



NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH CO-ORDINATOR'S MANUAL

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NIO



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1. HISTORY OF NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

- 1.1. A group of police officers visiting Chicago USA in 1982 discovered the concept of Neighbourhood Watch and decided to try the idea to combat crime in the UK and also make communities safer and friendlier places to live and work. The first scheme was set up in the village of Mollington in Cheshire, in response to a prevalent outbreak of burglaries and was an immediate success. Surrounding areas became aware of this success and copied the scheme, which led to the rapid growth of Neighbourhood Watch schemes throughout the UK. Over 165,000 schemes are now established throughout the United Kingdom covering up to 25% of all households, making it now the largest voluntary organisation in the UK.
- 1.2. Neighbourhood Watch has proved to be a very effective example of communities collaborating to prevent crime and vandalism, reduce the fear of crime and generally improve the quality of life.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. Neighbourhood Watch, which was launched in Northern Ireland in June 2004, continues to grow from strength to strength. For this to continue and Neighbourhood Watch to succeed, it is dependant on Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators who give up their time voluntarily to work with the police and to assist their neighbourhoods in tackling crime.
- 2.2. Neighbourhood Watch is promoted, supported and endorsed at a strategic level by the Community Safety Unit (CSU) of the Northern Ireland Office, the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and at a local council level through Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), District Policing Partnerships (DPPs) and Area Command Units.
- 2.3. Neighbourhood Watch Schemes are widely considered to be an excellent way to reduce crime, the fear of crime and address anti-social behaviour. Its reputation is well deserved on the basis of it providing a practical and positive means for committed citizens to enter into a meaningful partnership with the police to make communities safer. This sense of community spirit is particularly important in respect of vulnerable members of communities, such as older people and ethnic minority groups, who are often most fearful of crime.
- 2.4. This manual has been developed to provide guidance to Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators in supporting Neighbourhood Watch Schemes. Roles and responsibilities of each of the partners involved in Neighbourhood Watch are outlined, guidance is provided on how to establish a new Neighbourhood Watch Scheme and some pointers are provided on assisting Co-ordinators in carrying out their role within Schemes.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This section outlines the roles and responsibilities of each of the key partners and agencies involved in Neighbourhood Watch.

Local Community

3.1. The responsibility for establishing and maintaining a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme lies primarily with the Co-ordinator(s) in partnership with the three agencies, but the active support of the local community is also essential. The establishment of a scheme is often easier if there is already an active resident or community group, but this is not essential.

3.2. The roles and responsibilities of the community are as follows:

- To help identify the need for a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in their area
- To designate and agree an area for the scheme with the local PSNI
- To nominate a trusted representative(s) of the community to be the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator(s)
- To actively participate in the consultation of local residents on the proposal for a Scheme by carrying out leaflet drops/hosting public meetings etc.
- To liaise with the local CSP Co-ordinator, DPP Manager and PSNI, as required
- To work with the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator(s) to ensure that the documentation is completed and issued to the appropriate agencies
- To liaise with the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator(s) in relation to issues of concern regarding policing, crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour in the area

Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator

3.3. The Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator is a key person for each Scheme. It is his/her responsibility to voluntarily manage its activities, to work in partnership with the three agencies and to make the Scheme as effective as possible. It is important that the Co-ordinator has time to commit to the scheme and is able to listen to the concerns of the community and can act as a two-way channel of information between the community and the police.

3.4. All Co-ordinators are subject to a police service check to ensure that they have the confidence of the community and the PSNI to undertake their role effectively. When a Co-ordinator is approved and the Scheme is accredited, they are issued with a Neighbourhood Watch ID card. If a Co-ordinator commits an offence or demonstrates behaviour that impacts on their ability to hold the position of Co-ordinator, the PSNI will rescind their approval. The Co-ordinator will then cease to hold the position and will return their ID card to the CSP Co-ordinator.

3.5. The Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator's tasks include the following:

- Regularly contacting all residents within the Scheme by appropriate methods, for example, telephone call, calling door to door, newsheets etc.
- Retaining information as required about households involved in the Scheme
- Managing and distributing relevant information in respect of the Scheme in an appropriate way
- Acting as a first point of contact between residents and the police and notifying the police of community concerns about crime and anti-social behaviour
- Communicating with the PSNI on an ongoing basis and providing a two-way exchange of information on crime and anti-social behaviour issues
- Ensuring appropriate positioning of signage in the local area and notifying the agencies if replacement/additional signage is required
- Welcoming new residents to the Scheme area
- Maintaining the interest of Scheme members
- Distributing relevant crime prevention material as appropriate
- Acting in an honest and law-abiding manner

3.6. It is also recommended that the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator(s) is supported by additional Co-ordinators or willing individuals within the community to carry out some of the above tasks if the Scheme involves a large number of households.

Some points to bear in mind ...

- It is your Scheme – you run it for the benefit of your community, your neighbours, family and friends.
- The police and other organisations are there to support you.
- Above all, enjoy your involvement with Neighbourhood Watch; ask for support when you need it. By working together we can continue to keep our communities, towns and villages safe and attractive places to live and work.
- No-one in the scheme, whether Co-ordinator or member is expected to put themselves at any risk whatsoever.
- As a Co-ordinator, don't let yourself become a one-person security service for your area. Encourage members to support each other.
- You don't have to do any more than an ordinary member in terms of keeping your eyes open and reporting suspicious activities. You are not expected to make special efforts to be vigilant, nor be held *responsible* if a criminal is not noticed.
- The whole scheme is operated by private individuals. No member or Co-ordinator has any special powers, or any additional responsibilities, above those of an ordinary citizen.

