

What is Neighbourhood Watch?

We are a national organisation and the title Neighbourhood Watch and our logo is protected in law, nobody may use our name or logo without permission.

It's a free, confidential service, run by volunteers for their neighbours and it is up to you how involved you want to be.

We aim to encourage people to inform the Police of any suspicious activity, and coordinators let neighbours know if anything has occurred in their own road or nearby.

NHW aims to make its members become more aware of local crime problems and be more security conscious about their homes and property, too often we make it easy so easy for thieves.

We also want to encourage neighbourliness, and especially looking after elderly or vulnerable people who might not be on the internet, telling them about scammers who might be targeting them.

How to start up your own Watch group:

NOBODY can call themselves a NHW coordinator unless their area coordinator authorizes them and their group.

It is really easy to start up a NHW group.

1. Contact the area coordinator (or me) to see if there is an existing authorised group in your road, if there is, we will put you in touch with the person appointed as your scheme coordinator.
2. Your area coordinator will talk to you about the reasons why you want to start up a group, and s/he will see if there is any conflict of interest, if there is, you might not be able to start your group. S/he will also make you aware of our CODE OF ETHICS which every NHW Coordinator agrees to follow. That is for your protection and also the protection of your neighbours.
3. When your group has been authorised, all you will need to do is call door to door or pop leaflets through neighbours doors and then call back a week later with a membership form for them to sign.
4. The form is important, it tells them who will have access to their data, how it will be shared and so on, in line with Data Protection regulations.
5. From that point on, life is easy for the coordinator, all you need to do is share information you receive directly from Essex Police or maybe information you see on our facebook page. From time to time, if there has been a burglary in your road or any suspicious activity, a neighbour will alert you and you will share that information with your neighbours, so that they can check their own security arrangements.

The role of NHW Members

When a new coordinator is appointed, they will call at your door and ask you to sign a membership form, that form is an agreement between you and our organisation that we will not misuse the information you give us, and you will notify your coordinator of any suspicious activity in your road.

A NHW is as strong as its membership, and the more committed they are, the more use a group will be. Yes, you can just read occasional emails and do nothing further, but if you really care about crime in your area you will report absolutely everything and then let your coordinator know so they can share that information with other members.

Sometimes you will be asked, do you remember seeing someone hanging around or do you recognise an image on CCTV following a burglary, but mostly you will receive information and phone the police / inform their coordinator should the need arise.

When Watch members sign up, they do so in the belief that their data will be secure and that it will not be passed on to anyone else or used for any other purpose, if it is, then the members can complain to the Information Commissioners' Office. It is that serious!

What if I do not want to join?

Sometimes people set up whatsapp groups or similar among neighbours and that is fine, but what they do not have is the close working relationship with the police and EFDC Safer Communities, and there is no safeguard as to whether or not the information you receive is accurate.

We have no idea why people put out claims that alarm the public, but we frequently hear people quoting claims that they have read on social media or have heard from various groups. Whatever the reason, it is irresponsible and makes people scared to leave their homes, which is something a Neighbourhood Watch would never do.

There are other benefits to running or being a member of an authorised Neighbourhood Watch.

Only authorised Neighbourhood Watch groups receive crime data directly from the police, only Neighbourhood Watch is authorised to circulate that data and if you receive it as a member, and you share it to non-members, you are breaching data protection legislation.

Only Neighbourhood Watch is entitled to receive lamp post signs with our logo on, as well as free door stickers and other security resources supplied through our organisation. There are so many benefits of joining NHW and in the UK over 4 million people have done just that.