



BOXSMART COLCHESTER  
EVALUATION REPORT

# About Boxsmart



Boxsmart Colchester is a boxing project for young people in Colchester delivered by Essex Youth Service in partnership with Active Essex Foundation, ABC Boxing Club and Colchester Borough Homes.

Young people were engaged through social care and missing chats workers as well as targeted promotion and sign posting from school staff.

Physical Boxing sessions, warmups, equipment and coaching were provided by ABC Boxing Club. Youth workers from Essex Youth Service provided emotional support and delivered informal education on a variety of topics.

The project created a safe space for young people to be able to learn boxing skills, teaching them disciplines and increased fitness and stamina.

19 referrals received

32% of referrals from Social Care  
and 26% from Youth Service

68% Male  
26% Female  
5% Other

Average age: 14.1  
(12-16 years)

16 young people attended  
12 attended more than 1 session  
80 attendances

Reasons for referral include young people having difficult home lives, poor mental health and being at risk of antisocial behaviour and exploitation.

Referrers hoped that BoxSmart would help increase confidence, wellbeing, self-esteem and self-control.

The most popular reasons for attending were to be healthier, to have fun and to do / learn new things.

# Engagement Ladder



2

week 1 average score

4.25

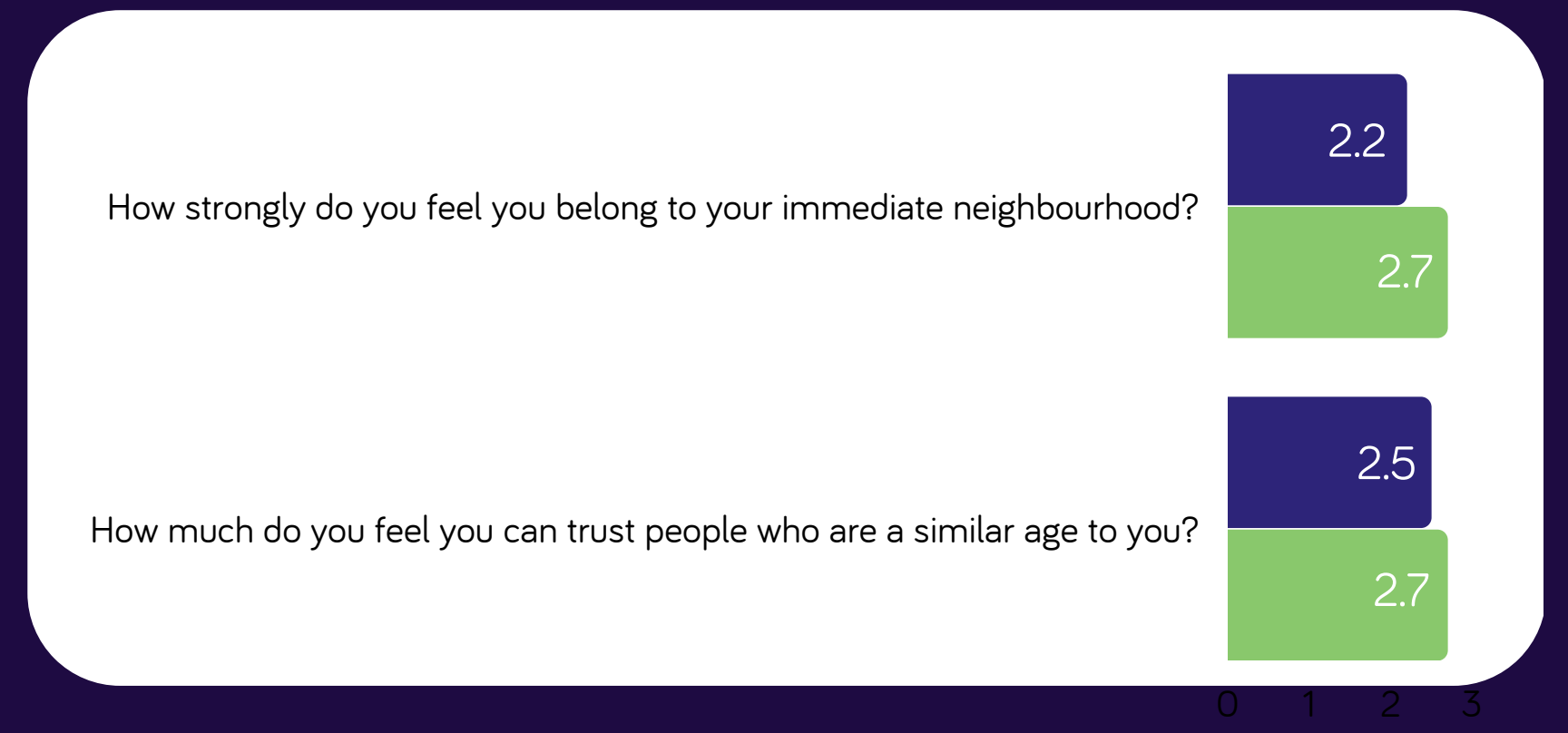
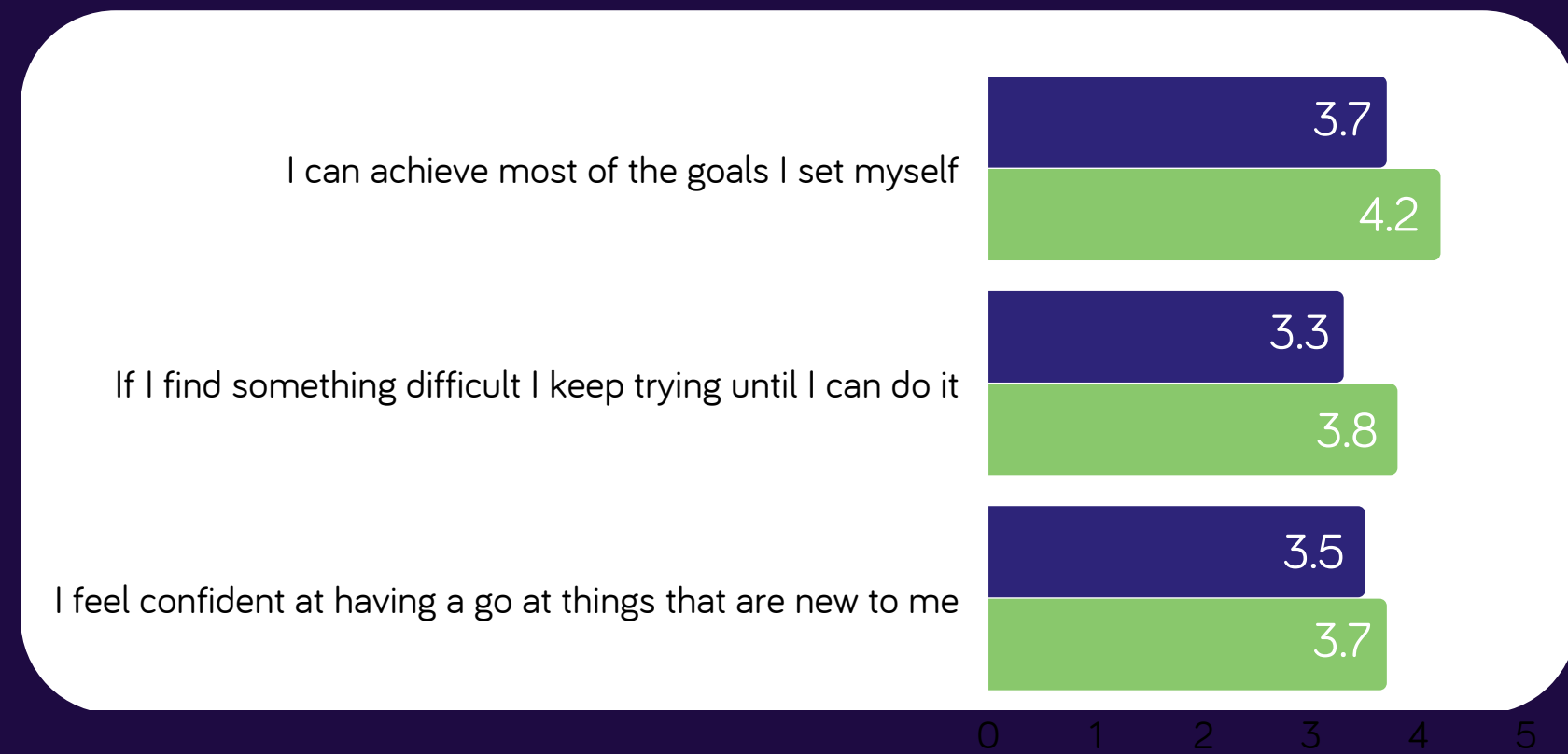
week 10 average score

