

How do I get my neighbours to join my scheme?

Building your scheme and engaging with your neighbours might be easy when you are an already well connected community. But what happens when you don't know many of your neighbours or are unsure what their response will be if asked to join Neighbourhood Watch?

In a survey about joining Neighbourhood Watch, respondents were asked about the barriers to joining and one of the top answers was that they simply hadn't been asked. That said, is it really as easy as that? Well most of the time, some people will say no when asked, and that is fine and don't feel offended, as for some, joining Neighbourhood Watch may not be for them. What you could do is invite them to any activities that you are organising or participating in, so that they feel included.

So when inviting your neighbours to join your scheme, what steps should you take? The best way is not to overthink it, at the end of the day they are your neighbours and the worst they can do is say no.

Why not start by letting your neighbours know why you feel Neighbourhood Watch could bring your community together, build resilience and improve the wellbeing of your neighbourhood, whilst helping reduce opportunities for crime? While there, let them know about the [benefits of membership](#).

We have various resources available as well to help you reach out to your neighbours to ask them to join, visit our Resources section to download them.

Starting a scheme

The following PDF is just as a checklist that you have covered all the initial bases of starting a scheme.

Resource pack

This resource pack has a small amount of assets for you to use, such as a leaflet to print and put through peoples doors

Example invitation letter to neighbours

Example of a letter that you could print out to introduce your scheme to your neighbours. Don't forget to amend it!

[Example letter](#)

Connect with your local policing team

Connect with your local policing team and join the local Safer Neighbourhood Panel. This is a great way of finding out what is going on in your community,

develop relations with key partners and work with policing teams for the good of your community.

Developing your scheme/group slides - recent workshop

Does your scheme reflect the community in which you live?

In this section we will guide you through developing your scheme to ensure it reflects the diversity of the local area, is inclusive and active in bringing different people in the neighbourhood together.

Diversity: Diversity is the range of human differences, including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes, religious or ethical values system, national origin, and political beliefs.

Inclusion: Inclusion is involvement and empowerment, where the worth and dignity of all people are recognised.

An inclusive scheme promotes and sustains a sense of belonging within the community; it values and practices respect for the talents, beliefs, backgrounds and ways of living of all residents.

It encourages participation by a diverse range of local people by creating an environment that respects and adapts to peoples' differences, takes steps to meet individual needs to ensure everyone is included and makes the most of the the unique contribution that all individuals with many types of difference can make.

In practice this means involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds, genders, sexual orientations, and with different religious beliefs in your scheme.

Firstly assess if your scheme is truly representative of the local community and if not, reach out to a wider group of people who reflect the local diversity. In a recent workshop, Coordinators agreed that it was important to be inclusive and to challenge yourself if you are not inviting certain people to join your scheme. You may realise that you are deliberately or inadvertently excluding people from your scheme because you have a certain perception about them or they are different from you and you are not sure how best to engage with them to invite them to join.

For example, some Coordinators admitted to avoiding inviting older people to join their scheme because they perceived that they would lack the technological expertise to be able to receive the e-mail messages they sent

them; others were unsure of how to invite neighbours who didn't really get involved with others in the neighbourhood.

Ways you could work to overcome these perceived and actual barriers to inclusion include:

- arrange for members of your community with the necessary IT skills to help raise an older person's awareness of how to use technology
- adapt the way you shared information and advice to meet an older person's needs, e.g. through printed materials or by word of mouth
- invite the neighbour you had not had much contact with round for a cup of tea to get to know them better and invite them to join your scheme or simply to attend your next Neighbourhood Watch meeting so they can learn more about it and get to know the members
- organise a community event and invite all the neighbours, making sure that the food and entertainment will appeal to a wide range of people

The most effective way of ensuring you engage with different people in a way that meets their needs is to get to know them and ask what would be best for them.

There are also many activities that we can do to encourage your community to work together, feel more connected and improve wellbeing, all whilst reducing crime through action:

- Litter picking
- Conduct an environmental audit of your area
- Hold a street party or picnic
- Hold a crime awareness event
- Encourage property marking
- Talk about scams and what steps people can take to reduce the risk

Attracting new members

Encouraging action

Your members joined your scheme to be proactive, so provide them with activity suggestions to do exactly that. This could include:

- target hardening their property
- helping others to learn about scams
- spreading the word about current trends in crime
- regular meetings
- litter picking to reduce risk of anti-social behaviour and increase community pride and resilience

Keeping your membership engaged

Keeping your members engaged is very important for the development and longevity of your scheme. Regular updates from you as the Coordinator

can help your members feel part of the community and feel more proactive, reducing opportunities for crime and increasing the sense of community spirit.

Effective messaging, such as email, WhatsApp and social media, can help you and your members feel better connected and engaged.

Have a look at our section about using social media to increase your reach.