



Good Ideas







Fighting crime with Neighbourhood Watch

Neighbourhood Watch is the largest voluntary organisation in the UK. Over a quarter of homes across the country are members, and they work with each other and the police to reduce crime and increase community safety.

Each Neighbourhood Watch scheme is different, as it depends on the area and what the people living there want and need. All over the country communities face different challenges, and different levels of crime. Scheme co-ordinators can find out from local people what most concerns them and focus on a specific problem. By forming a picture of local crime, conducting a 'fear of crime' survey and identifying the opportunities for crime reduction, schemes can then form an action plan to tackle the problem.

Most crime is opportunist, committed on the spur of the moment, for example when a car or house is left unlocked. This means there is enormous scope for reducing opportunities for criminals. Traditional Neighbourhood Watch activity has focused on the immediate vicinity of homes, with members looking out for anything suspicious, or helping their neighbours as necessary. However, more and more schemes are broadening their work to target a range of other problems such as antisocial behaviour, vandalism and graffiti.

Neighbourhood Watch is also about bringing people closer together and involving them in local life. A stronger community spirit grows as people get to know each other and look out for one another. Anyone can join a Neighbourhood Watch scheme and everyone can play a part in its achievements.

This booklet brings together some good ideas and practices that have been adopted by Neighbourhood Watch schemes, groups and associations throughout England and Wales. It is not meant to be a 'how to do it' guide, but to give you ideas for revitalising and expanding your scheme's activities, building a stronger community spirit and helping to reduce crime.

Inter-Generational Gardening Programme (Fishburn in Bloom)

Fishburn in Bloom is part of the Inter-Generational Programme started in April 2003 and funded until June 2006. It challenges isolation and promotes social inclusion by bringing together older and younger people through a positive exchange of skills and experiences in projects and activities. It also provides diversionary activity for young people to reduce the risk of them becoming involved in crime.

The scheme was started by Age Concern Durham, which worked with both young and old, forming a Parish Committee in the village of Fishburn. Age Concern development workers initially worked with the residents to get the scheme off the ground. The committee has now taken over the running, with Age Concern providing advice and guidance as needed.

The Fishburn Parish Committee, with support from Sedgefield Borough Council and Ground Work East Durham, provided young and old people with the technical skills to plant flowers and shrubs, and thousands of daffodil and crocus bulbs were planted in Fishburn. The residents felt so much better about their environment that they entered the Northumbria in Bloom competition and were runners-up in 2004.

A good working relationship has developed with the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership as well as the police and the local Primary Care Trust. The project has helped improve understanding between young and old, thus helping reduce their fear of crime and promoting social inclusion, and helping to improve the environment. Other projects in the programme include visits to art classes by older people, visits to residential homes by young people and the painting of the town mural by young and old people together.



Data Link (Message in a Bottle)

Data Link is an initiative which helps to improve safety for elderly and vulnerable people by enabling emergency services to retrieve vital personal information quickly and easily in an emergency. The idea originated in Australia but it has worked very well in County Durham where it has been welcomed by the police, social services, the fire service and the ambulance service.

The scheme is heavily financed by the Primary Care Trust. All elderly and vulnerable people in the county were identified and given a Data Link pack. They were encouraged to record vital medical and contact information and store them in a small plastic container (for example, a camera film case) marked with a green cross in the door of their fridge. The recorded information should include notes on medical conditions, medication, doctor's name, surgery and next of kin.

A little green cross sticker was then placed on the outside of the fridge door and another sticker inside the front door to the house. This tells emergency service personnel that the information is in the fridge. The fridge tends to be easily found and is usually an uncluttered place, which makes it easier and faster to retrieve the vital and potentially life saving information.

There have been numerous instances when people's lives have been saved as a result of the immediate access to the correct information. As a result of the scheme (also known as 'Message in a Bottle'), Age Concern in Durham have developed a good working relationship with the key service deliverers in the county.

This scheme has already been adopted by many Neighbourhood Watch groups throughout the UK.



Covert Neighbourhood Watch schemes

In high crime areas, residents may not always feel comfortable with the idea of being openly involved in a Neighbourhood Watch scheme or contacting the police. In Northamptonshire it was found that some residents feared that it would put them at risk from reprisals from local criminals.