Of those who attended more than 1 session, 100% increased their level of engagement.

The average engagement score in the first week was 2 and this had increased to 4.25 by the last week.

One young person moved from disengagement to achievement by week 5.

# Positive changes were reported by young people in wellbeing, self-efficacy and community trust\*:



\*based on average scores of 6 matched pairs

# Leo's Story\*

Leo is a 12 year old boy who attended Boxsmart in Colchester. He was referred by his Social Worker because he had been behaving aggressively towards his Mum and at school. It was hoped that boxing would help him to learn self-control .

Leo joined the group a few sessions in and faced some immediate challenges because some of the other young people knew him and didn't like him. But Leo persevered and both the boxing coach and Youth Worker gave him lots of individual support which helped to build a trusted relationship where Leo talked about some of the things going on in his life and the youth worker was able to signpost to other support services and tell Leo about other things happening at the centre.

Leo's attendance at the boxing sessions was sporadic and when he was there he struggled to focus for more than a few minutes, getting frustrated and walking off if he couldn't pick something up.

Despite this, staff saw some big changes in Leo. The amount of time he was able to focus seemed to increase as the project went on, he made some friends within the group and told staff that he had been avoiding his friends who smoke weed and shoplift because he's tired of being in trouble. He is also now engaging with new support services and has increased engagement with other projects that he was already involved with.



*"that Jade she is good to talk to"*

• not his real name

# Sam's Story\*

Sam is a 15 year old gaming fanatic who attended Boxsmart in Colchester. He heard about the project through a Youth Worker and decided to come along to build his confidence and self-esteem and make new friends.

Initially Sam struggled to integrate with the group and faced some hostility from other young people, but he was encouraged and supported to get fully involved with sessions and to contribute and be open in group discussions so that the other young people could understand him better.

Sam loved the boxing sessions, attending every session and was always the first to arrive and last to leave. He threw himself into learning this new skill, persevering when he found it difficult, and even took a skipping rope home to practice.

As the sessions went on, Sam grew in confidence and began to feel more comfortable in the group and made friends with some of the other young people. Sam's parents have also seen a huge improvement in his attitude at home saying that as a result of coming to Boxsmart he is happier, more focussed and there have been less family disagreements.

Sam is planning to continue with boxing; he asked for a got a punching bag for Christmas and is planning on making the most of his 6-month free gym membership with the support of his parents.



*"I've learned to focus better and not let frustrations stop me from carrying on"*

• not his real name