



Neighbourhood WATCH

Toolkit

Module 9: Community safety

This module will help you and your group to understand more about:

- the role of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) in England and Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) in Wales; and
- the impact of CDRPs and CSPs on Neighbourhood Watch

By the end of this module you will be able to:

- participate in a strategic assessment conducted by a CDRP or CSP to identify crime issues in your area

Introduction

The wider picture

In **Module 2: Starting and maintaining a scheme**, you looked at the benefits of Neighbourhood Watch for your area.

What you do locally can make a vital contribution to the overall effort to reduce crime and the fear of crime in a much wider area. Working together with the police and other organisations, such as your local authority and other Neighbourhood Watch schemes, you can make an impact on your town or city. This, in turn, contributes to the reduction of crime across the country as a whole.

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) and Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) – what they are and what they do

CDRPs (in England) and CSPs (in Wales) have a statutory duty to work with other local agencies and organisations to develop and implement strategies to tackle crime and disorder and misuse of drugs in their area. Following a review of the partnership provisions in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, legislative changes in the Police and Justice Act 2006 introduced minimum standards for CDRPs in 2007. These include producing a strategic assessment (a document which identifies the crime and community safety priorities in the local area) and a partnership plan which lays out the approach for addressing these priorities. The local community is given a chance to influence the strategic assessment, for example through public meetings and questionnaires.

Each partnership comprises the police, police authorities, local authorities, fire and rescue authorities, primary care trusts (in England) or local health boards (in Wales), as well as other private and voluntary agencies. You can find your local partnership on the Crime Reduction website at http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/regions/regions_map.htm.



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Under the new minimum standards, Neighbourhood Watch groups are among the local bodies the partnerships are expected to engage with when preparing a strategic assessment.

Where does Neighbourhood Watch fit in?

If your scheme is functioning effectively, you will probably already be contributing to the underlying goals of community safety. When it comes to dealing with the local partnership directly, however, it often makes more sense for Neighbourhood Watch schemes to get together to form a local association. And, just as a partnership can benefit from pooling its resources, a local Neighbourhood Watch association can benefit from the shared experience of its members.

What can Neighbourhood Watch do?

The minimum standards introduced through the Police and Justice Act 2006 provide an opportunity for Neighbourhood Watch to become involved in, and make an effective contribution to, the strategic assessment in its area. It is, of course, up to individual schemes and associations to decide whether to participate in their local partnership. Neighbourhood Watch schemes that are already in an association could survey their own members and feed the results into the CDRP (or CSP) strategic assessment process.

The role of Neighbourhood Watch in a local partnership will depend on which issues the strategic assessment identifies as important, but there is potential for Neighbourhood Watch to undertake any of the following:

- **intelligence gathering** – either generally or in response to specific circumstances
- **community surveillance** of a given area
- **promotion** of crime and disorder prevention messages
- **youth diversion** work
- **burglary reduction** work
- **community development** work – for example helping to reduce the fear of crime, and the consequences of such fear, by providing services to help the elderly, infirm or vulnerable to get out and about.



Remember

To avoid duplication of effort, check what the CDRP/CSP is already doing.



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Participating in a local strategic assessment

One of the things your group could do is to participate in the strategic assessment in your area. This could provide some useful information both for your scheme and the CDRP (or CSP).

What is a strategic assessment?

A strategic assessment is conducted at least annually and will provide knowledge and understanding of community safety problems and enables partners to:

- understand levels and patterns of crime, disorder and substance misuse;
- set clear and robust priorities for their partnership;
- develop activity that is driven by intelligence and meets the needs of the local community;
- deploy resources effectively and present value for money; and
- undertake annual reviews and plan activity based on a clear understanding of the issues and priorities

In other words, it answers these questions:

- What crimes are committed in the area covered by your Neighbourhood Watch scheme?
- How many of each type of crime are committed?

As a local organisation in your area that is closely concerned with preventing crime, your scheme will be in a good position to contribute to a strategic assessment.

The advantages of the strategic assessment are that it will help you to discover what the real crime problems are in your area and which ones people are most concerned about.

Involvement in a community safety project

If you already have a CDRP/CSP that covers the area where you live, it is likely that the organisations involved will have employed a community safety officer. He or she might have come from an organisation or be funded independently. The officer can advise you or help you to develop a project that benefits not only your group but also the wider community.

Your community safety officer will be able to find out about:

- **similar projects** that have been run elsewhere in the country, what the good points are and what to avoid;
- **events** that are being run regionally or nationally that might help you;
- **local resources** and more **formal funding**, for example National Lottery funding, that may be available to you;
- **support** from major organisations and agencies; and



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- **publicity opportunities**, including press releases and launch events



Remember

Don't waste your time and hard-won resources by making the mistakes that another project has made elsewhere.

To prevent other groups wasting their resources, you must ensure that both your successes **and** your failures are accurately recorded. This will help future projects to be as effective as possible.