



RECOMMENDATION REPORT

DECISION: 77/2025	DATE: 02/02/2026
TITLE: STOP-THINK-SELF-DEFENCE (Z'S DEFENCE ACADEMY)	
AUTHOR: BETH WILLMOTT	
SPONSOR: BECKY TYSON	
Executive Summary The OPCC, in partnership with Z's Defence Academy, Aspire Burnley and Bahja Initiative , is proposing a targeted initiative to support women and girls in Burnley, Accrington, and Blackburn who face heightened risks of violence, harassment, and cultural barriers to support. Running from December 2025 to June 2026, the programme will deliver an 18-hour empowerment model comprising a 6-hour intensive self-defence course and 12 weekly confidence-building sessions in women-only spaces with female instructors. Designed through community consultation, it will address gaps in culturally competent VAWG prevention, builds physical readiness, psychological confidence, and awareness of early warning signs, while fostering peer networks and referral pathways to specialist services.	
Recommendation The Police and Crime Commissioner is asked to approve the allocation of £13,730 from POCA Funds to implement this initiative.	

PART I

1. Background and Advice

This project is a co-produced, community-led initiative delivered by **Aspire Burnley Community Development, Bahja Initiative (Accrington), and Z's Defence Academy (Blackburn)**. It aims to address gaps in culturally competent violence-prevention services for South Asian and minoritised women and girls across Lancashire.

The programme offers an **18-hour personal safety and empowerment course**, combining:

- A **6-hour intensive self-defence and awareness session** led by Z's Defence Academy.
- **12 weekly 1-hour physical confidence sessions** co-delivered by all partners.

Delivery will take place in **women-only spaces** with female instructors to ensure cultural sensitivity and safeguarding. Three cohorts will run in Burnley, Accrington, and Blackburn, providing equitable access across East Lancashire.

The approach integrates **knowledge, physical readiness, and psychological confidence**, shaped through community consultation and previous programme feedback. It addresses barriers such as stigma, language, and cultural expectations, ensuring accessibility for working women, mothers, and students.

By combining trusted community engagement with specialist training, the project aligns strongly with PCC priorities on **prevention, community resilience, and safer environments for women and girls**.

2. Links to the Police and Crime Plan

Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls

3. Consultations

Engagement with Lancashire Constabulary, LANPAC, Community Safety Partners, Specialist VAWG Services, Local Community, faith and Youth Partners and Academics.

4. Implications:

a. Legal

Funding will be issued directly to Z's Defence Academy under a Grant Agreement. The recommendation for signing includes delegated powers, and the 151 Officer has agreed to sign the Grant Agreement thereafter.

b. Financial

£13,739 to be allocated from the POCA Reserves.

c. Equality Impact Assessment

Subject to the Equality Impact Assessment across all community funding.

d. Data Protection Assessment

There are no direct Data protection implications in the making of this decision.

5 Risk Management

Subject to Community Fund Risk Management matrix.

6. Background Papers

Appendix A.

7. Public access to information

Information in this form is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and other legislation. Part 1 of this form will be made available on the PCC website within 3 working days of approval. Any facts/advice/recommendations that should not be made available on request should not be included in Part 1 but instead on the separate Part 2 form.

Officer declaration	Date
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS – As above	
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS – As above	
EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS – As above	
CONSULTATION – As above	
<p>Author</p> <p>Signature: Beth Willmott Date: 08/01/26</p>	
<p>Sponsor</p> <p>I have read the above report and confirm this is factually correct.</p> <p>Signature: Becky Tyson Date: 21/01/26</p>	
<p>Section 151 Officer for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner</p> <p>I have read the above report and have considered the financial implications. I am satisfied that this is an appropriate (financial) request to be submitted to the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire.</p> <p>Signature: Steve Freeman Date: 21/01/26</p>	
<p>Chief Executive (Monitoring Officer) for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire</p> <p>I have been informed about the proposal and confirm that financial, legal and equalities advice has been taken into account in the preparation of this report. I am satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire.</p> <p>Signature: Anna Hopkins Date: 21/01/26</p>	