Community Safety Partnership (CSP)

3.7. Local CSPs support and endorse the establishment of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes. On behalf of the CSP, the CSP Co-ordinator will:

- Liaise with the PSNI and community regarding establishment of Schemes and provide general advice on funding and establishment of Schemes
- Facilitate the establishment of supported Schemes within the District Council area
- Ensure the timely processing of application forms
- Ensure that applications are endorsed by the Chair of the CSP and forward endorsed applications to the CSU in the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) for accreditation
- Liaise with the local Council or Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) office to facilitate the erection and replacement of signage (they will also arrange for any signage to be removed for schemes that cease to exist)
- Monitor progress of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes within their area
- Create opportunities to promote and publicise local Neighbourhood Watch Schemes in consultation with other partners and the Neighbourhood Watch Schemes

District Policing Partnership (DPP)

3.8. Local DPPs support the establishment of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes. The DPP may also consult with local Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators to determine the key issues of concern in relation to policing in the area. On behalf of the DPP, the local DPP Manager can assist with:

- Liaising with the community regarding establishment of Schemes
- Facilitating the establishment of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes
- Ensuring the timely processing of application forms and that they are endorsed by the Chair or Vice-Chair of the DPP and forwarded as required
- Monitoring progress of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes within their area
- Creating opportunities to promote and publicise local Neighbourhood Watch Schemes through DPP meetings in public in consultation with other partners and the Neighbourhood Watch Schemes

Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)

3.9. Neighbourhood Watch Schemes are initiatives supported by the police, **not** run by them. Therefore, given the relationship between a Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator and local police it is not appropriate for a serving police officer (full time or part time) to undertake the role of a Co-ordinator.

3.10. Local Area Command Units support and endorse the establishment of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes throughout the district and are responsible for:

- The timely processing of Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator application forms and completion of Police Service checks
- Reassessing the ability of an individual to continue as a Co-ordinator if he/she loses the confidence of the community or has demonstrated behaviour that is not appropriate for the position

- Liaising with the community in relation to the establishment of Schemes
- Issuing Neighbourhood Watch signs to the local Council/NIHE for erection as agreed
- Liaising with Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators on (an agreed) regular basis
- Providing a point of contact with local police
- Providing feedback and response to the concerns raised by Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators
- Monitoring progress of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes
- Creating opportunities to promote and publicise local Neighbourhood Watch Schemes in consultation with other partners and Neighbourhood Watch schemes

Community Safety Unit, Northern Ireland Policing Board and PSNI Community Safety Branch

3.11. At a strategic level the Community Safety Unit, Northern Ireland Policing Board and PSNI Community Safety Branch will:

- Endorse and monitor the implementation of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes across Northern Ireland
- Provide funding to support the development of Neighbourhood Watch
- Develop policy and disseminate guidance and good practice in relation to the support and development of Neighbourhood Watch
- Provide signage and other materials for Neighbourhood Watch Schemes

3.12. The CSU in the NIO is responsible for the administration associated with accrediting new Neighbourhood Watch Schemes and also re-accreditation of the schemes every two years on behalf of the partner agencies. Applications for Neighbourhood Watch Schemes endorsed by the CSP, DPP and PSNI are forwarded to the CSU for accreditation on behalf of the NI Policing Board and PSNI. The accreditation certificate for a Scheme is issued to the lead Co-ordinator and individual ID cards are issued to all approved Co-ordinators. Copies of the approval letter are forwarded to the CSP Co-ordinator, DPP Manager and Area Command Unit.

4. DEVELOPING A NEW NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH SCHEME

4.1. There are a number of stages which must be progressed in sequence when establishing a new Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. This section describes these stages in more detail and they are demonstrated in a flow chart in Appendix 1.

Who supplies documentation on Neighbourhood Watch?

4.2. Supplies of Neighbourhood Watch documentation are retained by the CSPs, DPPs and Area Command Units. If local stocks of the material are exhausted more can be ordered by contacting PSNI Community Safety Branch, Telephone: 0845 600 8000 ext 69964 or e-mail: community.safety@psni.pnn.police.uk. Community Safety Branch does not stock Neighbourhood Watch documentation. Requests for material are sent to a third party who dispatches the documentation direct. Please ensure adequate time to receive the documentation.

4.3. The Neighbourhood Watch documentation was produced in accordance with legislation governing such information i.e. the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act, Freedom of Information Act and Human Rights legislation, based on the understanding that all information gathered would be obtained and shared openly to build trust and understanding within the community at large.

How is the need for a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme established?

4.4. It is important that a local community feel that they need and want a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. Community representatives should also consult with their local police officer when considering establishing a new Scheme in their area.

4.5. Some of the questions that a community should address when considering the establishment of a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme are:

- Is crime in the area causing concern?
- Is there a fear of crime in the area?
- Are there volunteers in the area with the resources, time, commitment and dedication to work with the police and the community on an ongoing, voluntary basis?

4.6. Community representatives should contact either the CSP Co-ordinator, the DPP Manager or the local police to consider arranging an initial community meeting to get an overview of Neighbourhood Watch and clarify any issues (See Sample Meeting Notice - Appendix 2). When community support for the establishment of a Scheme has been identified, the community should identify at least one Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator for the area to be covered by the Scheme. The Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator should be a well-known, respected and trusted resident of the area.

What area should a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme cover?

- 4.7. The proposed area for the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme should be clearly defined. The size of a Scheme can vary from a cul-de-sac to a small village. Good practice dictates that a Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator should not be responsible for any more than 50 houses. Boundaries should be clearly defined and agreed with the PSNI.
- 4.8. The success of any Scheme will depend largely on the ability of Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators to share information with local residents. Communication may become difficult if a single Co-ordinator has a responsibility to relay information to a large number of residents over a wide area. Where a Co-ordinator has more than 50 active participants or households in a scheme, support volunteers or additional Co-ordinators should be used to provide assistance in maintaining contact with all homes within the scheme.
- 4.9. Neighbourhood Watch in a rural setting will also differ significantly from that in an urban location. Consideration must again be given to the size of any scheme and the ability of Co-ordinators to communicate effectively with the wider community. This may be through local meetings, postal drops, the Internet, mobile texting or even house-to-house contact if appropriate. These are only examples but it is vital that the CSPs, DPPs and local PSNI consider this at the earliest stage of development of a new Scheme.
- 4.10. Technically the minimum number of households required to form a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme are two. However, the effectiveness of such Schemes would have to be questioned. A minimum of ten households would be considered a reasonable baseline for an effective Scheme however this should be flexible especially if the scheme is located within a rural area.

