



EAST RIDING
OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

How to start a Neighbourhood Watch Group



Introduction to Neighbourhood Watch

Guide to forming a new group



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What is Neighbourhood Watch?



The Facts

If you are not in a Neighbourhood Watch Area, national statistics show that your chances of being burgled are 1 in 35.

Those same statistics show that in a Neighbourhood Watch Area, your chances of being burgled drop to 1 in 344*.

Getting Involved

Neighbourhood Watch is one of the most successful crime prevention initiatives ever. Behind it lies a simple idea, and a central value shared by millions of people around the country, that getting together with you neighbours to take action will reduce crime and disorder.

Neighbourhood Watch is a popular way for people of all ages and backgrounds to get involved in making their area a better and safer place in which to live.

We all know that the police are there to fight crime, but they need our help to do an effective job. Indeed, some problems just *can't* be solved by the police alone. Some need a joint approach by the police, the community, the local authority and perhaps other agencies too.

Neighbourhood Watch Groups don't just tackle crime issues. Many of our groups involve themselves in a whole host of community and environmental projects in order to improve the place where they live and the quality of life of their families.

* *Statistics produced by the Association of British Insurers*



What do Groups Do?



There are many different ways in which Neighbourhood Watch Groups are helping to tackle local crime and community safety issues in the Humberside Police area, however, all share the same primary aims:

- To reduce local opportunities for crime, thereby deterring would-be thieves and vandals.
- To establish or enhance a community spirit towards the protection of their property by mutual co-operation and communication.
- To reduce the fear of crime and encourage people to take a pride in their neighbourhood.
- To inform the police of any suspicious activity and in doing so, create a safer environment in which to live.
- To support Community Safety Partnership in its role to reduce crime and disorder around the East Riding.



Group Structure

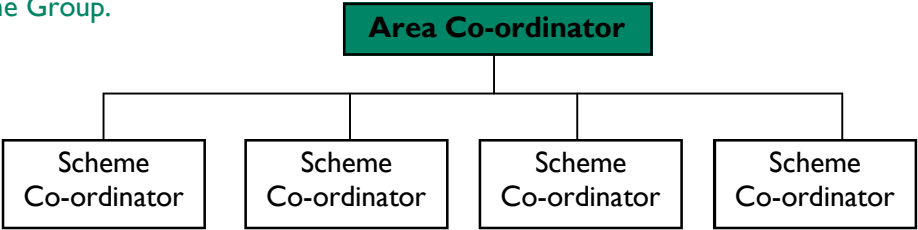


Within the East Riding area, Neighbourhood Watch members are organised into groups.

A Neighbourhood Watch Group is simply a number of residents operating Neighbourhood Watch within a clearly defined area based upon a single street, a number of adjacent streets or even a complete village.

The group will be headed by an Area Co-ordinator who will be the primary point of contact with the police and other agencies. They will be the community’s focal point for Neighbourhood Watch Activities; receiving and distributing information; administering the Group and helping to steer the community’s efforts to make their neighbourhood a better and safer place to live.

Where the Group is larger than, 20-30 houses, a single Co-ordinator will find it difficult to administer it alone. In these cases, the Group is sub-divided into Schemes, each of which has a Scheme Co-ordinator (may be referred to as Co-ordinators throughout the booklet) who will assist the Area Co-ordinator to run the Group.