In response to this, the Community Watch Liaison Officer (CWLO) for Eastern Northants discussed Neighbourhood Watch at the regular community safety meetings and some interest was shown by residents, who suggested that they would like to be involved as co-ordinators but did not think that their neighbours would feel comfortable that they were known to the police.

The CWLO provided these residents with all the necessary information on how to set up a Neighbourhood Watch group and asked them to contact a small number of their neighbours whom they considered trustworthy. Having contacted these people the co-ordinator informed the CWLO of how many members there were but did not provide their names or contact details. The only contact police have is with the co-ordinator, who attends monthly meetings accompanied by any members who wish to attend.

These schemes are 'covert' in the sense that the members are not known to the police/CWLO and that they do not have Neighbourhood Watch stickers in their own windows, but the estate itself is signposted as a Neighbourhood Watch area.

Similar 'covert' schemes have been set up successfully in other parts of the UK.





Consulting the Community – Colchester

The Colchester Borough Neighbourhood Watch (CBNW) was revitalised and restructured in 2001 after asking the local members for their views. Questionnaires were sent to all known existing schemes in the borough to find out how they worked and what they needed. This resulted in creating a new structure, underpinned with organisational and management systems.

The transformation enabled CBNW to obtain funding from the Colchester Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) to undertake initiatives such as the production, printing and distribution of a new co-ordinator's handbook. The working relationship between the CDRP and CBNW has now developed to such a degree that a Service Level Agreement has been drawn up which provides the core funding for CBNW.

CBNW provided the CDRP with a ready-made structure for conducting community consultations during the development of the CDRP's strategy for 2002–2005. CBNW has actively participated in the CDRP's yearly crime reduction plans and will play an even bigger role in the Crime Reduction Strategy 2005–2008.

The relationship between the Colchester CDRP and CBNW has grown and this has enabled CBNW to become a lead agency in the Colchester CDRP and have a representative on the CDRP Board.

Discussions have been taking place with a view to providing sufficient funds to support the current main volunteering co-ordinators and possibly fund a full-time post.

Exeter Parks Watch – Youth Sculptor Project

In response to antisocial behaviour by young people in a local park in Exeter, the local council, police, Neighbourhood Watch group and residents set up a Parks Watch Group. The Watch met with the police and the council, who provided statistics on the crimes and damage caused in the various parks. The issues faced by the group included vandalism; underage drinking; graffiti; people breaking into tennis courts and the bowls pavilion; the use of motorbikes on the bowling green; broken bottles being left in the children's paddling pool and play area; and other park users being subjected to verbal abuse.

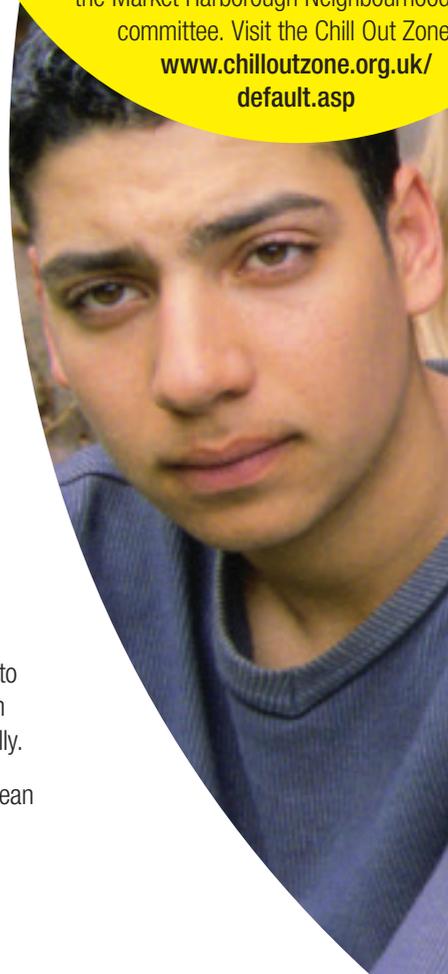
A second meeting brought together members of the community, representatives of statutory agencies and young people. The young people explained that they did not have anywhere to go or anything to do. Funding was obtained and a consultation exercise was carried out to establish their needs. It was agreed to make the tennis courts free of charge to use and to remove the padlocks to provide unrestricted access. A BMX bike area was created and a pilot project set up to positively engage young people, who designed and helped to build the BMX course. The level of vandalism in the park dropped.

