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Andy Rhodes

Chief Constable
Lancashire Constabulary

“Actually aiming to have fewer calls to 999 in the first place, not charging around under flashing lights catching criminals, is where I want us to be. From the outside, people see the police as enforcement. But policing is about social impact, it’s about people feeling safe where they live, about people who are vulnerable being protected. The lock-up-and-throw-away-the-key-system isn’t working. We need to spend upstream.

I came across Triple Dividend [Community Links’ first Early Action Task Force report] when I was Deputy Chief Constable. The report wasn’t aimed at the police, but we feel at the bottom of the cliff too sometimes – where prevention and early action have failed. Its cliff metaphor became part of our language, from our crime plan to tons of frontline toolkits. It’s a department-wide approach. We’ve secured the biggest Police Innovation Fund grant in the country and are using it entirely for early action initiatives. The first early action police cohort that came out of this was immediately assigned to work on prevention in intensive neighbourhoods and an early action board has been set up to facilitate collaboration between different partners and agencies sharing the same purpose in the region.

We would never even be on this journey without the Early Action Task Force set up by Community Links. We are experiencing real challenges through austerity and work of the Task Force has helped us to light some candles instead of complaining about the dark. I remember telling the Task Force that the Lancashire Constabulary was spending 48% of its time dealing with issues that might have been prevented had they been addressed earlier. The Task Force offered positive language and a useful framework in which to develop preventative action and, above all, a new interpretation of success; a systemic view with people at its centre rather than a statistical account of narrow achievements.

I am now leading on a national consensus that’s developing a new model of local policing, integrated with partners and community assets. Despite the huge cuts everyone is facing, it’s an amazing opportunity for positive and lasting change.”