

COMMUNITY MINIBUS FUND

BOXING FUTURES: PEOPLE CHANGE PEOPLE

Boxing Futures were awarded a minibus as part of the Community Minibus Fund second round. Chief Executive **Anthony York** spoke to *Together* about what this means for them.

Boxing Futures is a charity that aims to provide support and opportunity to disadvantaged young people through rehabilitative sports programmes and mentoring. “Our aim,” said Anthony York, Boxing Future’s Chief Executive, “is to bridge the gap between young people and the wider community from which they can often feel excluded.”

In 2017, Boxing Futures was one of 40 organisations to receive a minibus through the second round of the Department for Transport’s Community Minibus Fund (facilitated by CTA), something which Anthony says will have a significant impact on their work.

Many of the beneficiaries of Boxing Futures are young people who have been exposed to family breakdown,

communication problems, are involved in petty crime, live in deprivation and have been, or are at risk of being, involved in anti-social behaviour. Beyond this, many of the beneficiaries have specific physical and/or mental health needs.

Boxing Futures work to make an important, immediate and enduring positive impact on the lives of the young people they work with. They do this by improving their physical and mental wellbeing through sport, building empowering and non-judgemental relationships and creating pathways into new experiences. “At boxing futures,” said Anthony, “we believe in the goodness of the human spirit and that people change people. Through our work we hope that this new found experience and energy in a young person’s life can be a platform from which they can pursue routes into employment, education, training and volunteering.”

One of the key barriers to getting more people involved in this work however has been the availability of accessible transport. “We made the application to Minibus Fund,” said Anthony, “in order to prevent transport from being a barrier to participation in the programme. Many of the young people who want to attend Boxing Futures aren’t always able to access their own



transport, private or public, due to financial constraints, availability, or not being able to independently use other forms of transport.”

The impact of accessible transport

The new minibus is going to have an enormous impact on Boxing Futures’ activities. They already have drivers lined up to undertake MiDAS training and once they’re trained, plans are in place to undertake seven residential trips over the next 18 months, something which would have previously cost the organisation upwards of £4,500. Because of the new vehicle, Boxing Futures will have the ability to grow and provide more outreach to more young people. Where they were previously based in one community centre, their location can now vary, allowing more young people to benefit from their services.

The ability to reach young people who otherwise may have been excluded from Boxing Futures’ activities, said Anthony, demonstrates the ethos that underpins the organisation: “to foster a collective attitude and environment of inclusion and togetherness.”

“We believe in the goodness of the human spirit and that people can change people.”