2025 ESPORTS YOUTH CLUB REVIEW



Lewis Kay, Esports Youth Club (EYC) Founder

Esports Youth Club began in 2021 on the Tulse Hill Estate, where I was seeing first hand how few spaces truly reflected the lives and interests of young people. Gaming and esports were already bringing young people together, so we built a youth club around that reality.

As we enter our fifth year at EYC, I am incredibly proud of what we have achieved. Through weekly programmes across South London, we have engaged thousands of young people in positive, structured activities and helped shape a new standard of youth provision that meets young people where they are.

This progress has been driven by collaboration, determination and a willingness to do things differently. Your support helps make this work possible and I am excited about what we will continue to build alongside the next generation.

1,598

DEDICATED YOUTH WORK HOURS PROVIDED

383

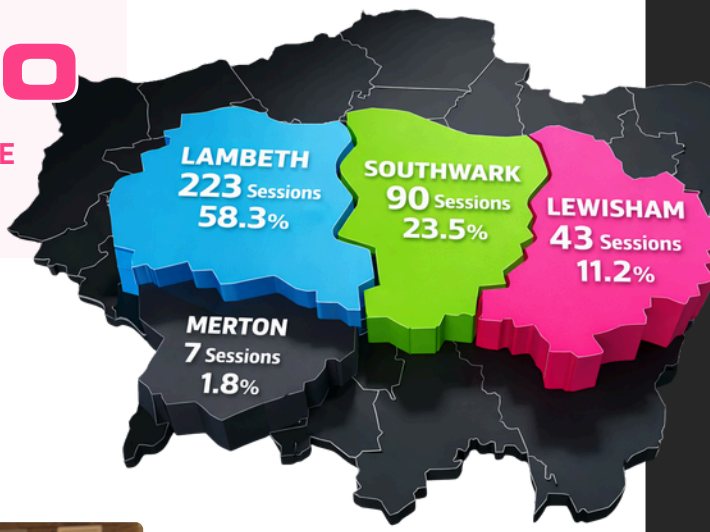
SESSIONS AND EVENTS HOSTED

1,602

UNIQUE YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGED

4,670

YOUNG PEOPLE ATTENDED



CURRENTLY: 4 CORE YOUTH HUB SPACES RUNNING 8 WEEKLY SESSIONS



Southwark, Various



West Norwood Library, Lambeth



Heathbrook Hall, Lambeth



Pollards Hill Library, Merton

We delivered consistently last year across 4 South London boroughs for a total of 383 sessions split across Lambeth, Southwark, Lewisham and newly added Merton.

With a core team of 2 full-time employees and 12 freelance youth workers, we achieved a marked uplift in delivery, hosting over double the amount of sessions compared to 2024.

2025 ESPORTS YOUTH CLUB IMPACT

A PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE

Feeling safe is the foundation of everything we do. When young people feel safe, they come back. They relax. They open up. They try new things.

Fun is what brings young people through the door. Feeling better is what they leave with.

Our sessions provide fun, safe spaces to encourage laughter, friendship and confidence.

100% said they feel safe and included at sessions

98% are likely to return

70% made at least one new friend

86% rated sessions **8/10** or above

80% Saw an increase in mood and personal wellbeing



SOMEWHERE TO BELONG

Many young people told us that without EYC they would be "at home on my phone" "doing nothing" and "at home in my room".

For many, this is their only youth space:

65% of EYC's young people do not attend any other youth clubs

Our sessions provide space for young people to thrive and grow together in a trusted environment.



"Thank you for making a place that helps kid socialise with other people"

GROWING SKILLS THROUGH PLAY

Young people come to play, but they grow while they're here. We asked our young people if they'd felt an improvement in any skills. Of those asked, we saw plenty of growth:

66%	50%	40%	50%
improved digital skills	grew in confidence	improved communication	improved teamwork

This happens naturally, in a space where young people feel supported by experienced youth workers.

OPENING FUTURE DOORS AND AMBITIONS

Access changes what young people believe is possible.

28%	1 out of 5	80%
developed an interest in esports or gaming careers	became more interested in coding or computer science	used digital tech they hadn't accessed before

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THEORY OF CHANGE

CONTEXT

Marginalised young people, and a lack of safe spaces catering to the needs of a new generation of young people

ACTIVITIES

EYC creates safe, accessible spaces for young people to enjoy playing video games with like-minded peers

OUTCOME

Increased social connection, improved esteem, enhanced skills, increased confidence

IMPACT

Access to increased safe spaces for young people, increased knowledge of career pathways, increased social inclusion

HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS



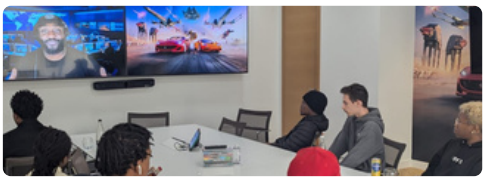
Partnered with ESP Foundation for the whole year to deliver girls-only sessions for **over 300 girls**



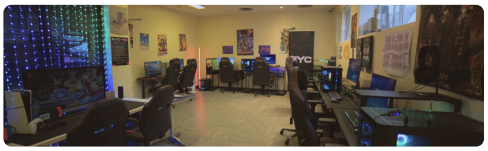
Prince William attends an EYC session at Mentivity House



