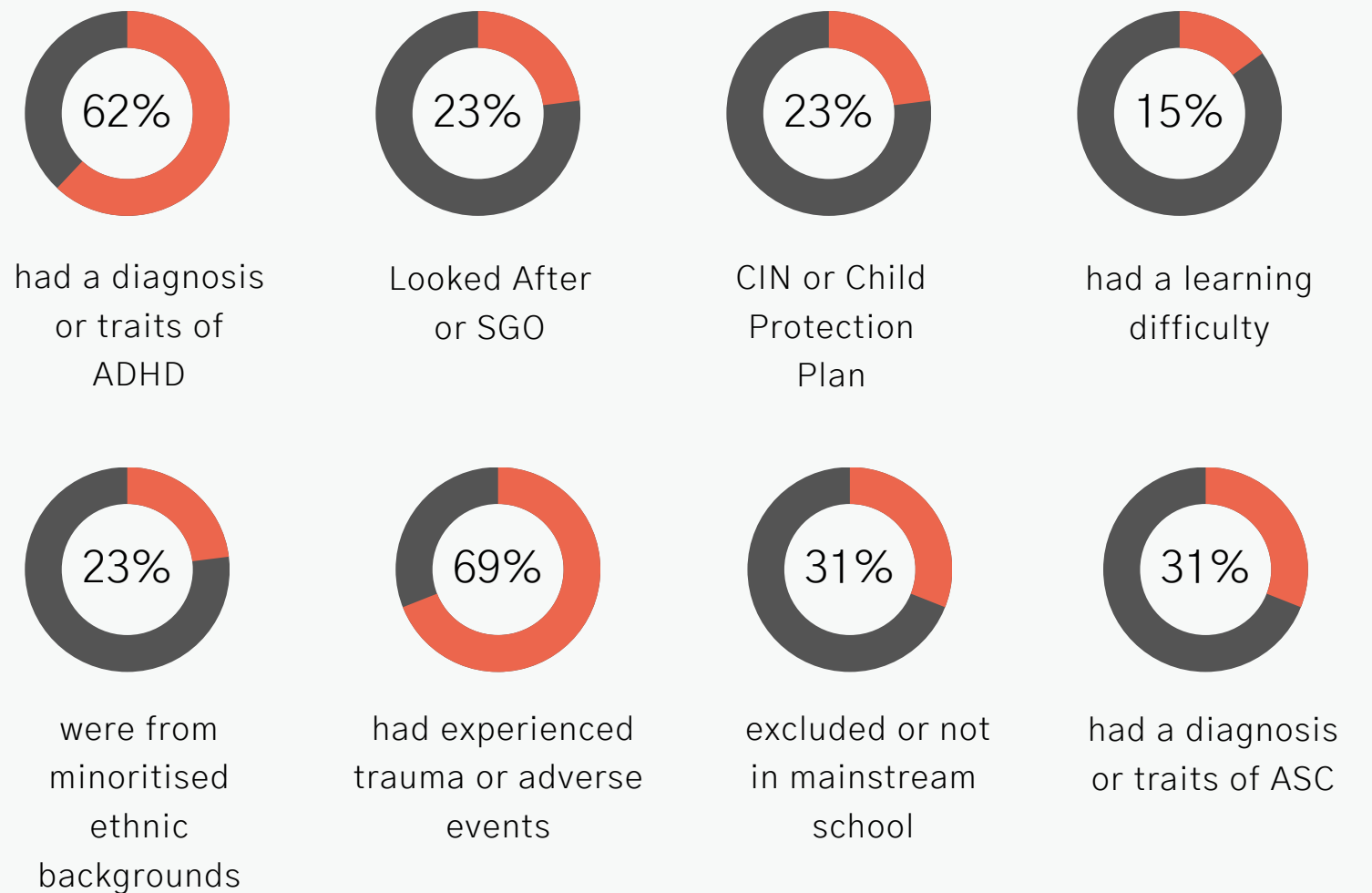
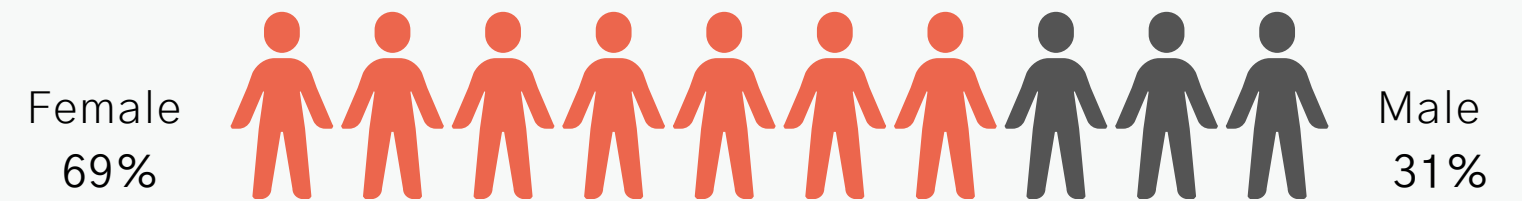
Each group ran for 12 weeks, for 2 hours per week, and was for young people aged 12–15 years. Groups were co-delivered by a Clinical Psychologist from IYC, a Clinical Psychologist from CAMHS and an accredited boxing coach from In Your Corner, supported by an Anna Freud Centre Masters Student working in CAMHS.