Eight months later the Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator sought the assistance of a 'life experience facilitator' and an application for funding was made for a project to build a youth shelter and to also include a woodland camp for young people to develop social and life skills. The shelter was to be built by the young people in oak wood from a local fallen tree. They were given health and safety training and encouraged to have a positive respect for the tools and their use. The group gathered after school to work on building the shelter, learning to become inclusive and to work as a team. The rapport between the young people, residents and agencies improved dramatically.

This project is based in Exeter and was nominated for a European crime prevention award.

Young people's website – Chill Out Zone

The Chill Out Zone is a forum where children and young people can gain information on personal safety. It is a website that provides information to young people through a chat forum, games, information on choices and a sensible drinking quiz. The programme challenges young people and promotes social inclusion by engaging young people through a positive exchange of skills and experiences in projects and activities. The project is co-ordinated by the Market Harborough Neighbourhood Watch committee. Visit the Chill Out Zone at www.chilloutzone.org.uk/default.asp



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Junior Neighbourhood Watch Training Scheme

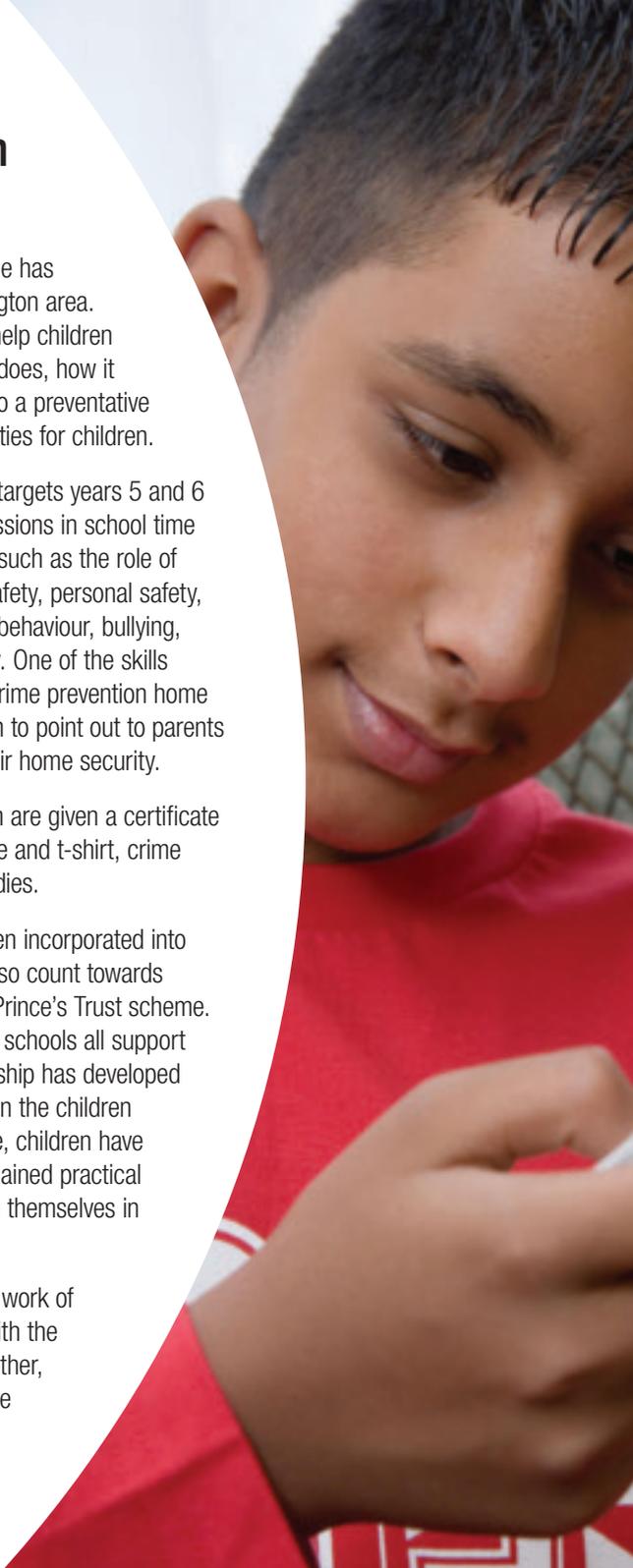
The Junior Neighbourhood Watch scheme has been established in schools in the Darlington area. It is a twelve-module training project to help children understand what Neighbourhood Watch does, how it operates and how they can help. It is also a preventative measure that provides diversionary activities for children.

