

Lancashire Constabulary

The Tilley Award 2003

Category: Partnership

A.L.L. S.A.F.E.

Age Concern **L**ocal Authority **L**ancashire Police **S**ecurity **A**ddressed **F**or **E**veryone

SUMMARY

Endorsing Chief Officers:
Lancashire Police: Mr Stephenson
Age Concern: P Collister
Hyndburn Community Warden Leader: N Cook

By
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ALLSAFE

ALLSAFE was implemented to combat the upsurge in anti social behaviour in the Wai ms ley Close area of Accrington.

Hyndburn Council Community Wardens and CBW have first identified this, which was further evidenced by the rise in the number of Police incidents being reported.

A letter drop to 70 residents revealed the main concerns were that the area was run down, insufficient household security, the streets were badly lit, which contributed to a greater 'fear of crime' factor. Anti-Social behaviour was rife, they identified that most offenders were congregating around 2 problematic addresses.

To combat the problems, ALL-SAFE commenced in September 2002.

The Police, Social Services, Wardens, Housing and Maundy Grange Charity joined forces to deal with the 2 addresses and their associate problems, to either re-integrate the occupants or, as eventually occurred, to re-locate them.

Juvenile nuisance immediately reduced dramatically. Once the occupants left, so did the problem youths. Fear of crime was tackled by encouraging the charity 'Age Concern' to embrace the project. Funding was obtained resulting in all elderly residents in the area having free security devises installed in their houses (alarms, door locks, chains, window locks.)

'Community E-mail*', was introduced, in order to improve reassurance. Funding for email telephones, installed in homes in the Close, was obtained, and encourages "involvement*". The system was so successful that it was extended throughout Hyndburn.

A media campaign promoted our work in the area, and challenged other agencies to get involved. The Housing department agreed and negotiations secured premises on the estate for use by community, Police and Community Wardens, instilling further confidence in the locals.

ALLSAFE persuaded other partners to join, agreeing to tackle the layout of the Close. Money has been secured to increase the lighting, create defensible space, introduce 'Alleygating' (Hyndburn Regeneration Funding) improve the grassed areas ('Groundwork Team')-

fte Analysis, a letter drop obtained feedback. It depicted overwhelming turn around. Calls to police dropped dramatically. Such is the success; there is now a waiting list to re-locate to the area.

24/26 Whalley Road
Accrington
Lancashire BB5 1AA
Tel 01254 871010
Fax 01254 396624
Reg Charity No. 3036637

12th May 2003.

Dear Sir,

I write in support of the A.L.L.S.A.F.E project and to express the official thanks of Age Concern Hyndburn for the significant contribution which it has made to the improvement of the quality of life for the older people of Hyndburn.

The project originated from the wish of Sergeant Holbrook and W.P.C. Molloy to address the very real fear of crime which is prevalent amongst older people, particularly in areas where they feel at risk. It has improved the home security of some of the most vulnerable of our older people and has been an excellent example of joint working involving residents, the voluntary sector and the local authority.

The project has been of real and lasting value to the older people of Hyndburn and I would have no hesitation in commending it to you.

Yours sincerely,

Patrick Collister.
Chief Officer.

Making more of life for the older people of Hyndburn

Chairman Mr Ivan Smith JP
Chief Officer Patrick Collister Dip. H. Ed B.A. (Hons) P.G.C.E. (F.E.)

Age Concern Hyndburn is a full member of the National Council on Ageing



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

ALLSAFE PROJECT
Walmsley Close, Church, Accrington

To whom it may concern

In relation to the above project I would like to state that I endorse the submission in relation to the Tully Awards and agree that the working partnership adopted throughout the project has been beneficial to all concerned.

Yours sincerely

T. A. Cook

Position

COMMUNITY WARDEN CO-ORDINATOR

Date

17TH MAY 2003.

A.L.L. S.A.F.E. PROJECT

Age *Concern*

Local Authority

Lancashire Police

Security

Addressed

For

Everyone

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PROJECT ASSESSMENT

Walmsley Close is a small self-contained estate in the area of Church, Accrington. The estate itself consists of approximately 70 Local Authority owned properties of low quality, which were built in 1979 and were never intended to still be standing 24 years later.

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

The Hyndburn Community wardens were introduced to this and several other deprived wards of Accrington in July 2001, to patrol the area and in particular to concentrate on environmental issues and anti-social behaviour.