This report presents data collected from the two groups held during the first pilot year of I-Box, and reflects on the learning from this, suggesting ideas for future implementation.



WHO WE REACHED

13 young people engaged in the project. Their demographic information is shown here.



OUR IMPACT

69% (n=9) of young people graduated from I-Box. We collected pre and post intervention data for all of them. Two standardised measures were used to measure our impact: Goal Based Outcomes (GBO) and The Outcome Rating Scales (ORS).

GOAL BASED OUTCOMES

Young people set personalised goals for what they wanted to achieve in I-Box. They set Boxing Goals for their boxing skills, and Feeling Better Goals for their emotional wellbeing.

They rated goals on a ten point scale before and after the group, where 10 = maximum improvement*.

Example boxing goals:

“I want to build boxing skills so I might be able to be a professional boxer”

“I want to learn to do punch combinations”

Example emotional wellbeing goals:

“I want to control my reactions and calm down when I get angry”

“I want to have more confidence to put words to feelings”

	Average rating pre-group	Average rating post-group	Average Pre-post change	Is change more than 2.45*?
Feeling Better goals	3.9	7.0	+3.1	✓
Boxing goals	3.9	8.0	+4.1	✓
Fitness	5.2	7.8	+2.6	✓
Confidence	6.3	8.6	+2.2	

Scores above +2.45 indicate clinically meaningful change.

*Goal Based Outcomes and ORS are widely used outcome measures in child mental health. See <https://bit.ly/3tLvRc0> for details on thresholds for clinically meaningful change.

THE OUTCOME RATING SCALES

Young people also rated how they feel about different areas of their life using the ORS. Total scores were measured pre and post intervention to consider change. Higher scores on ORS denote improvements. The clinical cut off total score on ORS is 28, which means total scores between 0 – 28 are considered to be in the clinical range.

	Rating pre-group	Rating post-group	Pre-post change
Average Total Score	25.1	30.0	+4.9
Young people in Clinical Range	6	1	5 young people moved from Clinical to Non-Clinical Range
Young people in Non-Clinical Range	3	3	3 young people started in Non-Clinical Range and maintained this

69%

of young people who started the programme graduated from I-Box

44%

of graduates became Ambassadors or joined the In Your Corner Graduates Programme in Camden

Measures suggest clinically significant improvements were made on goal based outcomes for Feeling Better goals. Improvements were also shown on ORS, notably with all young people scoring below the clinical cut off score on ORS after completing the intervention.

Graduation rates reflected sustained engagement for the majority of I-Box participants. There was also good uptake of the post-intervention graduates and ambassadors offer, suggesting that young people were engaged and wanting to consolidate the gains made after completing their initial 12 week programme.

WHAT DO YOUNG PEOPLE SAY ABOUT I-BOX?

We conducted post-intervention interviews with young people, and parents/carers, asking about their experience of the group and also any improvements they would suggest.

Themes in qualitative comments reflected positive change in:

- Developing emotion regulation skills
- Being better able to identify and communicate feelings to others
- Making friends
- Feeling a sense of belonging
- Being able to focus more and regulate in school / education
- Feeling more resilient to face life's challenges

A selection of qualitative comments is shown here.

