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**Neighbourhood Watch - Information for PCCs**

**1. Introduction**

1.1 Neighbourhood Watch is the largest crime prevention volunteer organisation in England and Wales with over 2.3m members and 90,000 street coordinators, with a well-known and trusted brand which is recognised by 95% of the population. Volunteers are supported locally in most police force areas by a sustainable infrastructure of Force Area or Borough Associations and nationally by a small, dedicated Central Support Team within the Neighbourhood Network (NWN) charity who provide volunteer training, share effective practice, and develop and share crime prevention toolkits, campaign material and other resources.

1.2 The primary aim of Neighbourhood Watch is to reduce crime and fear of crime by working in partnership with the police, councils, local partners and community groups on crime prevention initiatives. Volunteers also share crime prevention advice and help neighbours to act upon it, thereby building communities that are more resilient against crime. We focus on sustainable and impactful outcomes, giving our volunteers the tools and support to be active in their neighbourhoods, connect with one another and work together with their community members to make committing crimes in their area more difficult.

**2. Crime Prevention**

Many of our volunteers have received training, either from their local police force, partners or from NWN, to equip them to actively implement and share knowledge of specific crime prevention techniques to complement the activity of neighbourhood policing teams. While historically the focus of local groups has been on neighbourhood crimes such as car crime, anti-social behaviour, burglary and fraud, Neighbourhood Watch also has a role in supporting the identification and reporting of hidden and high harm crimes affecting neighbourhoods. There are a range of toolkits on the Our Watch website providing information and resources to assist local Neighbourhood Watch groups to raise community awareness of the signs and symptoms of these crimes and how to report concerns. <https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/crime-prevention/crime-types>

**3. Resilient communities, long-lasting impact**

Neighbourhood Watch is about connecting neighbours, enabling them to set up self-supporting networks through Neighbourhood Watch schemes and other models of local engagement. Although crime occurrences are a key factor for neighbours starting or joining a local Neighbourhood Watch scheme, the activity of Neighbourhood Watch groups also increases community spirit and neighbourliness, leading to more resilient, cohesive communities that can better face future challenges, as evidenced during the Covid-19 response.

**4. Volunteer base**

Our strongest asset is our committed, engaged and motivated hyperlocal volunteers who have links into their community and partner organisations. There are very few parts of England and Wales where Neighbourhood Watch does not have a presence or reach. Our volunteers come from a wide range of backgrounds and life experiences, bringing with them a range of skills. They share crime prevention advice and good practice with their communities and between themselves and act as a catalyst for community action to address local issues affecting their community. We equip our volunteers with the tools, training and opportunities to connect with their neighbours, partners and other local groups to enable them to become active within their communities.

Many participate on local and national Working Groups to identify how NW can help tackle issues such as Rural Crime, Heritage Crime, Antisocial Behaviour and County Lines with relevant partner agencies. NWN helps share that knowledge through our website, monthly newsletters, webinars, social media and other communication channels and provides tried and tested, evidenced-based solutions across England and Wales.

**5. Evidence-based flexible approach**

Neighbourhood Watch is flexible and adaptable to the needs and characteristics of local communities. We employ measurement tools and commission research to identify what works and any challenges Neighbourhood Watch is facing to assess our impact, learn from experience and support our local areas to make improvements.

**6. Neighbourhood Watch Crime and Community Survey**

National results from the Neighbourhood Watch Crime and Community Survey 2020 which received more than 32,000 responses from both NW members and non-members, show that members of Neighbourhood Watch consistently feel safer and more connected within their community. Headlines results show that-:

• Those who live in a Neighbourhood Watch area are more likely to be satisfied or very satisfied with their personal safety than those who don’t (59% vs 45%) with NW members in those areas more likely to be satisfied with their personal safety than non-members (63% vs 45%).

• Those living in a Neighbourhood Watch area less likely to say that crime has increased than those who don’t (32% vs 43%). Neighbourhood Watch members living in those areas are even less likely to think that crime has increased (28%), and significantly more likely to think crime has decreased or remained stable (62% vs 42%).

• Neighbourhood Watch members are more likely to agree that they feel part of the neighbourhood than non-members (87% vs 75%) and are much more likely than non-members to very strongly agree that they feel part of the neighbourhood (47% vs 29%).

• Both members and non-members are likely to act on crime prevention advice they receive from Neighbourhood Watch, with 91% of Neighbourhood Watch members and 83% of non-members usually or sometimes acting on that advice.