What level of community consultation is needed?

- 4.11. When the need for a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme is agreed it is important that all the residents within the designated area are notified of the proposal and asked to register their interest (See Sample Expression of Interest Form - Appendix 3). Neighbourhood Watch Schemes are most effective when there is a high level of awareness and community support for the initiative.
- 4.12. Raising awareness and consulting with all residents is essential. This can be done in the following ways:
- Leaflet drop/letters to all properties in the designated areas (See Sample Canvassing Letter - Appendix 6)
 - Press Release in local papers regarding the proposal
 - Article in local Church Newsletter/Parish Notes
 - Public Meeting – inviting all residents to register their interest
 - Volunteers calling door-to-door
- 4.13. If going door-to-door, volunteers should keep a record of the details and the number of houses within the area that are willing to participate in the Scheme (see Sample Register - Appendix 8). It is important that volunteers adhere to the legislative requirements outlined in the Data Protection Act.

4.14. The Data Protection Act provides safeguards as to how personal information is used. Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators may find it useful to retain personal data such as names of scheme members, addresses and possibly telephone numbers to keep in regular contact. Co-ordinators should advise residents of this accordingly and ensure that they have their consent to retain their details. Co-ordinators should only collect information that is needed and consent is required if the co-ordinator wishes to share personal details of residents. All information relating to or from which an individual may be identified must only be processed for the purposes of operation of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme which will include prevention of crime, the protection of the rights and freedom of others or the apprehension of offenders.

4.15. When the community consultation is completed, it should be possible to identify the level of community support for the initiative. This can be broadly defined as:

- High: At least 75% of all households within the designated wish to participate
- Medium: 40-74% of all households within the designated area wish to participate
- Low: 0 – 39% of all households in the designated area wish to participate

4.16. It is essential that there is a strong level of support for the initiative across the designated area. At least 60% of households in the proposed Scheme area should be willing to participate to make it viable.

4.17. Applications for Co-ordinators should only be progressed following endorsement from the community in the area to be covered by the proposed scheme.

How is a Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator appointed?

4.18. The proposed Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator should complete the Application Form for a Police Service Check – found in Appendix 4. A declaration form for a Co-ordinator's ID card should also be completed and attached to the Application Form (Appendix 5).

4.19. The Application Form and ID Card Declaration form should be sent – with two colour passport photographs – to the local PSNI Area Commander. The Area Commander should then return the letter of endorsement to the proposed Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator directly. The PSNI Area Commander should also provide duplicate copies of the approval letter to both the CSP Co-ordinator and the DPP Manager. If the applicant does not pass the Police Service check, he/she should be advised accordingly.

What happens if a replacement Co-ordinator is needed?

4.20. If a replacement Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator is required the local CSP Co-ordinator, DPP Manager and police officer, will liaise with the local community to seek to identify a suitable replacement. If a replacement is identified they will have to undergo the Police Service Check and be issued with an ID card. The ID card of the former Co-ordinator must also be returned as outlined in paras. 3.4 and 4.26.

4.21.If a replacement Co-ordinator is not identified, the accreditation for the scheme will cease and the CSP Co-ordinator will make arrangements for the signage to be removed.

How does a new Neighbourhood Watch Scheme get accredited?

4.22.If the application by the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator to the police is successful, he/she should fill out the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme Application Form (Appendix 4). The Application Form should be forwarded to the CSP Co-ordinator with a copy of the letter of approval by the PSNI. One colour passport photograph of the Co-ordinator must accompany the application form to facilitate production of the ID card.

4.23.The application form should be endorsed by the CSP Chairperson, DPP Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson and the local police officer. However, the CSP and DPP may delegate authority for endorsing applications to the CSP Co-ordinator and DPP Manager respectively.

4.24.The CSU will issue a two-year accreditation notice for the scheme to the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator on behalf of the partner organisations.

When are ID Cards issued for Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators?

4.25.ID cards for Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators will be provided to give reassurance to local residents when the Co-ordinator is making personal contact with the community. The cards will be issued by the CSU with the accreditation notice. The Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator will also be asked to sign a Declaration Form that commits them to proper management and use of their ID card. A copy of the form is attached at Appendix 5.

4.26.If a Scheme has lapsed or there is a need to retrieve the ID card, this will be the responsibility of the CSP Co-ordinator. If the card is not forthcoming, the local police officer will be advised and will be responsible for ensuring return of the card. The PSNI may rescind the approval of a NW Co-ordinator, if satisfied that the person is unable or unfit to discharge their functions as a Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator.

How is the Neighbourhood Watch signage erected?



4.27. Neighbourhood Watch signage is available to all new Schemes. The nominated Co-ordinator(s) must walk round the area of the proposed Scheme with a local police officer to agree locations for the signs on street lighting columns which should be clearly marked on a map. The map should be submitted to the CSP Co-ordinator who will arrange for an

appropriate number of signs to be erected in the designated area when the Scheme is accredited. Supplies of Neighbourhood Watch signs are held by Area Command Units and issued to accredited schemes on request. Further signs can be obtained by contacting PSNI Community Safety Branch, Telephone: 0845 600 8000 ext 69964 or e-mail: community.safety@psni.pnn.police.uk. Community Safety Branch does not stock Neighbourhood Watch signs. Requests for material are sent to a third party who dispatches the signs direct so please ensure adequate time to receive the signs (approximately one month).

