



Pathway Strategy

Member Consultation Report



BUILT
DIFFERENT 

The Boxing Ireland Pathway Strategy is an athlete development framework designed to create a clear progression from grassroots club boxing to the High Performance Unit

It aims to:

- Reduce the significant athlete drop-off that typically occurs between the U19 and U23 age groups.
- Help talented athletes transition successfully into senior elite boxing.
- Ensure athlete development is based on long-term potential rather than short-term result

An important element of strategy development is wide-ranging consultation across stakeholder groups, including Central Council Coaching Commission, Provincial Council leaders, members of the Officer Board and Central Council, current and former High Performance athletes and coaches, and others.

This report focuses on the feedback from club coaches, club leaders, club boxers, parents'guardians and official on how they feel Boxing Ireland's Pathway Stragety should develop.

Feedback was invited in August 2026, and invitations to particpate were shared with all affiliated clubs, county boards & provincial councils, on Boxing Ireland's website and across social media platforms.

116 people clubs took part, of whom 20 expressed interest in participating in follow-on workshops

This consultation has been conducted, and is presented, by Boxing Ireland Pathway Development Lead, Daithi McCabe

What We Asked



Your top 3 priorities for Boxer Development in your club

Your top 3 priorities for Boxer Development throughout the Pathway

Your top 3 priorities for Coach Development, within your club

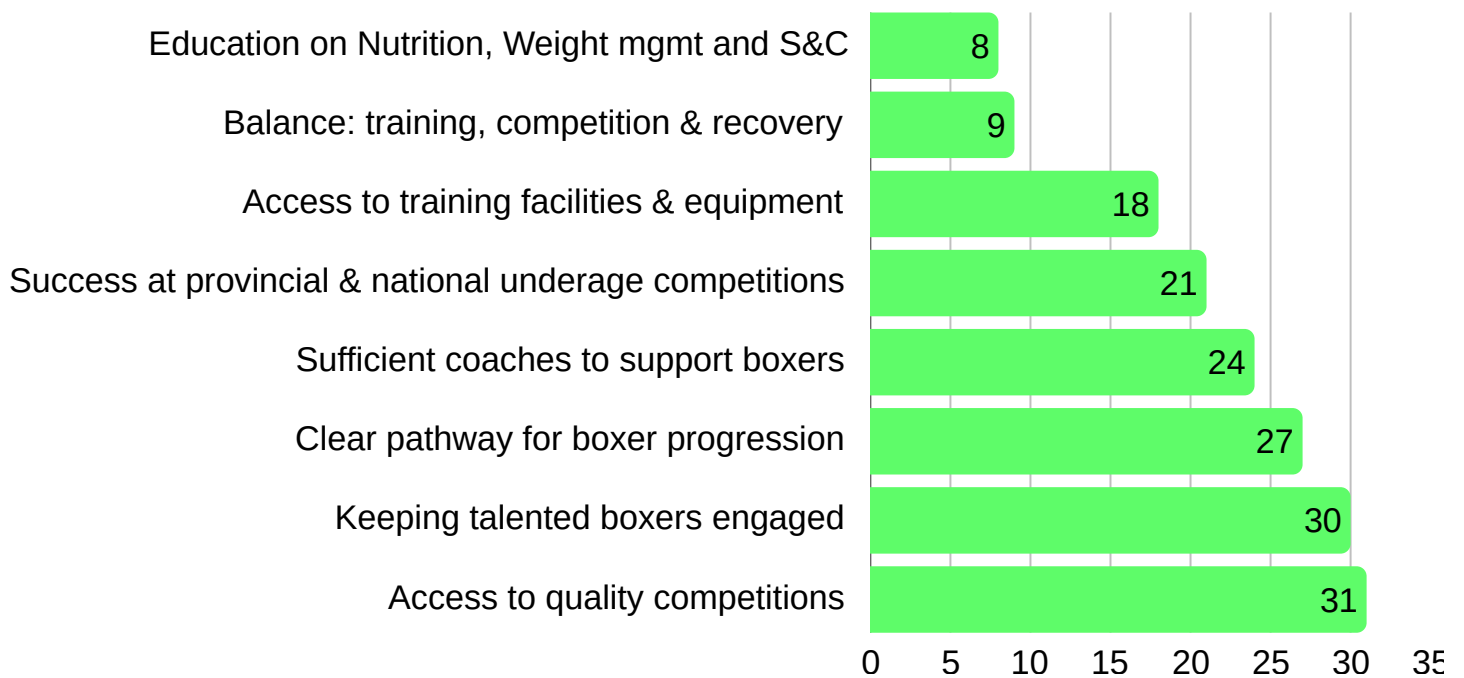
Your top 3 priorities for Coach Development throughout the Pathway

What are the top 3 reasons young boxers leave the sport?

