



# News Release

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## Good neighbours spend 3m days a year sorting out other people's problems

Neighbourhood Watch volunteers are spending more than 3m working days a year sorting out other people's problems, according to a new survey.

On average, local co-ordinators give up two days a month dealing with neighbourhood issues. Top of their to-do list is tackling anti-social behaviour.

The snapshot poll was carried out by the website [neighbourhoodwatch.net](http://neighbourhoodwatch.net) to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the first UK Neighbourhood Watch group was formed.

When the first Watch group was set up in the Cheshire village of Mollington in 1982, it was in response to the growing tide of burglaries in the area.

Since then the Neighbourhood Watch movement has spread to virtually every village, town and district in the UK. Home Office figures reveal that six million households are members of 170,000 Neighbourhood Watch schemes nationwide.

"The role of Neighbourhood Watch in the community has changed significantly since it began 25 years ago," said Roy Rudham, Chair of the UK Neighbourhood Watch Trust.

The [neighbourhoodwatch.net](http://neighbourhoodwatch.net) survey asked 150 group co-ordinators and association organisers to list the issues that take up most of their time. Seven-out-of-ten highlighted dealing with anti-social behaviour, then came improving the local environment (63%), followed by sorting out parking and traffic problems (37%) and then dealing with burglaries (34%).

Roy Rudham said: "The old image of Neighbourhood Watch as a curtain-twitchers charter is a long way wide of the mark. In today's Britain groups of neighbours are making their voices heard on a range of issues that affect their local communities."

Neighbourhood Watch organisers were asked to list the main tasks they do. Attending meetings with Police and local bodies (73%) and sorting out neighbours' problems (60%) came top.

If you move to a street or estate where a Neighbourhood Watch scheme already exists, there's a good chance you'll get to meet the local co-ordinator. Nearly half said they put themselves out to welcome new neighbours.

Being a good neighbour is costing Watch groups, on average, around £250 a year - though many groups run on a shoestring of £10 a month.

"Our survey indicates that throughout the UK Neighbourhood Watch groups are running up costs of more than £40m a year in total," said Roy Rudham.

"In the majority of cases that money is coming out of the pockets of the members themselves," said Mr Rudham.

The survey also highlights the inconsistent levels of support for Neighbourhood Watch from local police teams. While 47% of Watch organisers said they received good support from the Police, worryingly, 22% reported they received little or no support.

When asked if Neighbourhood Watch was making a difference in their local community, 69% of Watch organisers said it had been fairly or very successful at reducing crime and 50% said people felt much safer locally as a result of a Watch group being formed.