In September 2002 they highlighted the fact that residents were complaining to them in relation to the decline of the area. Anti-Social youths were congregating in the close shouting and swearing, damaging property and generally reducing the quality of life of the residents. Working in conjunction with the Police Community Beat Manager for the area, a decision was made to take action.

PROBLEM ANALYSIS - RESIDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Police analysis showed that complaints logged to the Police were running at an all time high generally in relation to Anti-Social behaviour and often from repeat victims. Joining forces, the Police and Wardens posted a questionnaire document to all the residents relating to all their concerns and fears in order that the analysis would show EXACTLY what the problems were, something which we identified Police systems could not always do. This project was about speaking to REAL people about REAL problems.

The returned pro forma document indicated that the residents feared the area was going downhill. They were afraid of the "Gangs" congregating on the estate, and they felt unsafe in their own houses, which had little security.

In addition, residents felt they were isolated from the Police, who they suggested did not prioritize the residents' concerns. Many residents, especially the elderly, lived in fear of the verbal abuse they may receive if they raised their concerns to the offenders and subsequent retribution.

Specifically, they blamed two problematic addresses for being a magnet to the youths, many of who lived outside the boundaries of the estate.

POLICE RESPONSE

Police response to the problems highlighted in the resident questionnaire addressed several major objectives. First, the police took formal action to alleviate immediate threats to the residents, and then undertook objectives to improve their general safety and security in their homes.

Objective 1: Consequences for Offenders

The first objective was the immediate problems caused by the unruly youths; Community Wardens collated information from residents who trusted them. Police, benefiting from help from the local residents groups, encouraged the locals to provide statements against offenders. Arrests were swiftly made imposing conditions not to enter the close where possible.

For the disruptive but not criminal element, Police supervision and the Warden Leader were initiated and personally visited the parents of the youths, warning of the consequences of further disruption to the residents and making an initial informal request for the parents to give the area some grace, getting their children to play elsewhere.

Working in conjunction with Hyndburn Council Solicitor, we successfully applied for an Anti-Social behaviour order using the evidence gathered from the residents. One specific youth was a persistent nuisance to all the residents and the subsequent prohibition not to enter the area quickly relieved much of the misery that he had previously inflicted. The removal of this youth from the area was of great benefit, as amongst other things it ensured that the residents began to feel empowered to assist the Police and to help themselves improve the area.

Objective 2: Social Assistance for Problematic Residents

It was now imperative to deal with the underlying problem as to why the youths constantly gathered in the close. The two problematic addresses highlighted in the residents' questionnaires were both female occupant single parent families.

The first resident was identified as a female with several small children. She was herself abusive to residents but also a victim of the congregating youths who took advantage of her weak disposition.

The house was found to be unkempt, and in a bad state of repair. All the furniture was damaged and there was even evidence of arson attacks within the bedrooms. Her children were impoverished, dirty and looked under nourished.

Again, Multi-Agency intervention was the key. The Police and Wardens approached both the Housing department of Hlyndburn Council/ Social Services/ "Maundy Grange" (a local charity benefiting the poor). It was decided that the occupant needed to be either re-integrated into the community with our help, or, if not, re-housed.

Our initial approach commenced with Maundy Grange, who refurbished the premises. Social Services and the Community Wardens jointly helped the female clean up the premises to make it more habitable. The Council installed new security to the premises and a period of close monitoring followed by the Police and Wardens in a "trial" period. Unfortunately, the female failed to independently maintain her residence in a habitable manner. Despite our assistance to prevent the youths re entering her house, she had allowed access to them stating she was "lonely". We believed this was putting the children at risk. The Housing Department therefore now instigated the full eviction proceedings using the previous evidence and her negative response to social assistance.

The close monitoring had revealed that her children continued to be neglected. Therefore, the Police initiated an urgent case conference, which resulted in the female's removal from the close to a more supervised location by Social Services, to the benefit of her children, and the subsequent benefit of the residents of Walmsley Close.

Simultaneously, the second address was also targeted for social assistance. The occupant in this case was uncooperative and in the knowledge of the evidence gathered against her, left the close prior to any eviction action being necessary.