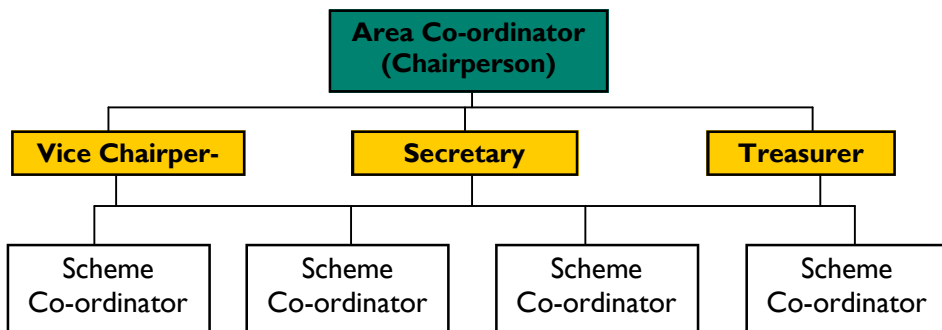
Scheme Co-ordinators operate within a clearly defined sub-area (perhaps their end of a street) and they distribute information and co-ordinate Neighbourhood



Group Structure

Larger Groups

Some groups, especially those covering a large number of households, may decide that they can best serve the community by having a full Neighbourhood Watch committee. The structure may look like this:



Working Together

Neighbourhood Watch isn't the only way of improving your community. Whilst many communities operate Neighbourhood Watch as a 'stand alone' initiative some communities feel that Neighbourhood Watch is an ideal platform for starting or working alongside other community groups.

Some of our member Groups have very close links to Resident's Associations, Parish Councils, Community Associations, Village Hall committees, Tenant's Associations, Community Centres, Playing Fields Associations and many more. The great thing about Neighbourhood Watch is that it's completely 'transparent'. It can quite comfortably work along side other community initiatives and in almost every case, it adds further value to those other initiatives.

The Right Structure for You

Wherever you live, be it in a tiny cul-de-sac, a countryside village or on a large estate, East Riding Safe Communities will be happy to talk to you about establishing a Neighbourhood Watch in your area. We will guide you through every step of the process so that you can achieve the ideal structure for your Neighbourhood Watch Group. It's not as complicated as it may seem.

What does a Co-ordinator Do?



The Area and scheme co-ordinators are probably the most important part of any Neighbourhood Watch Group and consequently the success or failure of the group will be directly linked to their enthusiasm and commitment.

Duties vary considerably from Group to Group, but they generally include encouraging residents to:

- Foster a community spirit.
- Watch out for neighbours (checking whilst a neighbour is away, taking in parcels left on doorsteps etc.)
- Secure their homes and outbuildings.
- Keep their eyes and ears open.
- Report suspicious or criminal activity directly to the Police.
- Display Neighbourhood Watch window stickers.
- Mark and record details of their property.
- Distribute crime reduction and Neighbourhood Watch material to members.
- Welcome new residents to the area and introducing them to Neighbourhood Watch.
- Pay particular attention to the more vulnerable members of the community - the elderly, those living alone and the young and encouraging others to help them too.
- Helping to arrange meetings and other community events in order to help people to get to know their neighbours and improve community spirit.
- Giving residents a sense of having some control over crime in order to reduce fear of crime.

We all know that time is precious. Many of our co-ordinators find themselves involved in Neighbourhood Watch activity for less than an hour each month.

How do you start a Group?



Section 1

Step 1

Contact East Riding Safe Communities

Before embarking on starting a new group, it is a good idea to make contact with East Riding Safe Communities. They will have experience in starting new Neighbourhood Watch Groups and their services are entirely free.

In addition to answering any questions you may have, we will be able to provide you with all documentation and information necessary to start your new Group.

Step 2

Decide on a clearly defined area

It is important to decide upon the size and exact area where your Neighbourhood Watch will operate. Although groups can be any size, our experience is that 20-30 households is a manageable number for one co-ordinator. If you have a much larger number in mind, you will need to split the Group into schemes and enlist the help of other co-ordinators.

When making the decision, you should bear in mind:

- The overall number of households.
- Natural boundaries (roads, village boundaries etc)
- The level of anticipated support.
- The difficulties in maintaining communication with isolated properties.

Step 3

Distribute questionnaires to all households

On request, East Riding Safe Communities will provide you with a questionnaire which you should distribute to all households within your chosen area. If you have a large area, you might need help with this task. The questionnaire contains simple questions designed to assess the level of support for the scheme and to help you identify potential co-ordinators and other helpers.