What You Said

Your Top 3 priorities for Boxer Development within your club

1. Access to quality competition(s)
2. Keeping talented young boxers in the sport
3. Having a clear pathway for boxers to progress



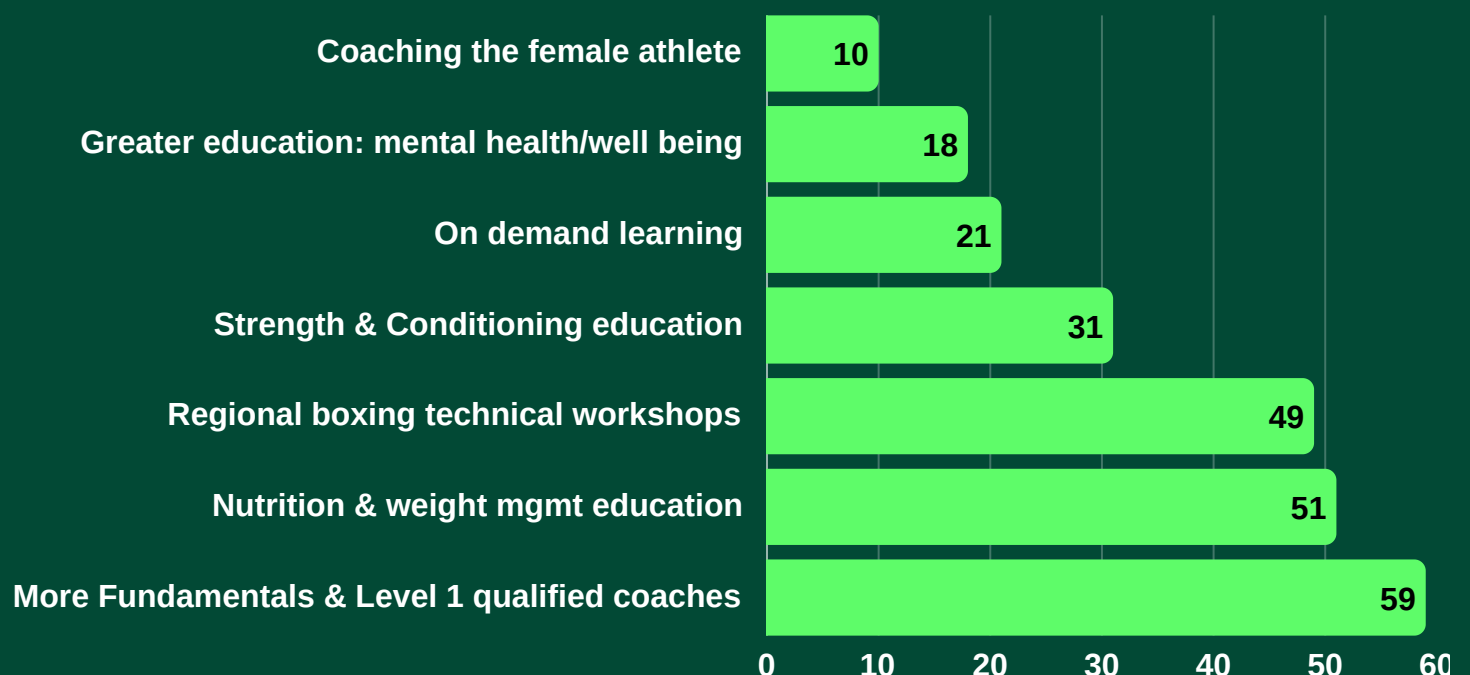
Top 3 priorities for Boxer Development throughout the Elite Pathway

