

## Neighbourhood and Home Watch

Crime in your community - are you concerned? - There is something positive you can do. Have you been the victim of crime recently? Do you have concerns on local crime? Are you interested in finding out how you can help reduce crime and fear of crime in your neighbourhood? If so, then please read on.

**Neighbourhood Watch** establishes a formal network for concerned citizens to report information to the local police, support each other in the community and follow crime prevention advice - reducing the opportunity for crime to occur by making it difficult for the criminal.

Neighbourhood members go about their normal lives but in addition, keep their eyes open for suspicious persons or vehicles in the neighbourhood.

Have you ever heard something suspicious but haven't known what to do about it? Neighbourhood Watch helps you handle information and pass it on to the right people.

Advice from local police is given; your local Neighbourhood Policing Team helps to set up the scheme. Crime prevention advice and details of local crime put you in the picture and there is no restriction on numbers of houses - it can be as few as five or as many as five hundred.

### Neighbourhood Watch - The facts

Residents of a community possess a specialised knowledge of their neighbourhood that even the proverbial 'village bobby' would take years to acquire. A police officer might not recognise someone in your garden as a stranger, but a neighbour would. This is what Neighbourhood Watch is all about.

Some residents think they shouldn't ring the police when they see something suspicious going on at a neighbour's house. They don't want anyone to think they're being nosy, prying around net curtains at other people's business.

In Neighbourhood Watch the residents all agree that they want each other to be vigilant as far as crime is concerned. If you have the phone number of the lady next door and you ring her at work to check that a removal firm should be clearing his house, who wouldn't be grateful?

### The role of the Co-ordinator

It is important that members of a scheme appreciate that the police do not run Neighbourhood Watch schemes. Whilst they will render assistance in starting and supporting a scheme, it is fundamentally the members who will run it.

The success of a scheme is often dependent on the enthusiasm of its Co-ordinator. The Co-ordinator is someone who is prepared to act as the central pivot, but recognises that work must be shared, so that all scheme members feel they have a role to play.

Although the Co-ordinator's duties will depend on the assistance offered by scheme members, his or her duties are basically:

- To encourage participation in your scheme amongst residents
- To circulate information received from the police and vice-versa
- To organise and attend local Neighbourhood Watch meetings

### The next stage

If you want to start a scheme, decide on the area to be covered. There are no hard and fast rules over the number of homes involved, although on average it tends to be between 10 and 20 houses. The size is entirely up to the Co-ordinator as he or she is the one that will probably have to visit each house several times!

The geography of the area may also decide for you (a cul-de-sac, block of flats or a section of road between two junctions, etc).

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The first job is to canvass your neighbours to see if there is sufficient interest. If you have a good response, contact the Neighbourhood Policing Team for your area, details shown below, to arrange a suitable date for them to give a talk to everyone. The meeting can be in your house, a local hall or school.

You may not be able to fix a date to suit everyone, just arrange the meeting to suit the majority - daytime or evening.

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You will probably have many questions to ask about Neighbourhood Watch and the Neighbourhood Policing Team will explain all this to you, so don't worry - you've nearly completed the hardest part!

If you want to start a scheme, or find out if one exists in your area, take that positive first step to making a difference in your community and contact the **Neighbourhood Policing Team** for your area.

<http://www.gmp.police.uk/content/neighbourhood.html?Readform;>

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