Preliminary Outcomes following Police Intervention

The removal of these two addresses, the Anti-Social behaviour order, arrests of offenders, home visits, and the constant patrolling of the area by the Police and Community Wardens resulted in a dramatic reduction in youth congregation. The attached graphs show one hundred percent reduction in the amount of Anti-Social behaviour calls made from the Walmsley Close area from September 2002 to March 2003. March 2003 and April 2003 are still showing no calls to the Police from the Walmsley Close area in relation to Anti-Social behaviour. We accept that it is unlikely that this trend will continue indefinitely, but it does dramatically illustrate the success of our first 2 objectives.

We predicted that maintaining this reduction over a period of months would be difficult, however time has shown in our case that "magnet" addresses on an estate (i.e. problem addresses), where social rules are none existent, result in unacceptable behaviour being offered by the youths attracted to them. Remove the magnet and the bad behaviour declines.

The attached graphs (in the appendix) also shows that from September 2003 to March 2003 the total number of complaints in relation to ALL calls to the Police reduced from 26 to 2 calls. As can be seen from the graph, this is shown as a gradual decline throughout the months in between. This is a 92% reduction in ALL calls received, and depicts that ALLSAFE was not merely a "quick fix solution" but is more maintainable, when added to intervention with offenders and residents.(see below).

Objective 3: Reduce Crime Fears of Elderly Residents (ALLSAFE)

The next task was to reduce the "Fear of crime factor" expressed by the residents, many of whom were elderly. The Police required an agency with specific expertise in social issues to become involved. "Age Concern" was the obvious choice for the needed social agency, due to their goal of helping all individuals over 55 years of age in the region. Our approach was successful and they embraced the project, which we now gave the title ALLSAFE (Age Concern, Local Authority, Lancashire Police, Security Addressed For Everyone)

A further survey was commenced; this time to ascertain exactly what security issues the older occupants had concerns over with regard to their home addresses. Funding obtained from Age Concern under the ALLSAFE banner were then quickly raised, and financed the installation of free door alarms, "Spy-holes", window locks and door bars or chains to each address, tailor made for the client.

Not only did the installation assist in relieving the fear of crime, but it addressed the issues of "Independent Living", and facilitated their easier access to a diverse range of services available to them via the Charity, which many were previously unaware of. For example the use of free handyman service, free shopping service, cheap household insurance, social events and bereavement counselling.

After installation, a local survey was made of the clients who benefited from installation (see attached forms). 100 per cent of the replies received stated that the people felt safer within their own homes after the installation, and that their confidence in the support available to them via the Police, the Voluntary sector, and the Local Authority had increased.

The project also contributed to a National Survey, which was undertaken by the Age Concern Federation. We had extended the original "Fear of Crime" survey forms to a further 400 addresses throughout the area, 200 being in the area directly surrounding the Walmsley Close estate. One of the significant findings of the National Survey was that older people felt that they were never consulted about the fear of crime and that they felt that insufficient assistance was available to them to combat that fear. (Survey results out May 2003)

The ALLSAFE project has therefore not only been effective in combating that fear, and establishing an ongoing initiative to address it in the long term, but it has also identified, and responded at an early stage to an issue which is of National Significance.

Such is the success of this part of the project, it has now been agreed to extend the model across the entire Borough, an area that includes Accrington, Oswaldtwisle, Rishton, and Great Harwood.(the over 55 year olds from a population of 70,000 people!!)

Objective 4: Demonstrate Continued Police Involvement

We now needed to show that the Police had a commitment to continual involvement and reassurance in the area. Along with integration with the Community groups and regular presence in the area by the Community Beat Manager and the Community Wardens, to provide continuity of the project, the Police introduced a new initiative into the homes of key residents.

“Community Email” ensured that the residents received a weekly document in their homes from the Police giving regular updates on our activity and items of interest. It also covered crime prevention issues, local arrests, and patterns of emerging crime. Funding was obtained in order that free Email telephones could be provided to those without an Email address.

Email comments returned to the Police were not only positive but provided good intelligence. The system has now been extended to include all of Hyndburn with nearly all Resident Leaders, Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators, Councillors and importantly, key residents receiving the documents, resulting in the Emails being shared with vast sections of the Community. (See attached media release document that relates to the Community Email)

This is an important tool for the Police. We realise that we cannot be in all places at all times, yet wish the community to feel more involved—the email system does this for us, keeping many residents in the borough informed and involved with our work.