1. International experience
2. Opportunities for non-champions
3. Provincial development squads/programs



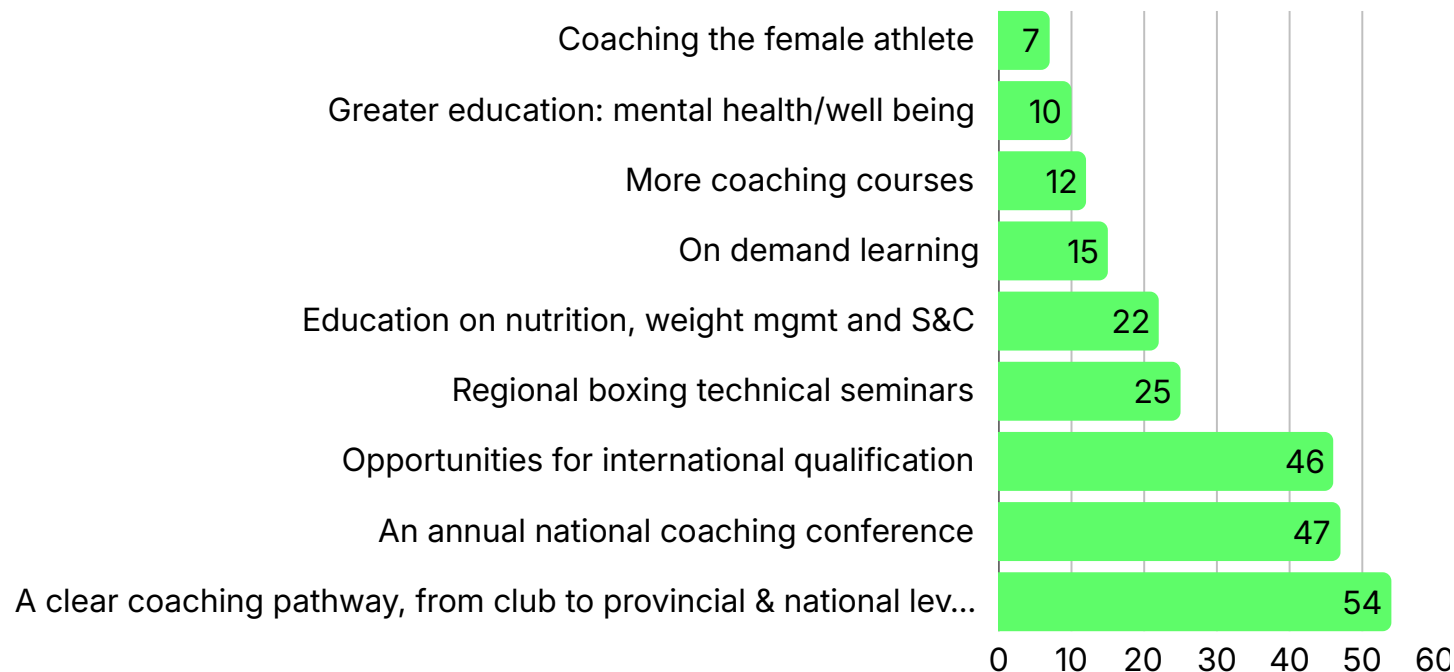
Top 3 priorities for Coach Development, within your club

1. Getting more coaches qualified in the Fundamentals and Level 1 courses
2. Nutrition and weight management education
3. Boxing technical workshops delivered across the provinces