4.28. The current position in relation to putting up and maintenance of Neighbourhood Watch signs is as follows:-

- The Department of Regional Development (DRD) has confirmed that the current design of the Neighbourhood Watch signs conforms to regulations. These regulations limit the maximum size of the sign and how they can be displayed, in that the sign must be parallel to the road.
- DRD has agreed that their 'street furniture' i.e. street lighting columns can be used to erect Neighbourhood Watch signs.
- If an accredited Scheme covers an area of NIHE properties, the NIHE have agreed to erect NW signs and will provide the associated (Public liability) insurance cover within the social housing sector.
- If an accredited Scheme covers an area of private housing, most Councils have agreed to assist with putting up NW signs and provide the associated (Public liability) insurance cover.
- Due to insurance issues Schemes should not erect their own signage.

How can a new Neighbourhood Watch Scheme be publicised and interest maintained?

4.29. It is important to seek publicity for a local Neighbourhood Watch Scheme at appropriate times. This could, for example, include the launch of a new Scheme, celebrating the birthday of a Scheme, or when prompt action by a Scheme has helped the community or the police in the course of an investigation. Whether or not to seek publicity is entirely a local matter, but it is essential that any information placed in the public domain, such as a press release, gives credit for all partners involved in local Neighbourhood Watch Schemes, i.e. the CSP, the DPP and the PSNI. The views of the members of the Scheme should also be considered in the preparation of any publicity material.

4.30. Neighbourhood Watch Schemes are most successful when they are run by members for members. One of the most important messages to get across is that everyone has something to contribute to their local Scheme. It could be information, skills, time or useful equipment. The more people involved the better. People like to feel useful and everyone likes to feel appreciated. One of the biggest challenges for Co-ordinators is keeping people's interest and maintaining the momentum for a Scheme. Effective communication is essential and should be based around holding meetings with Scheme members that are focused. It may help if these meetings are regular with the dates, times and venues agreed in advance, for example on a quarterly basis. A newsletter and a varied programme of events run by the Scheme through the year are also excellent ways of maintaining momentum.

4.31.A Neighbourhood Watch Scheme is more likely to be effective in helping to address local incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour if good networks are established and maintained with its members. Remember that, although crime is a serious problem, people will be happier doing something about it, if they are making a valuable contribution and enjoy doing it. Aim for activities that will both protect your community as well as make it stronger and more caring. Include some fun and social events in your programme to sustain interest and attract young people. Consider combining the activities of Schemes that are within a similar geographical area (See Sample Local Co-ordinators Contact Details Form – Appendix 9).

How does the Scheme start working in practice?

- 4.32 The Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator(s) and the local police officer should meet to agree methods of contact and agree times and locations for regular meetings to ensure methods for effective two-way communication are identified and maintained.
- 4.33 The Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator(s) should then contact each household within the designated area to inform residents that the establishment of the Scheme has been approved (See Sample Co-ordinators Letter- Appendix 7) and to confirm arrangements for liaising with the local police. The CSP Co-ordinator and DPP Manager will also keep in contact with the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators as needs arise.
- 4.34 Schemes accredited to Neighbourhood Watch (NI) can register with Neighbourhood Watch UK. See National Neighbourhood Watch Trust website for further information:
www.neighbourhoodwatch.net

5. BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH CO-ORDINATOR

5.1 There are no strict regulations around how a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme should function, but central to the effectiveness and success of any scheme is the input from the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator(s). This section outlines some pointers around the different activities a Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator might wish to organise such as production of a newsletter or organising meetings.

5.2 It is important to note that these activities are not essential to the operation of a Scheme and some Schemes operate differently depending on local circumstances. If there is more than one Co-ordinator they should aim to meet on a regular basis to progress ideas and events which will help maintain the momentum of a Scheme.

How to produce a newsletter

5.3 A newsletter gets information to people quickly and easily. The CSP Co-ordinator, DPP Manager or local police officer may be contacted for help with layout and printing. Members of the Scheme may also be able to assist. A newsletter can be produced by:

- Typing it on an A4 sheet and dividing the information into sections to give it a more professional finish, and make it easier to read.
- Using a word processor or a publication package on a PC makes it easier to move items around within the finished document. Remember to get permission if using photographs.

A newsletter can be delivered by:

- Mapping the area covered by the Scheme into small sections of approximately 20 homes. People are more likely to assist than if you have large rounds.
- Organising a central point from which people can collect their newsletters.
- Exploring the possibility of using a local newsagent.

5.4 Some things that could be included in a Scheme's newsletter are as follows:

- Local crime and disorder statistics (available from the local Area Command Unit Crime Prevention Officer)
- Local news articles – good news as well as bad.
- Comment on local problems and ideas for tackling them.
- Report on the Scheme's activities.
- Ideas to improve membership of the Scheme.
- Crime prevention advice (available from the local Area Command Unit Crime Prevention Officer).
- An events diary.
- Appeals for volunteers.
- A letters column.
- A tear off slip people can fill in to raise their concerns or make suggestions for Scheme events.

- The local CSP, DPP and police may also have useful information to input i.e: updates on regional initiatives etc

How to make local Scheme meetings work

5.5 When meetings are organised as part of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme they can be formal or informal. The priority, however, is to keep Scheme members interested and motivated. This section outlines some guidance in how meetings could be organised.

5.6 Before the meeting:

- Make sure everyone knows where and when the meeting is to be held and whether they are expected to prepare or contribute anything. Use flyers, notice boards and newsletters to publicise it.
- Choose an accessible meeting place. For example, a small group could meet in someone's house whilst for more than ten people; a larger venue may be required.
- The room should have enough comfortable chairs, as well as any other items that might be needed such as paper, pens etc.
- Think how best to set out the room as this can affect the contributions that people make. People should be able to see and hear each other. Chairs arranged in a circle are more likely to make people feel part of a group than straight rows facing a platform.
- Prepare an agenda to cover necessary business and structure discussion. Do not forget to ask other people what they would like to see included on the agenda and, if possible, publicise it before the meeting.
- Agree who will chair the meeting, take notes, organise refreshments, etc.