"When I first started, I walked out of the gym angry, but now it's so much better. I stay in the room and make friends"

"(I've learned to) not overthink. It made me cope with my worries, emotions, and anxiety better"

"I used to do nothing in English, now I can focus more"

"I made some new friends, and I'm able to use my voice more"

"All the movement helps get your energy and frustrations out"

"It helps take your mind off hard things going on outside of the gym"

"There's always someone open to you or someone that you can talk to. Near the end of the session, you get your voice out and make friends...You've got people on your side"

"I've learned to never give up and keep trying no matter how bad your day is"

WHAT DO CARERS AND PARENTS SAY ABOUT I-BOX?

“She has become better at expressing her thoughts and feelings to us since starting I-Box.”

“She’s happy when she comes home from boxing. She made friends, she enjoys boxing. She learned to listen to the discipline more and to the instructions. She is more focused and her concentration improved. She is more confident ”

“He was happy to be part of something... he felt like he belonged.”

“She didn’t complain to go (to school) when she usually refuses. She’s doing better in school, putting effort in. She hasn’t got into trouble in a while.”

“Lots of improvement in the ability to manage emotions”

OUR AMBASSADORS PROGRAMME AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADUATES

I-Box offered two development pathways for young people after the initial 12 week programme.

Ambassadors programme: Here, graduates were supported to join the coaching team to co-facilitate the next I-Box group. Roles for ambassadors included leading group games, contributing to facilitating boxing, fitness and emotion-focused elements of the group, and supporting participants to take part and make friends. Ambassadors were rewarded for their commitment with gift vouchers for every session they co-facilitated. Two young people signed up to be ambassadors, and one of them co-facilitated a full 12 week group. This Ambassador said:

“It’s helped me physically and mentally... it’s helped me with my anger and my sadness”

Graduates group: In August 2024, three I-Box graduates joined graduates from IYC’s Fight Connect project in Camden, over two workshops held to co-produce a new graduates group offer for both projects. This graduates group started in September 2024, with weekly one hour sessions held in Camden, with a focus on consolidating boxing and emotion regulation skills, and gaining AQA qualification units in boxing.



WHAT FURTHER SUPPORT DID GRADUATES ACCESS?

All young people who graduated from the project met with a Clinical Psychologist to consider next steps and whether they felt they would benefit from additional therapeutic support. Four young people were offered further CAMHS support, feeling more comfortable to do so having accessed I-Box. Three graduates were referred for mentoring (via Elevate or Advantage mentoring), having enjoyed the consistency of working towards a goal but not needing any more specific mental health support. The final two graduates did not require any further support.



4 graduates were offered further CAMHS support



3 graduates went onto mentoring (Elevate / Advantage)

REFLECTIONS, LEARNING AND THE FUTURE

I-Box engaged a complex group of young people from a range of diverse backgrounds and supported them to access CAMHS intervention and improve their emotional wellbeing, as evidenced by clinically meaningful change on Goal Based Outcomes and ORS.

Alongside this, their confidence, boxing skills and fitness improved, and qualitative feedback suggested gains in a number of functional areas. The majority of young people graduated from the project with many continuing their involvement post-graduation as graduates or ambassadors. This is a great indicator of sustained engagement and relationships in their local communities.

Both feedback from participants and reflections from the delivery team have led to a number of considerations for refining project implementation in Year 2. These are summarised here:

- **Group Size, Age and Gender Mix:** Groups had capacity for 12 young people but were not full at this pilot stage. Many young people felt groups would be better if they were slightly bigger. However, other young people felt a smaller group helped them to make friends and feel comfortable. Young people felt it was important to have other participants of their age and gender in the group.
- **Referrals and entry:** The groups were oversubscribed at referral and CAMHS staff offered consultations to establish suitability and to consider the support a young person would need to attend. There was attrition between referral to starting. Young people who did start were helped by an adult (parent, carer, or professional) actively supporting them to get to the gym, and working in partnership with the delivery team to support their engagement throughout. Offering initial assessments in pairs of young people with their parents/carers also supported engagement and helped the delivery team assess whether a young person could manage the social elements of a group intervention.
- **Communication with parents/carers and young people between sessions:** Parents/carers fed back that they valued weekly texts and regular calls about their young person's progress. They were also sent the "chill skills" videos between sessions, offering the opportunity for home practice.



- **Gym venue:** Young people liked the Sobell Centre boxing studio and found it easy to access.
- **I-Box Ambassadors:** Young people really valued the ambassadors supporting group delivery and ambassadors reported their own wellbeing improvements as a result of taking on this role.

We will use this feedback and learning to refine the group in Year 2 and look forward to continuing to work in partnership.



**IN YOUR
CORNER**

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