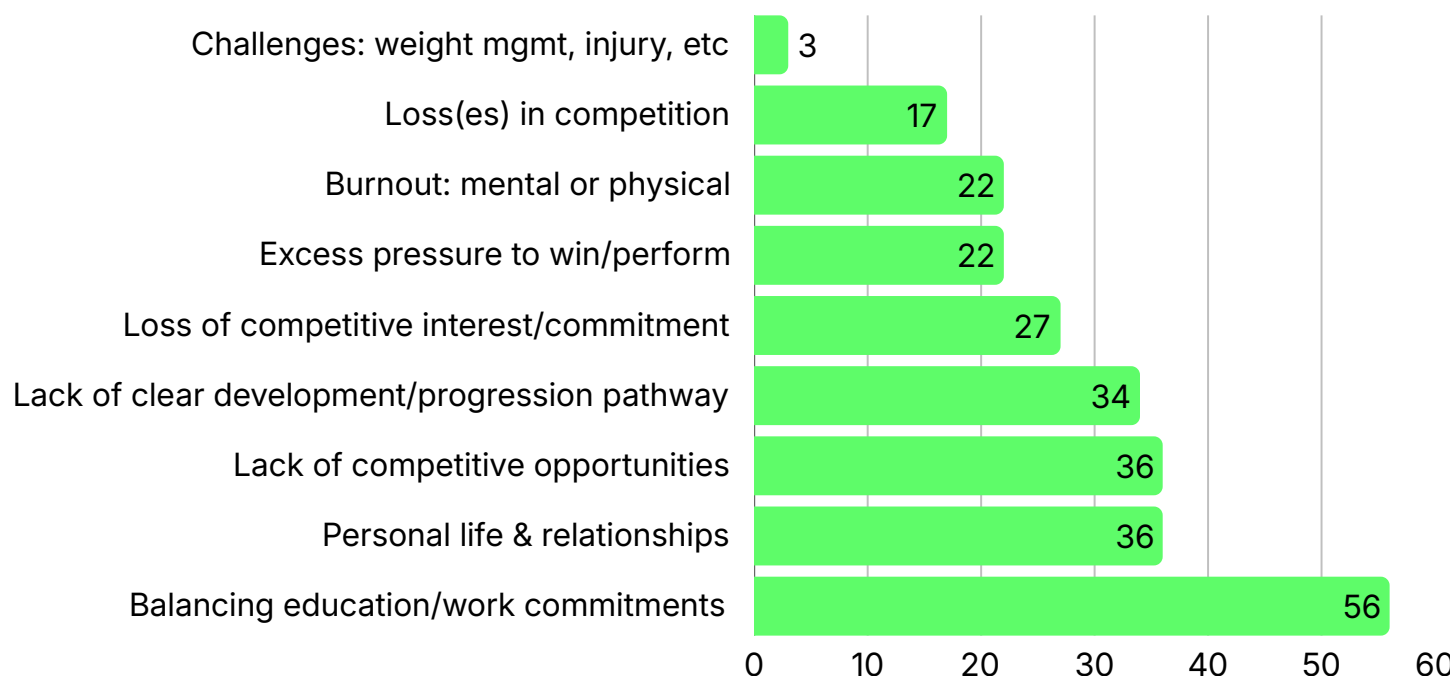
Top 3 priorities for Coach Development in the Elite Pathway

1. A clear pathway for coaches to progress from club to provincial/national level
2. A national coaching conference, run over one weekend each year
3. Opportunities for international/coaching courses



Top 3 reasons young boxers leave the sport

1. Balancing education/work commitments
2. Personal life and relationships
3. Lack of opportunities for competition



Additional Insights



What else is important to consider when developing a pathway for Boxing Ireland?

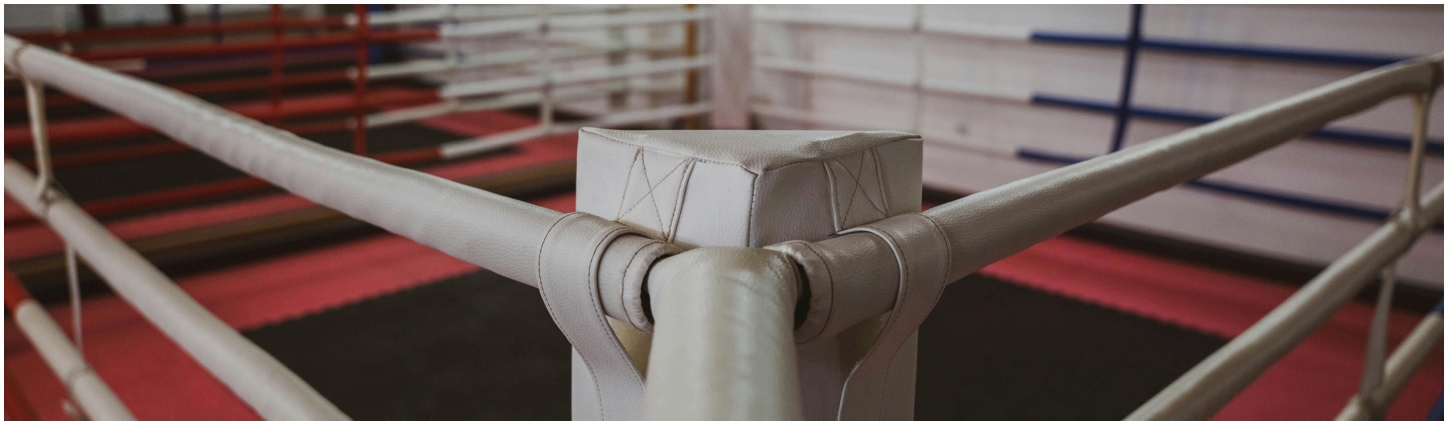
Pooled responses highlight six recurrent themes:

Theme 1. Inclusive Selection & Opportunities

a) Talent Identification Over Winning: Shift from only selecting the national champions to identifying boxers with potential (e.g., runners-up, number 2's and number 3's).

b) International & High-Performance (HP) Exposure: Development squads, multi-nation camps, and international travel opportunities for non-champion boxers to prevent talent drop-off.

c) Clear Selection Policies: Need for clear, transparent, and effective selection criteria for international competition and high-performance entry rather than perceived favoritism ("who knows who").



