

# Youngsters box clever in healthy living drive

By CHRIS HOLE

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YOUNGSTERS in Middlesbrough have been acknowledged for their tough fighting spirit during a healthy living course.

Since last December, Middlesbrough Council has been helping both boys and girls to develop skills in boxing with help from the Amateur Boxing Association of England.

And the commitment and hard work of the 90 youngsters taking part was acknowledged at a special awards ceremony at The Muslim Community Centre on Waterloo Road, Middlesbrough.

Hartlepool's European Boxing Champion, Amanda Coulson, and Middlesbrough Councillor Habib Rehman presented each youngster with an Amateur Boxing Association Certificate of Achievement and a medal.

Rakeem Mohammed, 14, said: "It was really good fun. It gives us something to do and keeps kids off the street too. It's something I am going to keep doing."

Nine-year-old, Ihsaan Hussain, said: "It's been good fun and good exercise. It was the first time I had tried boxing and I have learned lots of new things."



**KNOCKOUT:** Amanda Coulson and Idrees Arangzabe, left, Rakaem Mohammed, above left, and Daniyal Din

Tackling the rising tide of obesity in young children is a health improvement priority for Middlesbrough Council.

Obesity is the second biggest

cause of preventable death in the UK. In Middlesbrough, the council aim to enable at least 70% of the population to be active by 2020.

Imran Naeem, Public Health

Specialist from Middlesbrough Council, said: "Boxing skills help young people stay active, learn about health and fitness. The popularity of the awards has taken us by surprise and we look forward to developing the boxing skills awards over the next few months."

Councillor Habib Rehman, who represents University Ward, home to many of those taking part, said: "These young people have shown dedication and determination and can be rightly proud of their achievement."