5.7 Running the meeting:

- Begin by welcoming everyone, especially new members.
- Run through the main agenda items for the meeting.
- Review the notes of the previous meeting. Check that people have carried out any agreed actions.
- Guide the discussion through the agenda with a firm but fair manner. If you have a large group, you may want to ask people to indicate if they want to speak. Encourage people to keep to the point and be aware of the time.
- Give everyone the chance to express their opinion without interruption. Avoid the discussion being dominated by a few people and encourage an environment of mutual respect in which agreement can be reached.

- Try to reach agreement.
- Make sure that someone keeps a record of the meeting (the 'minutes'). This should list those present, where and when the meeting was held. Above all, the notes should clearly record any decisions taken and the names of those responsible for carrying out the agreed actions.

5.8 After the meeting:

- Prepare and distribute the minutes as quickly as possible.
- Keep in touch with anyone who agreed to carry out an action to see if they need any support and to try and ensure that actions are carried out before the next meeting.

How to help detect offenders

5.9 There are three main ways members of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes can help to detect offenders:

- By being vigilant
- By recording descriptions of individuals and vehicles
- By reporting suspicious activity

Here is some advice that can be passed on.

Being vigilant

5.10 Everyone in the Scheme area, including children, should be aware of anything unusual and should all know what to do about it (see below). Information can be circulated at meetings, through a newsletter or "checklist" etc. It is important to advise people that they should not put themselves at risk when trying to observe a crime, or by trying to prevent a crime.

Taking descriptions

5.11 Make people in the Scheme area aware that the more detailed information they can provide, the more useful it will be to the Police.

Here are some tips on what to look for when observing people, or vehicles:

Person: Gender, age, skin colour, build, height, dress.

Hair: Colour, length, curly/straight, receding.

Face: Shape, complexion, beard/moustache.

Mouth: Shape, teeth.

Eyes: Glasses, colour.

Marks: Scars, tattoos.

Vehicles: Car / Van / Lorry / Bike.

Make, model, colour, registration number.

Distinguishing details (e.g. company name, damage, decoration).

Make sure that all members of the scheme have copies of the Neighbourhood Watch Information Card, which should be kept in a convenient location and used as prompts to record information. Information should be recorded as quickly as possible rather than relying on memory.

Reporting suspicious activity

5.12 An essential part of the Co-ordinator's role is to encourage people in the Scheme area to report crime and suspicious activity promptly and efficiently. In an emergency when there is danger to life, or a crime is in progress, people should dial 999 at once, ask for the police and provide clear details about yourself and the incident.

In a non-emergency situation use **0845 600 8000** to contact the police. Your local police officer may also have an assigned mobile phone and their number may also be used to report incidents or suspicious activity.

Crimestoppers

5.13 The Crimestoppers Trust is an independent charity that is not affiliated to the PSNI. It was set up in 1988 and operates across the UK to help identify, prevent, solve and reduce crime by use of a Freephone number. It can be used by anyone who can provide information about crime but wishes to remain anonymous.

5.14 It offers the opportunity for a person who may have information about a crime, such as details about the offender, to report it without that person giving their own details to the police. In these circumstances information can be passed anonymously to **CRIMESTOPPERS** by ringing **0800 555 111**.

This number is not suitable for an emergency that requires immediate police attention.

How to be safe on the street, in a car or on public transport

5.15 Neighbourhood Watch is not just concerned with being safe in the home. This is some advice for members when they are out and about.

On the Streets

- Avoid short cuts through dark areas, or waste ground.
- Walk facing the traffic. A car cannot easily pull up behind you unnoticed.
- Walk on the street side of the pavement to be furthest from dark entrances.
- Run in the opposite direction from anyone in a car who is threatening you. If you can, note the number and type of car.
- Do not accept lifts from strangers, or hitchhike.
- Always have enough money with you to book a taxi, if it is late, or arrange a lift home.
- Carry a personal alarm in your hand at night, or in areas where there are few people.
- Test the alarm every couple of months to make sure it still works.
- Cover up expensive jewellery when you are outside.
- Keep house keys in your pocket, not your bag.

- If you are followed, run to the nearest place where there are other people and call the police.
- Vary your route, if you go out regularly at night.

In a car

- Keep car doors locked and valuables out of sight.
- Make sure the car is in good condition before going on a long journey.
- Make sure there is sufficient fuel for the journey.
- Plan your route using main roads as much as possible.
- Take change in case you have to make a call. Also if you own a mobile phone ensure that it is charged.
- Be wary of hitchhikers and anyone who flags you down.
- If you break down on the motorway, do not accept lifts from strangers. Wait for the police, or breakdown services.

On Public Transport

- Keep away from isolated bus stops after dark.
- If it is late sit near the driver and conductor on buses.
- On platforms, stand where there are several others waiting.
- On trains, sit in compartments with several other people.

Security and Safety at home

Improving property security

- Fit good security hardware, including locks and bolts on doors and windows, door security chains and viewers, better lighting and possibly an alarm.
- Consider replacing doors and windows, if they are weak.
- Keep external doors locked. Always lock doors and windows properly even when popping out for a few minutes.
- Never leave keys under the doormat, or on a string, in the letterbox. Give a spare key to a trusted neighbour to keep safely.
- Change door and window locks when moving to a new home.

Encourage your Scheme members to visit the website www.howsecureismyhome.com. This site enables householders to assess how safe their home is from the risk of burglary. On accessing the website the householder is asked to complete a short series of questions on four areas of their home i.e. the doors, windows, exterior and protection of valuables. At the end of each section they are given a security rating of red, amber or green and advice on which areas action needs to be taken to improve the security of their home. A print out of the results is also available.