Theme 2. Competition

a) The U19-to-U23 Gap: Need for an Under-21 competition to bridge the step up from U19 to U23/Elite, helping to keep more young boxers engaged and involved in the sport.

b) Novice & Adult Beginner Pathways: A need for more entry-level competition structures for novice and less experienced boxers who want to compete beyond club exhibition.

c) Domestic Calendar: Structured county, provincial, and regional league systems to support development and provide regular competition activity for boxers throughout the year.

Theme 3. Grassroots & High-Performance Alignment

a) Coach-to-HP Collaboration: Improve the link between national high-performance coaches and club coaches (e.g., shared athlete development plans, joint training sessions).

b) Coach Education & Workshops: Regular regional/in-person workshops, seminars with past champions/coaches, and clear pathways for club coaches to transition into provincial and national coaching roles.



Theme 4. Referee and Judging - Fairness & Standards

a) Domestic Officiating: The need for consistent standards and fairness with domestic judging/refereeing. Highlighted as a factor causing boxers to leave the sport.

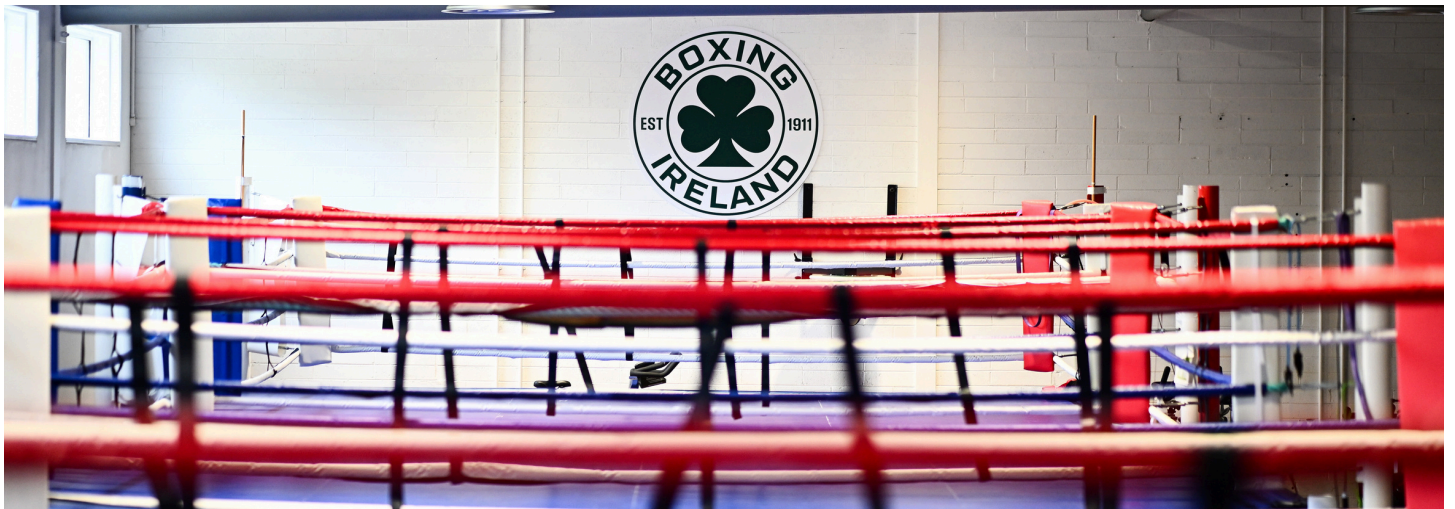
b) Governance & Accountability: Calls for independent oversight and transparent complaint processes to maintain trust in local and national tournaments.

Theme 5. Female Athlete Pathways & Support

a) Tailored support for female boxers: Female-focused development and sparring opportunities combined with specific support e.g. weight management

Theme 6. Athlete Well-Being, Weight Management & Burnout

a) Well-being: Highlighting the mental toll on young boxers, specifically surrounding weight management pressures, balancing social/school life, and intense training loads at early ages.



Next Steps

Boxing Ireland will create a Strategy Development Working Group, which will be comprised of between 6 and 8 people of relevant experience and perspectives across Irish Boxing.

This group will create the Strategic Plan for the Boxing Ireland Pathway.

The Working Group is expected to be in situ before the end of Q4 2026.