How do you start a Group?



Step 4, Retrieve the questionnaires

Between 3 and 7 days after distribution, you should collect the questionnaires. Experience has shown that if you leave collection longer than one week, many of the questionnaires will have found their way into the bin!

Although it is quite in order to ask residents to forward their completed questionnaires to you, you will find that personal collection generates a much more positive response and also allows you to talk to many of your neighbours who you may never have spoken to before. In order to start a successful Group, you really need a positive response from more than 40% of residents.

You should keep the completed questionnaires for your own records but inform East Riding Safe Communities of any names and addresses of people who showed an interest in becoming a Special Constable etc...

Step 5, Identify Potential Scheme Co-ordinators

The questionnaire responses will enable you to identify those who have volunteered to become Co-ordinators or have offered to help in some other way.

Step 6, Mark a map with the Group's area

It is a good idea for the Group to have a map with the Group's area clearly marked. The map is useful for identifying Co-ordinators areas and other points of interest. Maps can be hand drawn or obtained from other sources such as the local planning office or from the internet.

Section 2

Step 7, Organise a Public Meeting

You should arrange a public meeting in conjunction with East Riding Safe Communities. The purpose of the meeting is to introduce Neighbourhood Watch to residents and to allow Co-ordinators to introduce themselves. Although the Area Co-ordinator will run the meeting a representative from East Riding Safe Communities (and perhaps a Police Officer or PCSO) will be present to explain and answer questions on the Neighbourhood Watch concept and how it can benefit the community. The meeting will ideally be held at a venue in or near to your area which is large enough to accommodate the number of residents you expect to attend. Schools, Community Centres, village halls and Pubs should all be considered (although where a meeting is to

How to start a Group



be held in a pub or club, a private room is preferable).

Careful consideration should be given to the date and time of the meeting in order to achieve maximum attendance: too early in the evening and those working residents may be unable to attend, too late in the evening and elderly residents may not attend. You may also wish to consider offering transportation or escorts to elderly or disable community members.

Before finalising a date, you should contact East Riding Safe Communities to ensure that a representative can attend. You can also contact your local Police Officer.

Step 8, Order Meeting Invitations

To reduce your administrative burden, East Riding Safe Communities can provide you with pre-printed meeting invitations which you can distribute to residents. You merely supply details of the date, time and venue of the meeting along with your contact details, and they will print the meeting invitations for you.

Step 9, Distribute Invitations

We recommend that you distribute meeting invitations to residents no less than one week prior to the meeting.

You should attempt to include all members of the community including the elderly, ethnic minorities and teenagers. Neighbourhood Watch exists to serve us all.

Step 10, Order Starter Packs

When the Neighbourhood Watch scheme is launched, every household will be provided with:

- A 'Starter Pack' containing crime prevention literature.
- A Neighbourhood Watch window sticker.

These Items will be provided free of charge and the Area Co-ordinator should order these through East Riding Safe Communities.

Step 11, Hold the public Meeting

At the meeting, a representative from East Riding Safe Communities will introduce the Neighbourhood Watch concept to residents and the Police Officer will usually



How to start a Group



talk about local crime issues. The meeting is a good opportunity for residents to voice their concerns about local problems and issues may be identified which the group can begin to address once the scheme is in operation. If everyone agrees, it is possible at this meeting for the Group to go through the Problem Solving Process.

Step 12

Hold a Co-ordinator's Meeting

At the co-ordinators meeting, an Area Co-ordinator is formally appointed along with a Treasurer and Secretary if required. The Group's area is divided into clearly defined schemes and co-ordinators are appointed. If the group wants to access funding for projects then a constitution should be adopted (we can give you advice about this on request).

Step 13

Distribute Starter Packs and Donation Envelopes

Co-ordinators distribute starter packs and donation envelopes to all households in the Group's area. These are often accompanied by a letter from the Area Co-ordinator introducing the group and stating when the next meeting will take place.