It will never replace our absence, and does not intend to, but will ensure that the public remain involved in our absences from the streets when we are not walking them. It also explains why we are not there, and what we are busy doing, therefore promotes greater understanding.

PROJECT OUTCOMES: BENEFITS FOR RESIDENTS AND AGENCIES

In a reversal of fortunes, the residents had now not only lost the problem occupants on the estate but have gained closer links with the Police and Wardens. Our relationship with the Housing department, which were forged during the eviction stages, had resulted in a successful negotiation to secure the now vacant property for our own use, Community Wardens and Local Councillors as a community premises where police surgeries, community meetings etc could be held.

The local residents groups had now gained much respect for ALLSAFE’s efforts and are very much involved with the project; Neighbourhood watch is being implemented in the area with a very strong response to the interest survey.

A media campaign released by the Police challenged other partnerships to become involved in the project. Our voices were heard by further Organisations and the “Walmsley Close Project” group has now been formed. The group is united to working strongly together to improve street lighting in the area, which was highlighted as another concern of the residents and one, which we understand, further feeds the “fear of crime” factor. We are also looking at improving “defensible space” (Trees and shrubs in front of the premises so that privacy is obtained and burglars are hindered). The charity “Groundwork” has secured funding to re

vamp the open spaces to provide something much more aesthetically pleasing to the eye. This group meets on a regular basis to discuss these long-term solutions and is attended by Police, Community Wardens, and Council officials, Resident Association Leaders, Groundwork, Housing, and Age Concern. To ensure that the initial aims of A.L.L.S.A.F.E are maintainable.

We understand that this project is a long term one, and therefore we are very proud to be involved with the move towards permanent long-term improvements for the area. We further understand that as a Police Force we must also understand our limitations- although we are keen to assist, matters of regeneration for the area are matters best undertaken by the experts in their field. We have been successful in getting the right people in the right place at the right time-to make things happen. It is this that gives us a justifiable sense of satisfaction.

PROJECT ASSESSMENT

We can always learn from every initiative. The gaining of an Anti-Social Behaviour Order was a lengthy process, and for all concerned somewhat frustrating. It is always difficult to gain trust from the Community when promising to get an Anti-Social Behaviour Order. The natural assumption of the community is to that these things happen overnight, which in most cases, is not possible.

By the nature of the system, there are time delays before the Orders are granted.

Eventually we managed to get one of the first "Interim" Anti-Social Behaviour Orders in existence, which did help to install confidence in the residents.

The individual who was served with the order has not breached the boundaries imposed, so its implementation was successful once it was in place.

We would have liked to have the resources to install security equipment in all of the houses and not just the homes of the elderly. We are currently making progress with other potential funding sources, so that we can extend the initiative to all the houses.

We successfully met the objectives of the program, as shown by several different types of evidence, via the results from our own assessments, and via the graphs attached with depict the reduction in complaints from the residents.

Our objective to reduce Anti-Social behaviour speaks for itself (see attached graphs).

Our objective to decrease the fear of crime in the residents was shown to be successful in the replies to our assessment letter.

Our objective to reassure the public that the Police "DO care" has been addressed by the installation of the security devices, the use of the community Email, and the continuing links with the Community Beat Managers.

Prior to the commencement of ALLSAFE many premises on the estate were empty. The Housing Department could not fill the houses, as it was such an undesirable area. The Housing Department have now informed us that there is now a waiting list of people wishing

to re locate to the Close. This in itself is an incredible turn around, and one that we are all justifiably proud of.

We feel that we have been able, via A.I.I.S.A.F.E. to show that the Lancashire Constabulary Reassurance Strategy is a workable system; Our results have enabled us to show that the Community of Walmsley Close ARE safer (security in homes), Involved (ASBO evidence, Community email) and Reassured (removal of the "gangs" and incompatible occupants).

We have done this in a professional manner, and have been effective in dealing with the full range of problems highlighted by the residents. We have shown that we have marshalled the resources of other agencies where appropriate to good effect.

We have confronted the behaviour that was unacceptable and have ensured that it has no place in the estate. We have been seen to deal pro-actively with the anti-social behaviour within the community, ensuring that our good reputation is maintained, and increasing the resident's faith in us as a Constabulary.

In summary, our program as a whole has been very successful, not only for the residents of this community but also as a demonstration of police and social service agency collaboration to fully address residents' concerns.

PS 6328 Holbrook
PC 2836 Molloy