The national and regional reports can be accessed here:-

* [National Crime and Community Report 2020](https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/2021-01/Neighbourhood%20Watch%20National%20Crime%20and%20Community%20Report%202020.pdf)
* [London Crime and Community Report 2020](https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/2021-01/London%20Crime%20and%20Community%20Report%202020.pdf)

**7. Impact**

NWN published our first [Impact Report](https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/2020-11/NW%20Report%202020%20Online%20Spreads%20.pdf) in 2020 outlining our achievements, locally and nationally, alongside data and case studies highlighting the impact these have had on reducing local crime and improving community well-being. We are proud to be able to share with you our [2021 Impact Report](https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/2021-10/NW_IMPACT%20REPORT_202021%20FINAL%20Spreads.pdf) which has yet again shown the value Neighbourhood Watch brings to communities.

**8. Projects**

8.1 We are in the process of rolling out fraud prevention and support initiatives. The Communities that Care project is very much targeted at hyperlocal implementation – neighbours helping neighbours – and covers all fraud types, while the Cyberhood Watch Ambassadors programme focuses on cybercrime and is a more strategic role, including acting as a local spokesperson for community led cybercrime prevention.

<https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/communities-that-care>

<https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/get-involved/attend-event/cyberhood-watch-initiative>

8.2 We have recently introduced the role of Community Champion to give an additional option to those who wish to support crime prevention and community work in their local area, as an add on or alternative to the traditional Neighbourhood Watch street coordinator role. We are trialling this role currently in the London Boroughs of Newham and Lewisham and in N Yorkshire with a view to rolling it out more widely if it proves successful.

<https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/community-champions>

8.3 Our acceleration projects in Middlesborough, Anglesey, Norwich, Lambeth, Lewisham and the West Midlands are testing ways of diversifying the way that NW communicates and interacts with communities in high crime areas and with students and other young people. Working closely with Community Organisers, local Councillors, PCCs and residents, the projects involve listening campaigns with local residents, actively recruiting and training volunteer community organisers, building community frameworks, student surveys, co-development of a young people’s project with young people and working within areas of deprivation with hard to reach communities. The project reports will be available in February 2021.

**9. Campaigns**

9.1 Over the past 12 months NWN has been running our own bespoke campaigns on aspects of crime prevention, targeted at either specific demographics at most risk of the particular crime type and/or areas where the crime type is most prevalent. We are planning our next campaign on vehicle crime in March 21 and will focus on Cybercrime in June 21 during National Neighbourhood Watch week. Going forward we plan to run at least 3 crime prevention campaigns per year.

<https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/get-involved/support-campaign/protect-your-paw0rd>

<https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/get-involved/support-campaign/safety-neighbours-campaign>

9.2 Our annual Neighbour of the Year award, run in conjunction with the Coop Insurance is gaining in popularity and featured on the One Show last year. We have now extended it to include a Young Neighbour of the Year, as well as continuing with the regional Neighbour of the Year awards.

**10. Covid 19 support**

In addition to sharing information and prevention advice about the scams that are being perpetrated in relation to Covid-19, we have also been collecting and sharing local stories about the support that Neighbourhood Watch groups have been giving to their communities during the pandemic and running campaigns to thank all the volunteers who have worked so hard to help people out and encouraging communities to stay connected with our Calling Tree campaign.

<https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/get-involved/support-campaign/thank-you-volunteering>

<https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/get-involved/support-campaign/calling-tree>

<https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/news/neighbourhood-watch-response-covid-19/covid-19-community-response-stories>

**11. Strategic Development Coordinator**

Devon and Cornwall’s PCC has funded a specific role to support the development of NW across the force area over an initial 2 year period. This role sits within Devon and Cornwall Community Watch Association and has strong links to NWN as we manage the finances and HR function related to the role. It has proved really successful in advancing the development of community crime prevention through NW and other Watch schemes in the two counties and has attracted interest from some other police forces. The OPCC has now extended the remit and funding of the post to include support for implementation of some of the Safer Streets work across the force area.

**12. The Future of Neighbourhood Watch**

A new 5 year strategy for the development of Neighbourhood Watch across England and Wales has recently been published. The strategy outlines our aspiration to build on our current strengths to become: -

* The authoritative voice on community-based crime prevention
* The most popular gateway for citizens to engage in their locality and
* A recognised contributor to community health and wellbeing

The full Neighbourhood Watch Strategy 2020/2025 can be read [here](https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/2020-12/Strategic%20Plan%202020-25%20Final.pdf)