Improving personal safety

- Do not give personal information to strangers on the phone.
- Never let strangers into your home when you are alone.

- If you receive abusive calls, put the phone down immediately and, if they continue, tell the telephone company.
- Have a telephone extension in the bedroom for emergencies.
- Do not go outside to investigate prowlers – dial 999 at once.
- If you find signs of a break in when you return home, do not go inside, or shout out. Go to a neighbour and dial 999.

How to protect empty homes

5.16 Whether a house is empty for just a few minutes, or while the owner is on holiday, it is vulnerable. Scheme members should take the simple precautions listed below.

Emphasise these things each year as the summer holiday season approaches and the checklist could be circulated to members. Do not keep a list of members' holidays, as this could cause problems, if it fell into the wrong hands. It is safer for members to let a neighbour or local police know when they are away and how they can be contacted in an emergency and provide contact numbers for key holders.

Make sure that every member knows at least one neighbour who can be called on to help. It may be helpful for the Co-ordinator to keep a record of who 'house sits' for whom, in case unusual activity needs to be checked.

For short periods

- Always lock doors and windows.
- Consider leaving a radio playing.
- Consider switching on lights in some rooms.
- Lamps and radios can be plugged into a timer which makes them come on and off at various times which can make it look as if someone is home.
- Draw curtains in the evening.
- Tell neighbours, if the house is unoccupied at regular times.

For long periods

- Make sure properties are secure when unoccupied.
- Cancel deliveries of milk and papers.
- Tell neighbours, local police and alarm companies when the house is unoccupied.
- Consider using a time switch to turn on lights.
- Ask someone to open and close curtains.
- Make sure post is removed each day.
- Mow the grass before leaving for holidays.
- Lock away ladders and secure sheds and garages.
- Do not put your home address on luggage labels.

Doorstep Callers

5.17 Be aware of bogus doorstep callers. Most callers are probably genuine, but some are not. The advice is:

- Keep the door locked.
- Identify the caller through a window/spy hole.
- Be cautious.
- Use the safety chain before opening the door.
- Ask for an identity card and check it thoroughly – don't be rushed.
- If unsure telephone the company concerned and enquire.
- If still unsure do not let them in - ask them to write and make an appointment.
- If you have any concerns, telephone a neighbour, your Scheme Co-ordinator and/or the police.

How to mark and record property

5.18 Property marking is about putting your postcode and your house number on valuable items that you own from DVD players and bicycles to mobile phones. It discourages thieves because marked property is less easy to sell on. If stolen or lost property is recovered, this marking system helps the police to return item(s) it to their original owner.

5.19 Property marking can be promoted in several ways:

- The CSP or police may provide property marking equipment free of charge. Property marking kits can also be purchased from stationers and DIY stores, as well as security companies.
- The property marking kit could be passed around to members with advice on how to mark different types of property.
- Hold property marking days for Scheme members to work together.
- Ask household members if they would welcome a home visit from the Co-ordinator, or a Scheme member to mark property for them.
- Take photographs of valuable property for members and provide a form for them to record serial numbers and other details.

Property marking is not a one-off activity – a few moments each year will help protect your possessions.

Local Police and in particular the Crime Prevention Officer can provide advice on practical steps that can be taken to protect your property.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

A number of the terms used in this handbook are described below.

CSU.....Community Safety Unit

Community Safety Unit of the Northern Ireland Office has overall responsibility for community safety within Government

www.communitysafetyni.gov.uk

CSP.....Community Safety Partnership

Community Safety Partnerships were established on a voluntary basis in Northern Ireland, following Government's response to the Criminal Justice Review recommendations concerning community safety

DPP..... District Policing Partnership

The role of a DPP is to consult with the community, establish in conjunction with the District Commander policing priorities and monitor police performance against the local policing plan

www.districtpolicing.com

DRD.....Department for Regional Development

Main responsibilities include strategic planning, transportation strategy, Ports and Public Transport, roads and water policy, providing and maintaining roads and providing and maintaining water and sewage services

www.drdni.gov.uk

NIHE.....Northern Ireland Housing Executive

A comprehensive regional housing authority

www.nihe.gov.uk

NIPB.....Northern Ireland Policing Board

The Board's principal function is to secure the maintenance, efficiency and effectiveness of the police in Northern Ireland. In discharging this function, the Board must hold the Chief Constable and the PSNI accountable for the performance of their duties

