



COMMUNITY FUND FUND

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

Application No 03

Organisation:	Hyndburn and Haslingden MP
Contact:	Sarah Smith

Application Details

Project Name: Everyone Deserves a Place to Feel Safe
Project Location & District: Unit 12, Alliance Business Park, Corporation Street, Accrington, BB5 0RU
Outreach in Accrington town centre, Spring Hill, and Fern Gore areas
District: Hyndburn
Project Duration: 6 Months
Proposed Start Date: 1st November 2025

Commissioners Priorities:

- Tackling violence against women and girls
- Reducing street crime
- Reducing anti-social behaviour
- Providing diversionary activities for young people to reduce risk of crime and ASB

Project Summary:

This pilot project aims to address the growing issue of youth-related anti-social behaviour in Accrington by offering structured, engaging, and supportive evening activities. Delivered by Victoria Street Bangers in partnership with New Era Hyndburn Youth Zone and the Hyndburn Neighbourhood Police Team, the project will provide a safe space for young people to develop confidence, discipline, and aspirations through sport, mentoring, and community engagement.

The initiative responds to concerns raised by police, community leaders, and local businesses about increasing incidents of vandalism, intimidation, and disorder involving young people. It also addresses the lack of accessible, structured evening activities that can divert young people from negative influences and risky behaviours.

Summary of Activities:

- 48 structured evening sessions (2 per week over 6 months) offering free boxing and Muay Thai training
- Mentoring and safeguarding support delivered by trained youth workers
- Food and refreshments provided at each session
- Session branding, music, and equipment upgrades to enhance engagement
- Peer mentor development to empower young people to support one another

Project Brief:

- Two community engagement events, including a family showcase and a town centre safety feedback session
- Professional video and case study production to document impact
- Travel support and hardship fund to ensure accessibility for vulnerable participants

There is daily evidence of youth challenges in Hyndburn, including bullying, social media conflicts, and weapon carrying. The area ranks among the most deprived in England, with limited youth services. Local HAF programmes have shown that targeted, safe activities can positively impact vulnerable young people. The Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) supports diversion efforts and will help monitor impact during the pilot. The project was shaped directly by young people's requests. Feedback through informal chats and social media led to tailored features like later start times, girls' self-defence, chosen music, free snacks, and a co-created rule set. Trusted youth informants also provide ongoing insights to keep the offer relevant.

Issue Identified:

Accrington is experiencing a rise in youth-related anti-social behaviour, particularly in the town centre. Young people are increasingly vulnerable to gang activity, peer pressure, and even knife crime due to a lack of safe, structured evening activities. Many face challenges such as bullying, low self-esteem, and disconnection from school or family, making them more susceptible to risky behaviour.

No. Of Individuals Expected to Engage:

Approximately 20 young people (based on travel support estimates), with potential for wider community engagement through events and outreach.

Referral Pathways:

The initiative targets 10–18-year-olds at risk of antisocial behaviour, exclusion, exploitation, or mental health struggles. Entry is via:

- Open access sessions (no questions asked)
- Warm referrals from schools, police, and parents
- Quick triage on arrival to assess risks and gather contact info

While not formally outlined, engagement is expected through:

- Victoria Street Bangers' existing youth network
- New Era Hyndburn Youth Zone
- Hyndburn Neighbourhood Police Team
- Community outreach in identified hotspot areas

Safeguarding is led by a designated DSL. All staff are DBS-checked and trained. Risk assessments cover all activities, and concerns are logged securely. Clear rules prohibit weapons, bullying, and street disputes in the gym.

Partners Involved:

- **New Era Hyndburn Youth Zone** – co-delivery and outreach
- **Hyndburn Neighbourhood Police Team** – community safety support and engagement

The NPT will support through:

- Referrals and intelligence sharing
- Light-touch presence during outreach
- Optional inputs on knife crime and online safety

They will not promote a specific gym but will help guide young people to safe alternatives.

Amount Requested From PCC: £14,540

Overall Cost & Breakdown:

Total Project Cost: £14,540

Breakdown:

- Coaching & mentoring (48 sessions): £5,760
- Volunteer expenses: £720
- Food & refreshments: £3,600
- Session branding, DJ/music, equipment upgrades: £810
- Activity expenses: £2,340
- Travel support & hardship fund: £960
- Monitoring & evaluation: £350

Funding Source: Entirely from PCC budget (no match funding indicated)

The pilot is a stepping stone toward longer-term funding. Applications are underway with Reaching Communities, Asda Foundation, Co-op, and Sport England. A mixed funding model will support free youth sessions, volunteer coach training, and expanded school referrals.

Evaluation Suggestions:

- Attendance tracking and session logs
- Participant feedback and testimonials
- Monitoring of local crime and ASB data
- Case studies and video documentation
- Measurable reduction in youth-related ASB in targeted areas
- Improved physical and mental wellbeing among participants
- Strengthened relationships between young people and community mentors

Outputs: 48 sessions, 60–80 young people, 10+ 1-to-1s/month, 2 showcases

Outcomes: Improved attendance, reduced conflict, increased safety and belonging

Evidence: Session registers, mood check-ins, anonymised notes, NPT/CCTV feedback, and participant surveys

Priority Supported:

Tackle Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour
Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls

Partner Consultation

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire

The proposal shows potential.

ASB, Prevention and Problem-Solving Command

The proposal for Victoria Street Bangers is seen as promising, especially given the current rise in youth-related antisocial behaviour in Accrington. The concept of using boxing and mixed martial arts as diversionary activities is welcomed and considered reasonable in terms of cost and structure. However, concerns were raised about the **sustainability** of the project once the initial £14k funding ends, and whether there are plans to secure **ongoing revenue**. A key point of consideration is whether the project will work **in partnership with local police**, particularly in accepting **referrals from NHPT teams** to ensure the right young people are engaged. If

this can be clearly demonstrated, the initiative is likely to be well received.