Working with local schools, the scheme targets years 5 and 6 (ages 9–10). A police officer delivers sessions in school time or as after school clubs, covering topics such as the role of the beat officer, drugs awareness, fire safety, personal safety, crime, Neighbourhood Watch, antisocial behaviour, bullying, racism, crime prevention and road safety. One of the skills the children learn is how to carry out a crime prevention home security survey. This enables the children to point out to parents and grandparents the weaknesses in their home security.

Upon completing the course, the children are given a certificate and a junior Neighbourhood Watch badge and t-shirt, crime prevention badge, pencils and other goodies.

Some of the scheme's modules have been incorporated into Brownies and Cubs activities, and can also count towards the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and the Prince's Trust scheme. The police, local education authority and schools all support the scheme and a good working relationship has developed between the partners, as well as between the children and the police. As a result of the scheme, children have been made aware of hazards and have gained practical skills and the knowledge to avoid placing themselves in dangerous situations.

There is also a greater awareness of the work of the police and Neighbourhood Watch. With the beat officer and children knowing each other, the programme has also helped to reduce antisocial behaviour.





Darlington Rural Watch and Text Messaging Service

The Darlington Rural Watch was developed as a result of the number of thefts and burglaries on local farms and in rural areas. Its founder was a gamekeeper on a local farm who found that his presence also helped reduce poaching, animal rustling and theft. Other farmers then offered him rights of way in return for his services and he soon had free run of all farmland in the area.

The Chief Constable of Durham Police was approached for support to set up a Watch scheme. With this support a number of social events were organised such as country and western nights and treasure trails to bring people together and develop a level of trust. A competition was organised for local schools to develop a logo for the scheme.

A text messaging service was set up to provide up-to-date information on local crimes and a quick method of informing police of incidents. The Watch scheme approached the company Midentity Ltd in Suffolk, who set up 'MiCircles' for the group. This is a system which allows groups of people to exchange text messages. When a group member replies to a message, the message gets sent to everyone, not just the originator, so that the group becomes a circle.

The extent of the local problems led the Chief Constable to also set up a Wildlife Unit, which moves from area to area on a weekly basis, but also has the capacity to respond rapidly to incidents. Working with the police canine division and the tactical operations section, local farmers agreed to allow regular practice drills and exercises to take place on their land. The increased police presence acts as a deterrent, and regular promotional events are held to improve awareness of the scheme and to recruit new members.

The result has been a co-ordinated approach to tackling rural crime issues in the area. The quick information gathering and dissemination have strengthened the community, and the number of incidents has reduced significantly and the level of detection has also increased.



Meertrek Mates

Meertrek is a game developed by a group of young people to create awareness of moral choices and crime prevention among other young people. It is an idea developed from meerkats who always have one of their group on lookout, watching out for the safety of others. The objective of the game is to undertake a journey and arrive safely at the destination. Through the course of the journey potential threats are identified. A large A1 poster has been produced, along with a CD-ROM and education pack.

The game is co-ordinated by the North Leicestershire Neighbourhood Watch.

Copies of the game CD-ROM, the poster and teacher's pack can be obtained from:

**Charnwood Arts, 31 Granby Street
Loughborough, Leics
LE11 3DU**

Tel: 01509 822558

E-mail: info@charnwood-arts.org.uk

Web: www.meertrek.co.uk

Co-ordination – Wirral Partners



In 1996 police in the Wirral decided to revamp the local Home Watch/Neighbourhood Watch schemes to increase community well-being and safety. With the reorganisation of the police force into eight local areas they appointed a special constable to work full time with each scheme, and a partnership was created. The Partnership is made up of 453 Watch schemes from the eight Merseyside police areas in the Wirral. Each area has a local police station which the Watch schemes use to hold local area leaders' meetings.