Section 3

Step 14

Open a community Bank Account

Some groups choose to set up a community bank account in order to properly account for all funds. All residents should be afforded the opportunity to inspect the account at any time.

Some banking organisations offer free banking services for community accounts.

How to start a Group



Step 15

Identify Location for Neighbourhood Watch Signs and Apply for Planning Permission

Neighbourhood Watch signs are normally erected on lampposts and this requires planning permission from the council. Planning permission application forms are available from East Riding Safe Communities.

Each individual lamppost must be identified and its number recorded. Signs should not be erected before planning permission has been granted. Where no suitable lamppost is available, in some circumstances signs can be placed on wooden telegraph or electricity poles. Any Group wishing to place a sign on one of these poles could contact East Riding Safe Communities for advice on how to seek permission from the relevant authority.

Step 16

Order Signs

Once planning permission has been granted Neighbourhood Watch signs can be erected. Signs can be ordered via East Riding Safe Communities. The signs can be attached to lampposts by group members using the supplied fixing bands, no special skills are required or the Highways Authority can erect the signs. There may be a small charge for this but Safe Communities will help with set up costs whenever possible.

Step 17

Organise a Problem Solving Meeting

Having established the group, its effectiveness can be enhanced by devising an action plan which seeks to address local concerns on community safety issues. A Problem Solving process is used to formulate the action plan to address the most urgent issues the group/community are concerned about and it enables the Group to identify partner agencies which can assist with the issues.

Things to do checklist



Section 1

Done

1	Contact East Riding Safe Communities	
2	Obtain a map of the local area and decide on a clearly defined area	
3	Distribute questionnaires	
4	Retrieve questionnaires (3-7 days later)	
5	Identify potential Scheme Co-ordinators from the questionnaire returns	
6	Mark a map with the Group's area	

Section 2

7	Organise a public meeting	
8	Order meeting invitations	
9	Distribute invitations to households	
10	Order 'Starter Pack' (One per Household)	
11	Hold public meeting (can hold the Problem Solving meeting at this point)	
12	Hold a Co-ordinators meeting	
13	Distribute 'Starter Packs'	

Section 3

14	Open a Community Bank Account	
15	Apply for planning permission for Neighbourhood Watch signs	
16	On receipt of planning permission, order signs	
17	Organise Problem Solving meeting and devise Action Plan	

Sample Questionnaire



Neighbourhood Watch Questionnaire

Some local residents are considering starting a Neighbourhood Watch Group in this area. We want to make our neighbourhood a better and safer place to live and we need your support.

It would be appreciated if you would take a few minutes to answer the questions below.

Please note that this questionnaire remains the property of the proposed Neighbourhood Watch Group and unless interest is shown in joining the Humberside Special Constabulary no information contained within this form will be passed on to any organisation or stored on any computer.

Please tick the appropriate boxes

- | | Yes | No |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Would you or any member of your household support a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in this area? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Would you or any member of your household be prepared to act as a Co-ordinator in such a scheme? <i>This would involve circulating information and acting as a contact between your neighbours and the local Police Officer.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Would you or any member of your household be prepared to help in delivering newsletters or in any other capacity? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Would you like to receive information about joining the Humberside Special Constabulary? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Would you be prepared to act as a volunteer in a police station? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Would you be prepared to act as a volunteer for young people? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Your name: _____

Your address: _____

Telephone No. _____



EAST RIDING

OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL



To find out more about Neighbourhood Watch in your
area contact

East Riding Safe Communities
East Riding of Yorkshire Council
County Hall
Cross Street
Beverley
East Riding of Yorkshire
HU17 9BA

Telephone: 01482 391012
Email: Safe.communities@eastriding.gov.uk
Or visit
www.safecommunities.eastriding.gov.uk



Protecting Communities, Targeting Criminals