



What is a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme?

Neighbourhood Watch (in some areas known as Home Watch), is one of the biggest and most successful crime prevention schemes ever. Over 120,000 schemes have been established across the UK since its introduction in the early 1980's.

At its most basic level, it's a scheme where a group of neighbours work with the police and other agencies to reduce local crime and disorder (and perceptions of crime) in the bid to make a neighbourhood a safe and better place to live, work and play.

In addition to the crime reduction benefits of a scheme, it also promotes the building of community spirit and good relations. Reviews widely suggest that for every 100 crimes committed, 26 were prevented in Neighbourhood Watch Areas.

This simple Guidance Note explains how to establish a scheme, and where advice can best be sought.

Local Solutions for Local Issues:

There is no set Neighbourhood Watch programme because each group scheme is owned and run by its community. Every community has its own needs and Neighbourhood Watch groups are exceptionally well placed to meet them. After all, who knows what a community needs better than the people who live in it?

Neighbourhood Watch schemes can vary in size from a few houses to a large estate. They are generally led by a volunteer co-ordinator from the local area or community who takes on the role of linking the community to the police. By being more aware of local issues, sharing information and advice, local residents are able to develop closer links, while reassuring and supporting vulnerable households.

Am I in a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme Area?

The best place to check is <http://www.cambsnhw.org.uk/>

If you are in an area covered by an existing scheme, simply contact them and ask to join.

I want to establish a scheme?

You may not be in an area where there is an existing scheme, so you might want to establish a new group.

The first stage is to talk with your neighbours and see if there is support for setting up a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in your area. It is important to find out:

- If there is enough support to set up a scheme?
- What area the scheme should cover?
- If neighbours have the free time to be involved?

You will also need to appoint a coordinator or co-ordinators.

The coordinator(s) will:

- Talk to local residents about supporting the scheme and encourage them to join.
- Keep a register of all scheme members.
- Keep in contact with the police, telling them about any suspicious and criminal incidents, and general community concerns about crime and anti-social behavior in the area.
- Be the first point of contact for local residents and the wider community if they need to get or give information.
- Meet with other local Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators to share experiences and good practice.
- Go to regular meetings with the police to discuss local community safety issues.
- Help maintain the scheme: This includes handing out leaflets and newsletters or erecting Neighbourhood Watch Signs.

Cambridgeshire Neighbourhood Watch can also provide support and advice when establishing a new group, and have some useful hints and tips on how to encourage people to join. Simply visit:

<http://www.cambsnhw.org.uk/>

Cambridgeshire Neighbourhood Watch will put you in contact with an Area Co-ordinator to answer any questions or queries you may have, and will be able to guide you through the regulatory framework which exists.

Are Neighbourhood Watch Schemes Police run initiatives?

Watch schemes are not police-run groups. It is important to build a close working partnership with your local police, and share with them all information relating to crime and other incidents in your area. Many police stations have a Crime Prevention Officer who works as a contact point for co-ordinators. The police can provide information on the latest crime figures and on crime prevention advice, all of which can help and assist the group.

How will the scheme be funded?

Funding for crime reduction is found at a local level and may be held by the newly established Police and Crime Commissioner.

It goes without saying that most schemes will need some form of funding to assist with advertising, marketing or the production of newsletters for their local community.

Support Cambridgeshire can assist in the process of finding funding opportunities: Simply contact

info@supportcambridgeshire.org.uk.

In addition, Support Cambridgeshire 4 Communities enables potential Neighbourhood Watch Schemes to search for funding availability free of charge. To register please visit:

<http://www.idoxopen4community.co.uk/supportcambs>