Residents are welcome to attend the monthly leaders' meetings, and a close working relationship has developed with the Merseyside Police who provide occasional support in the form of free office space, telephone, copying and printing facilities at a police station.

Working with the Wallasey Primary Care Trust (PCT), health care information is distributed to residents alongside events which are held to provide a platform for health care workers to promote healthy living.

A 'Feel Safe' project funded by Wallasey PCT targets vulnerable people and those aged over 65 with no family support. Once these people have been identified, Home Action Wirral will supply and fit security measures such as door chains, door viewers, security lights, property marking pens and personal alarms to make their homes safer.

Working with the fire brigade, safety awareness training is provided. The Partnership also provides a link for the supply of smoke alarms. The council has provided a contact point for the Partnership to handle community safety reports such as the replacement of street lights, reports of fly tipping, etc.

Community Two-way Radio Schemes

The advent of cheap two-way radios has not gone unnoticed by Neighbourhood Watch groups. These operationally cost-free radios have no licence fee or call charges, no line rental or contracts. With a range of around two miles they are sufficient to cover most neighbourhoods, areas and estates.

These systems are a cost-effective way for people to stay in touch. They have the ability to provide one-to-one or one-to-many contact. They are easy to use and setting up a scheme is easy. The most effective schemes are those that have been jointly set up between the Watch group and the local police. With the radios, Neighbourhood Watch members are able to pass information to one another instantly, alerting them to criminal or antisocial behaviour and gathering information for the police.

Success rates of a 40 per cent reduction in crime have been reported in trials by Kent Police. Similar radio schemes have been used in Leicester and the West Midlands. A successful radio scheme has also been set up between traders in a local shopping centre in Stanley, Liverpool.





Chichester Pub Watch

Police and partner organisations in Chichester are working together on a number of initiatives to reduce violent crime in the city centre and throughout the district. They are tackling one of the causes of violent crime – excessive drinking.

The police and West Sussex Trading Standards officers carry out test purchase operations to see whether off-licences are selling alcohol to underage people. Police also visit pubs and clubs with partner agencies, in order to bring down underage drinking. Other visits are made to pubs and clubs to check on compliance with licensing legislation, including registration of door staff, good management and control of premises, and the sale of alcohol to drunk or disorderly customers. The drinking control zone in the city centre is enforced, which prohibits the consumption of alcohol in public places and provides officers with powers to confiscate alcoholic drinks when necessary.

Police maintain close contact with Pub Watch schemes in Chichester, Midhurst and Manhood, ensuring that information on those people excluded or banned from premises is shared and enforced. Virtually all pubs and clubs in Chichester are members, along with a large number in and around Midhurst, and an increasing number in the newly-formed Manhood scheme, including holiday parks that attract a lot of people.

The city centre police team has been increased to include a sergeant, five constables and two dedicated Police Community Support Officers. Operation Tower operates on Friday and Saturday nights in the city, providing additional high visibility officers supported by the police CCTV vehicle not only to prevent and deter violent crime and antisocial behaviour, but also to gather evidence when incidents do occur. A taxi marshal scheme operates at Chichester railway station on selected weekends in order to maintain the safe and speedy dispersal of people visiting the city. An official survey was carried out to determine the late night transport needs in the city.

Other areas with similar schemes include Coventry and Wolverhampton.

Sloppy Slipper Exchange

Falls are a major cause of disability and the leading cause of mortality due to injury among people aged over 75.

Research conducted found that the majority of falls are due to badly fitting footwear, most of which has very thin soles, flaps about and is not being worn properly. With this in mind the Sloppy Slipper Exchange initiative was created. This is an exchange scheme where older people are asked to bring in their old slippers in exchange for new ones. Some schemes have got sponsorship or have negotiated substantial discounts and can do the exchange for free or for a small sum. By taking a multi-agency approach, which includes Neighbourhood Watch groups, the Primary Care Trust, social services and other voluntary organisations that work with elderly people, the exchange days incorporate other activities to support older people.

The event provides an opportunity to give advice on crime prevention, fire safety, housing grants and how to prevent falls in the home. It is also an opportunity for residents to support older members in their Neighbourhood Watch scheme.