Partnered with Black Thrive to deliver wellbeing in esports sessions across Lambeth



Developed internal work experience & internship schemes



Transformed Heathbrook Hall on Heath Estate, Clapham into a high-spec esports suite free for the community



Grew Lambeth's first esports academy, made possible by the Walcot Foundation

BEHIND THE NUMBERS: AN INDIVIDUAL CASE STUDY

A first attended our club at the beginning of last year. A is a young person with autism and social anxiety, and on his first visit he was extremely withdrawn, finding it difficult to make eye contact or communicate with youth workers. This began to change when A was introduced to Nintendo's Super Smash Bros by our youth workers. A began to attend EYC weekly, finding a shared interest that helped him connect with others. Over time, he became more confident, began communicating more openly with staff and peers, and developed a strong sense of belonging within the club.

A has since discovered a passion for competitive gaming and has asked to take part in in-person Super Smash Bros. tournaments across London. With support and chaperoning from our team, he is now engaging positively in new environments and embracing new challenges. A is now a confident and engaged member of the club community. His family have shared how pleased and grateful they are to see him thriving in a space where he feels accepted and supported.

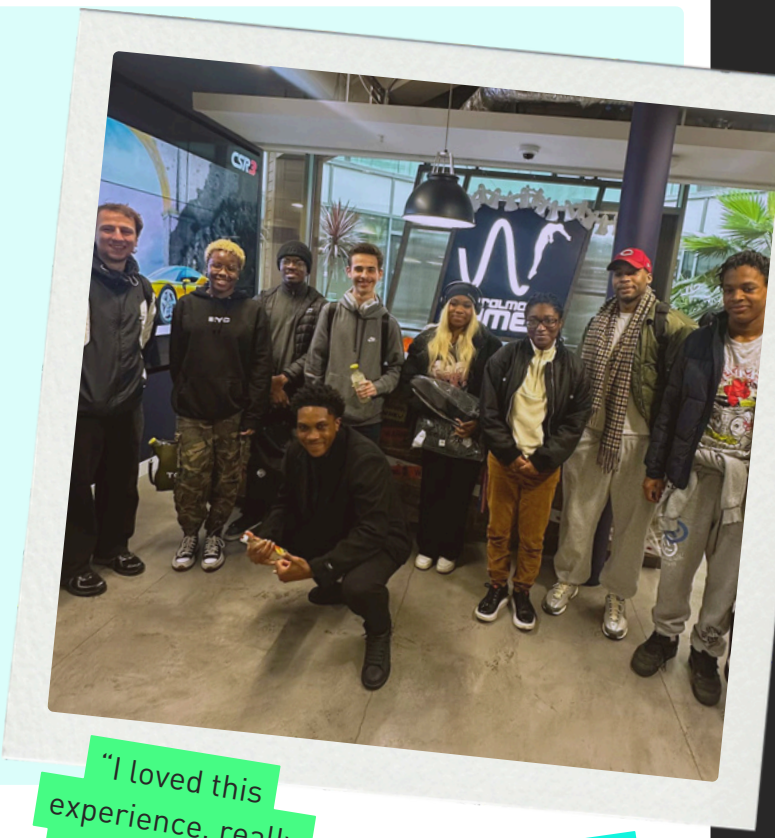
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COLLABORATIVE HIGHLIGHT

BLACK ZYNGA UNION

The Zynga BZU hosted a one week mentorship programme for six selected Esports Youth Club members who were paired with experienced Zynga professionals to gain insights into the world of gaming. The programme aimed to build confidence, provide career insights, and foster personal and professional growth through regular engagement, skill-building activities, and exposure to the gaming ecosystem.

We had a truly insightful week at one of the world's largest gaming companies, with 175 work experience hours delivered via this partnership.



"This engaging programme has provided we with countless opportunities to gain valuable insights on the corporate and professional side of game development." - Grace, 17

"I loved this experience, really grateful for this opportunity." - Emily, 16

"It was really cool to spend the days in the office, knowing what it's like to work in that environment now." - Samuel, 18

"I wish this existed when I was growing up" - Parent

"This is a once in a lifetime opportunity. I've learnt so much and it's not something you'd usually get to do." - Frankie, 17



COLLABORATIVE HIGHLIGHT

BBC CHILDREN IN NEED

Following an initial consultation with local young people, we secured multi-year funding from BBC Children in Need to deliver a new EYC hub within the borough of Merton. Partnering with Merton Libraries, we identified Pollards Hill Library as the ideal location for the hub, open every Friday PM.

The youth club has started wonderfully, seeing an average of at least 12 young people attending the hub per week, and receiving support from local councillors from Merton, including the Mayor of Merton. We are so pleased with how the hub has started and look forward to evaluating the resulting impact for young people over the next 3 years.

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WE RELY ON YOUR SUPPORT



We currently 'punch above our weight' with the amount of services we deliver compared to our overall revenue intake.

With your ongoing support, we can continue to provide safe, fun spaces in the heart of communities that need it most.

We are actively seeking new partners and sponsors to support core youth club costs, work experience opportunities, half-term provisions and to grow our team to continue delivering impactful youth services.

@esportsyouthclub

If you'd like to support us or find our more about Esports Youth Club, please get in touch today.

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Thank you from Team EYC!