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| Idea/Policy: | Self Defence [link] |
| Date/Time/Location: | 4 December 2025, MS Teams |
| Student Attendees: | Abby Kenrick |
| Staff Attendees: | Suzie Moffatt (Community Advice & Support), Jane Baston (SVRM), Molly Purcell (SSVC), Chloe Batten (SVC) |
| Apologies: | |
| Actions/Outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CB to send updated policy to group members ▪ CB to ask WO if she has any comments ▪ Policy to be implemented |

Minutes

AK begins the meeting by asking SM about the self-defence classes she's been leading.

SM: we had one last night, doing another three classes in Term 2 plus two women's only classes, so five in total

AK: what were your reflections on how it was received?

SM: generally received well. The only negative feedback we had via comment cards was about the room size. The classes are usually held in the dance studio but had to do it in the business school this time. Will book the room quicker next term to ensure we get the space.

Generally good feedback. Most people liked that we paced the lessons across 3 classes but some preferred one big session – hard to please everyone. Safety alarms offered at the end of the class were well-received. Had a comment that it'd be nice to have a women's only space, which is good because we've planned that. Most negative comments were about space – will consider the sports and fitness centre.

The sessions always sell out. Dropout rates are lower than other events – shows how popular and valuable they are.

AK: Lucy has a standalone women's only mixed martial arts class next week. Based on engagement and tickets selling out, it shows a big need for this. With recent attacks in the local area, people want to feel more secure and safe. The alarms are good too.

AK: We should renew the policy. Would be good to have accompanying VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls) policy to see if more campaign work can be done there and solidify Reclaim the Night as part of that.

JB advises submitting something through the democratic system/work with WO to. This policy mentions zero tolerance so

AK suggests remove the line about zero tolerance from the policy because it gives people a false sense of security and notion that we're able to sanction people for breaking the policy which isn't necessarily the case. Would be nice to add having the option of women's only events.

SM: Good idea if doing a VAWG element as women are feeling more unsafe at night. There are all-level classes taught by a Birmingham group. Women ones by women MMA.

AK: MMA are good to work with

MP: worth putting "women and non-binary people".

AK: concerns from LGBT+ community about homophobic attacks. Maybe we can do LGBTQ+ classes as well.

MP asks if AK want this under one umbrella or to differentiate between homophobic violence and VAWG

AK: keep broader because we don't know where/for what purpose people will want to use self-defence

SM: if we did an LGBTQ+ specific class it'd be ideal to find an LGBTQ+ NB instructor. However, we don't know enough about the instructors and their backgrounds

JB: it's best as a gender-based violence type of policy as this is specifically about self defence

SM comments about team budget and how societies can run self-defence classes themselves too

AK reflects on SM's comment about funding – so that it's not all on the community engagement budget but a whole guild responsibility

JB: we wouldn't use policy to make decisions about budgets. Should the Guild or university be doing this?

AK: from experience wouldn't get far with the university. We can look at how we fund within the Guild

JB: Yes, but not in the policy itself

AK: Last line of the policy needs work.

CB: You could add an action that the Guild will take

AK: Maybe the number of events

SM suggests the Guild will ensure at least 3 self-defence classes per term. Max budget is 3 per term, could be a benchmark.

AK – Good. Committing to a min of 3. We could do something around working with sports to ensure there's appropriate space available. They have a padded room for MMA and taekwondo classes that we could use.

SM: It's been difficult to book sports spaces

AK: Could work collaboratively with societies as they might have more contacts

SM: where possible we'd like to collab with societies. We're collaborating with women's society/committee on MMA. Could do different themed classes in collaboration with different societies

AK: good. Touches on collaborating with different student communities manifesto point. E.g. if LGBTQ+ association wanted to do a themed one

JB reads edits to politics and informs group that we can make future changes and don't have to get everything in now

AK: Guild believes in looking at preventive measures for violence? Not sure how to word it, or whether it should be in a VAWG policy.

JB: might sit better in there.

SM: this is probably as far as we can go for self-defence. But understands it shouldn't just be that we teach women how to defend and not have anything about preventing violence

AK: could put something in about offering personal alarms. We already offer this so can we reference it to make it a standard?

SM: people can collect door stop alarms and window alarms from our office any time. Ambassadors tell them they can collect safety things for home as part of the sessions.

JB: confirms AK wants direct implementation.

SM: it better reflects what we want to do

JB: this doesn't need an ASV

JB: we might want to meet again if the Women's Officer has comments, otherwise we will directly renew