Those who have implemented the replacement scheme have reported a 60 per cent reduction in falls. Events have been held in Buckingham, Market Harborough, Easington and elsewhere.



Neighbourhood Watch by e-mail – Hastings

Neighbourhood Watch by e-mail takes advantage of e-mail as a fast, inexpensive, mass-distribution medium. It combines the efforts of the police, Trading Standards, the Fire and Rescue Service, Neighbourhood Watch and local residents in the fight against local crime. One of the largest schemes is the Hastings and Rother scheme which has over 3,000 members. It is free for anyone in the local area who has access to e-mail. To join they simply send an e-mail to the designated police e-mail address to say they wish to join the scheme. All messages are sent out as blind copy (bcc) so that e-mail addresses remain private.

Messages are issued regularly about specific local crimes, scams and bogus callers, together with crime prevention advice, good news and appeals from local voluntary networks.

Sussex Police conducted a web-based questionnaire at the end of the first year of Hastings and Rother's pilot which showed that as a result of the scheme

93 per cent of respondents felt more informed by Sussex Police, 83 per cent felt more in touch with Sussex Police and 20 per cent had made contact with Sussex Police to report crimes or provide information. The survey also found that 26 per cent of respondents felt that the fear of crime had reduced and 74 per cent felt part of a safer community as a result of the scheme.

The scheme is supported by the Safer Hastings and Safer Rother Partnerships, the Sussex Neighbourhood Watch Federation and Sussex Police.



Nominated Neighbours

A number of Neighbourhood Watch groups have adopted Nominated Neighbour schemes. Vulnerable members of the community are encouraged to nominate a neighbour, friend or family member who lives nearby to act as a contact for callers at the door.

The vulnerable person displays a card in their window telling the caller to go to the nominee's address to have their identification verified. If the caller is genuine, for example they have come to read the meter, the nominated neighbour can then accompany the caller back to the vulnerable person's house. Callers who are not genuine tend not to bother to go to the nominated address.

The scheme means that the vulnerable person does not have to open the door to people they do not know or engage in conversation with them, and helps both to reduce their fear of crime and to protect them from distraction burglars.





Mobile youth centres

To engage with young people in Tavistock and West Devon, a mobile drop-in centre was developed by Devon Youth Association (DYA), supported by a multi-agency partnership. The centre has been situated in a convenient location with easy access to a bus stop on a major route.

The centre provides a place for young people to meet up or access the various services. These services include counselling with referrals from social services, crisis intervention, a drugs misuse worker, a 'Young Carer' worker supporting a drama project, health education and mental health provision, and the centre has discrete private rooms where confidential sessions can take place.

A project has been established to build a skateboard park designed by young people, who will also provide assistance with building it.