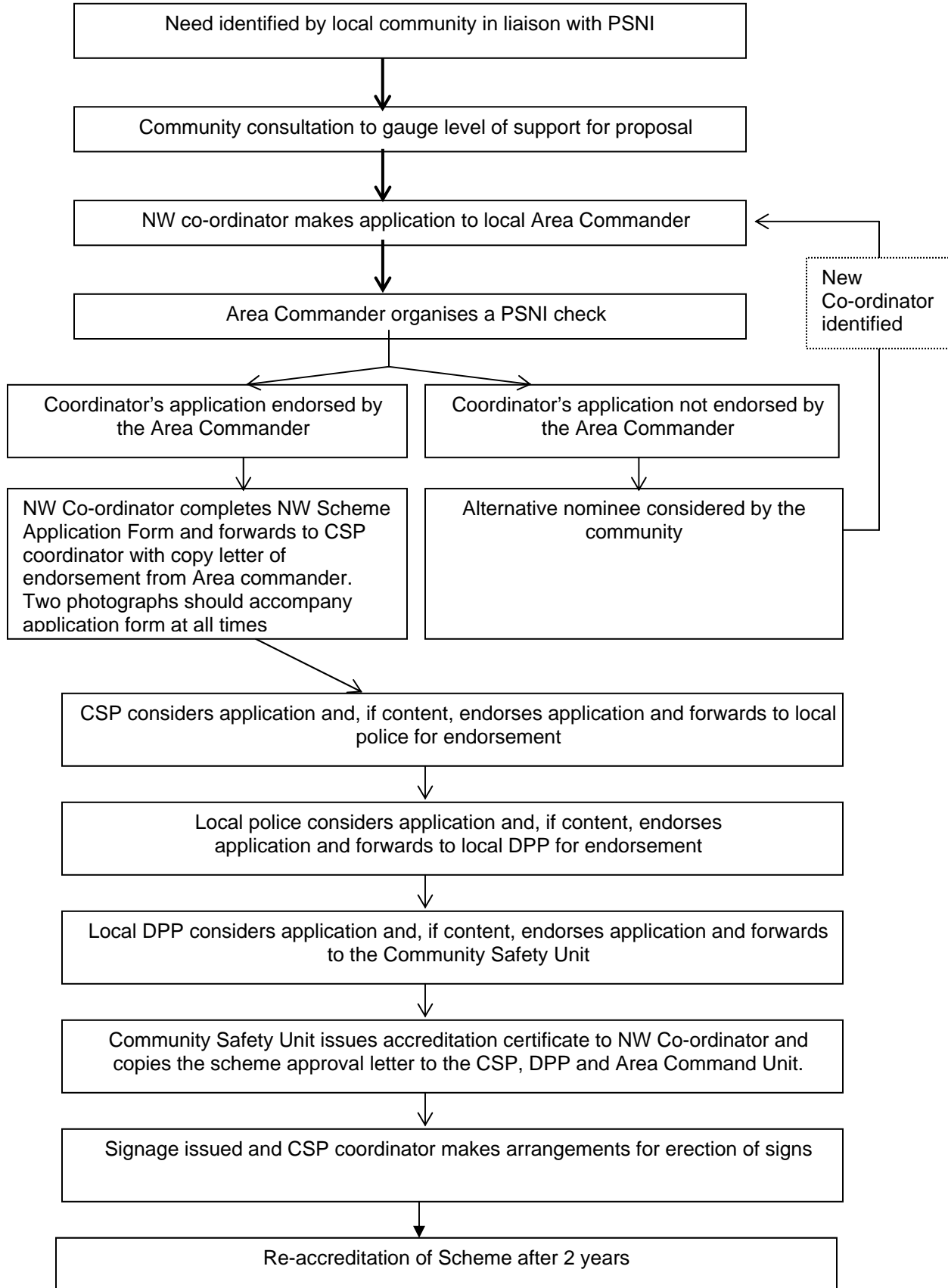
www.nipolicingboard.org.uk

PSNI.....Police Service of Northern Ireland

'Policing with the Community' is the style of policing delivered in Northern Ireland to meet the policing requirements of all members of the community and is delivered in furtherance of the statutory general duties of police officers

www.psni.police.uk

Appendix 1: PROCESS FOR ESTABLISHING A NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH SCHEME



Appendix 2: SAMPLE MEETING NOTICE



Are you concerned about crime,
the fear of crime and/or anti social behaviour
in xxxx?

A public meeting will be held on
xx xxxx xxxxx
in
xxxxxxxxx
at
xxxxx

The meeting is to find out whether residents wish to establish a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in the area. Neighbourhood Watch means that no one is alone. Neighbours look out for each other and keep a check on vulnerable people and places. A Neighbourhood Watch Scheme will work to reduce crime and to ensure that xxx remains a safe and peaceful place to live.

Everyone is Welcome.

Appendix 3: SAMPLE EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM



EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM

Thank you for attending this public meeting. We would appreciate your views on the proposal to set up a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in the XXXX area.

I think that the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme should be introduced in XXXX Yes
No

I would like to get involved in the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme Yes
No

I would like to be a co-ordinator within the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in XXXX Yes
No

Any other comments:

Name:
 Address:

 Post Code:
 Tel. No.:

APPENDIX 4: CO-ORDINATOR/SCHEME APPLICATION FORM

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH CO-ORDINATOR APPLICATION FORM

CONFIDENTIAL
PLEASE SUBMIT 2 ID PHOTOGRAPHS
WITH YOUR COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM

PERSONAL DETAILS:

First name(s): _____ Surname: _____

Previous surname(s) if applicable: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Full postal address: _____

Telephone Day: _____ Evening: _____

Email: _____ Fax: _____

What is the area of the proposed scheme?

Community contact details: (If different from above)

Name: _____ Tel No: _____

Address: _____

REFERENCES

Please give details of two people (not family members) who have known you for at least 2 years who could provide a reference.

Name: _____
Address: _____
Telephone (Inc Area Code): _____
How does this person know you? _____

Name: _____
Address: _____
Telephone (Inc Area Code): _____
How does this person know you? _____

Previous address(es) in the last 5 years:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

APPLICATION FORM DECLARATION

I agree that the Police Service of Northern Ireland may carry out a Police Service check and that a copy of the letter of advice to me can be forwarded to the Community Safety Partnership, in confidence, as to my suitability for appointment as Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator. I further agree to my personal details being held by the Community Safety Partnership and the local police.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Please forward this completed form to:

For Police District Command:

LOCAL POLICE DISTRICT COMMAND UNIT

Application received: _____
References received:
(1) _____
(2) _____
Police Endorsement: <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

**NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH SCHEME
APPLICATION FORM**

Registration Number:

Council/CSP Area:

SCHEME NAME: _____

COMMUNITY CONTACT /CO-ORDINATOR DETAILS:

First name(s): _____

Surname: _____

Full postal address: _____

Telephone Day: _____

Evening: _____

Email: _____

Fax: _____

SCHEME DETAILS: Please give as much detail as possible

STREET NAME	NUMBER OF DWELLINGS	STREET POSTCODES	NAME OF NW CO-ORDINATOR	CONTACT No	HAVE POLICE ENDORSED NW CO-ORDINATOR? (ATTACH COPY LETTER)
					<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
					<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
					<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
					<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
					<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
					<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

Has community consultation been carried out? YES NO

How? (Please give details)

Please indicate the level of Community Support

High (75%+)

Medium (40-74%)

Low (0-39%)

Has the scheme a particular focus, eg School, Rural, Elder Watch?

How many Neighbourhood Watch signs have been agreed for the scheme?

PLEASE COMPLETE BOX NUMBER ONE (OVERLEAF) BEFORE FORWARDING >>

1 - COMMUNITY CONTACT/CO-ORDINATOR

I can confirm the above details to be correct and I submit the application for accreditation.

Signed: _____

Print: _____

Date: _____

Forwarded to local Community Safety Partnership (Date): _____

2 - COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

Date Received: _____

Endorsed by: _____

Print: _____

Date: _____

Forwarded to local Police District Command (Date): _____

3 - LOCAL POLICE DISTRICT COMMAND

Date Received: _____

Endorsed by: _____

Print: _____

Date: _____

Forwarded to District Policing Partnership (Date): _____

4 - DISTRICT POLICING PARTNERSHIP

Date Received: _____

Endorsed by: _____

Print: _____

Date: _____

Forwarded to NIO Community Safety Unit (Date): _____

5 - NIO - COMMUNITY SAFETY UNIT

Date received: _____

Accreditation Approval Date: _____

Copies of Accreditation Forwarded to Community Contact, local Police/CSP/DPP (Date): _____

Appendix 5: NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH CO-ORDINATOR IDENTITY CARD DECLARATION

Neighbourhood Watch Scheme: _____

Upon receipt of a Neighbourhood Watch Identity card I will ensure it is kept safe.
Should the Identity Card be misplaced, lost or stolen I will inform local police immediately.
I will not permit anyone else to use my identity card.
If I cease to be Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator I agree to return my identification card.

I understand my role as a Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator and will:

- wear my Neighbourhood Watch identification card in a prominent position
- show my identification card to the householder without being asked to do so
- ensure the householder adequately checks the identification card to satisfy themselves to my identity when requested.
- not engage in any activity or behaviour which is likely to impact on my ability to retain the confidence of the local community and police.

I will advise the local DCU Commander if I:

- have been convicted in Northern Ireland or elsewhere after the date of my appointment of an offence (whether committed before or after that date); or
- have failed to comply with the duties and responsibilities of a Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator or otherwise am unable or unfit to discharge my functions as a Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator.

If requested, I agree to return the ID card.

NW Co-ordinator

Signed: _____

Printed: _____

Address: _____

Date: _____

Witness

Signed: _____

Printed: _____

Address: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 6: SAMPLE CANVASSING LETTER



(Date)

Dear Resident,

Residents within your area have suggested that they would like to set up a Neighbourhood Watch scheme where you live. Neighbourhood Watch involves neighbours looking after each other – keeping ‘an eye’ on each other’s houses while neighbours are on holidays, watching out for suspicious activity, reducing burglaries, vandalism and helping older people and the community feel safe in their homes.

Being a part of the Neighbourhood Watch scheme is easy and there is little work for you to do. It just means if you need someone to keep an eye on your house when you are away, see something that is suspicious and you do not want to call the police – you can contact a Co-ordinator. The Co-ordinator will also keep you informed, through leaflet drops for example, if there are crimes in the area so that you can protect your house and property.

The XXX community, XXX Community Safety Partnership, XXX District Policing Partnership and the PSNI supports Neighbourhood Watch. Residents living in your area have come forward and have volunteered to co-ordinate the scheme. One will call with you soon to introduce themselves and give you their contact details. **If you do not want to take part in the scheme, please telephone XXXX.**

Together we can work to make sure that XXX remains a safe and peaceful place to live.

Kind Regards,

Appendix 7: SAMPLE CO-ORDINATORS LETTER



(DATE)

Dear Resident,

Residents within XXXXXXXX are setting up a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. Neighbourhood Watch involves neighbours looking after each other – keeping ‘an eye’ on each other’s houses while neighbours are on holidays, watching out for suspicious activity, reducing burglaries, vandalism and helping older people and the community feel safe in their homes.

Being a part of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme is easy and there is little work for you to do. It just means if you need someone to keep a check on your house when you are away, see something that is suspicious and you do not want to call the police – you can contact the local Co-ordinator. [xxxx and xxxx are also Co-ordinators for the Scheme]

We will keep you informed of incidents in the area so that you can protect your house and property. You also have an important role to play in participating in the Scheme and I trust that you will get actively involved in identifying and forwarding information about crimes and anti-social behaviour within the area.

I called with you today to introduce myself, the Neighbourhood Watch scheme and give you my contact details. I am sorry that I missed you.

The XXXXX community, XXX Community Safety Partnership, XXX District Policing Partnership and the PSNI supports Neighbourhood Watch. Together we can work to make sure that this area remains a safe and peaceful place to live.

Kind Regards,

(NAME)
Co-ordinator

Appendix 8: SAMPLE REGISTER OF SCHEME MEMBERS



Register of Scheme Members

Name	Address	Delete as Appropriate:	Date
		Wants to be a member: Yes / No Left contact details Yes / No Not in – left letter	
		Wants to be a member: Yes / No Left contact details Yes / No Not in – left letter	
		Wants to be a member: Yes / No Left contact details Yes / No Not in – left letter	
		Wants to be a member: Yes / No Left contact details Yes / No Not in – left letter	
		Wants to be a member: Yes / No Left contact details Yes / No Not in – left letter	
		Wants to be a member: Yes / No Left contact details Yes / No Not in – left letter	
		Wants to be a member: Yes / No Left contact details Yes / No Not in – left letter	
		Wants to be a member: Yes / No Left contact details Yes / No Not in – left letter	
		Wants to be a member: Yes / No Left contact details Yes / No Not in – left letter	
		Wants to be a member: Yes / No Left contact details Yes / No Not in – left letter	
		Wants to be a member: Yes / No Left contact details Yes / No Not in – left letter	