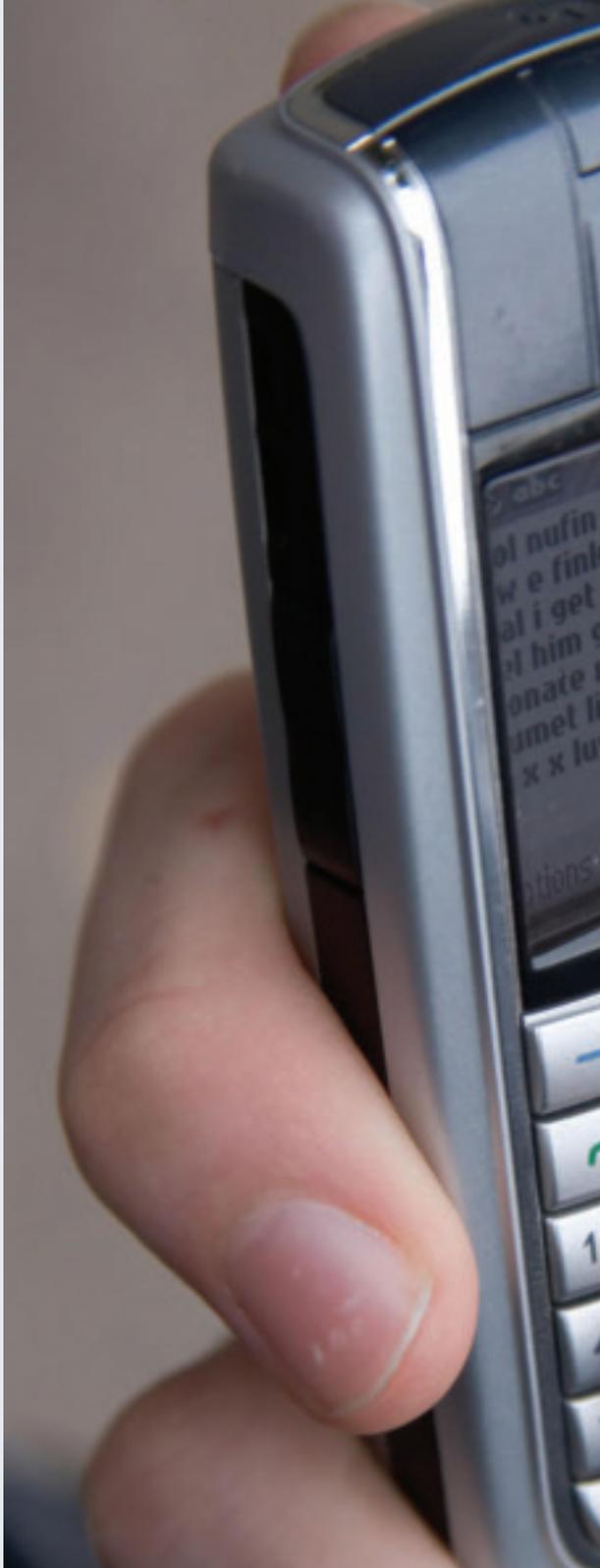
A youth café project is also being set up. The idea has come from young people who have formed a group, developed a business plan and are negotiating with the agencies to obtain premises and run the café. Funds need to be raised to have a youth worker present during opening times to ensure a responsible adult is present to satisfy insurance and safety requirements.

ICE (In Case of Emergency)

Research carried out by Vodafone showed that more than 75 per cent of people carry no details of who they would like to be contacted following a serious accident or illness. In conjunction with the East Anglian Ambulance NHS Trust they developed ICE (In Case of Emergency). The scheme encourages people to store the details of the person they would like contacted in an emergency in their mobile phone's phonebook using the word ICE in front of the person's name. This makes it much easier for the emergency services to identify quickly who they should be calling.

Several numbers can be stored, using ICE1, ICE2, ICE3 etc. The person whose number is being used should have agreed to be the ICE contact and should have a list of further people to contact, such as a place of work. In addition, they should know about any medical conditions that could affect the emergency treatment, including allergies or medication.

People under 18 should have an ICE contact who is a parent, guardian, or immediate member of family authorised to make decisions on their behalf. Friends and other relatives cannot make decisions on behalf of a person admitted to hospital.





More about Neighbourhood Watch

Neighbourhood Watch works by:

- Bringing people closer together
- Building a stronger community spirit
 - Helping to reduce crime
- Reducing people's anxieties about crime
 - Strengthening links with the police
- Developing closer relationships with local councils
 - Improving the local environment
 - Creating a better quality of life

Types of Watch scheme

In addition to Neighbourhood Watch, there is a wide range of Watch schemes operating throughout the country.

These include:

- Badger Watch
- Beach Hut Watch
- Boat Watch
- Business Watch
- Caravan Watch
- Church Watch
- Coastal Watch
- Community Watch
- Countryside Watch
- Cycle Watch
- Farm Watch
- Forecourt Watch
- Garden/Allotment Watch
- Golf Watch
- Home Watch
- Horse/Pony Watch
- Milk Watch
- Motorbike Watch
- Paperboy Watch
- Plant (Machinery) Watch
- Pub Watch
- Rural Watch
- School Watch
- Shed Watch
- Shop Watch
- Truck Watch
- Vehicle Watch
- Youth Watch







Home Security Checks

The Home Office supplies a range of crime reduction literature that is available free of charge to the general public. A full Publicity Catalogue is available online at www.crimereduction.gov.uk/publicity_catalogue/index.php. Copies of publications can be ordered online (following a registration process). Alternatively, readers can contact the Home Office supplier, Prolog, direct on **0870 241 4680** or by e-mail at homeoffice@prolog.uk.com

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