



# NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH NATIONAL CRIME AND COMMUNITY SURVEY 2021

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The national Neighbourhood Watch survey was developed by Neighbourhood Watch Network, supported by University College London, to better understand levels of crime victimisation, fear of crime and feelings of safety, neighbourliness, community cohesion and loneliness, and the current impact, reach and diversity of Neighbourhood Watch.

## 2. Methodology

- 2.1 The survey was conducted online using the Survey Monkey platform from 20<sup>th</sup> October – 16<sup>th</sup> November 2021. All responses were kept anonymous and were analysed in large groups to avoid identifying individuals or group of people.
- 2.2 The survey was shared with Neighbourhood Watch members and non-members via Neighbourhood Watch communication channels, Police force community messaging systems, and other partners' communication channels. This methodology is a non-probability sampling technique, and the sample can therefore not be guaranteed as representative of the general population.
- 2.3 A total of 16,473 responses were received, of which 14,083 were assessed as complete & valid following data cleansing and included in this analysis.

## 3. Executive Summary

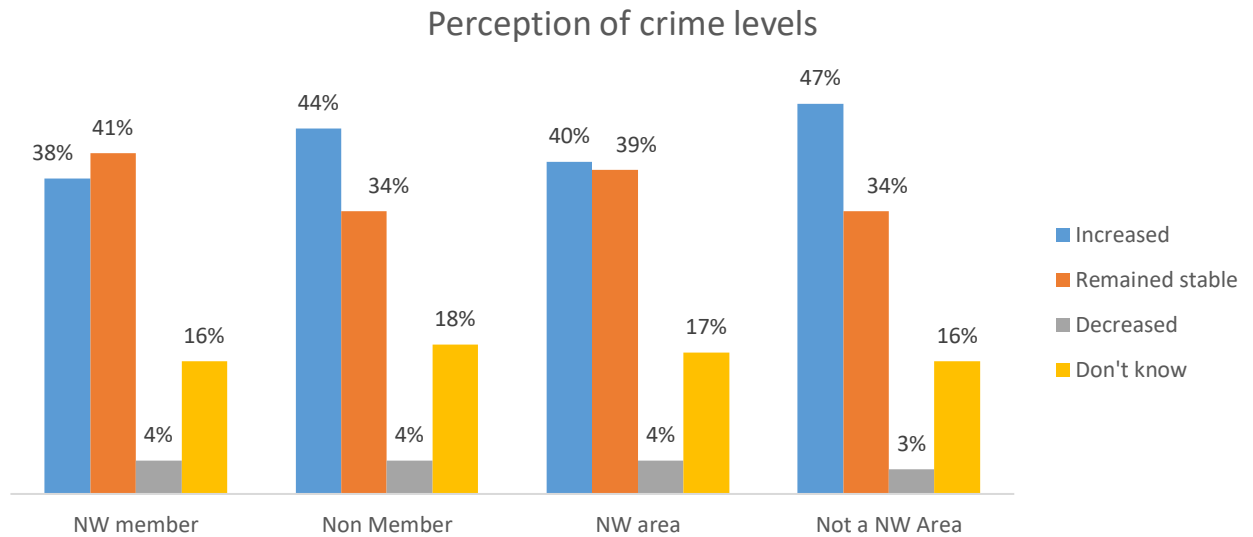
- 3.1 People's experience and perception of crime and their sense of community have been impacted in various ways during the COVID 19 pandemic. Restrictions on movement and social interaction and the extra needs placed on communities to support each other have all influenced people's experience and perception of crime levels and their feelings about their community.
- 3.2 Not surprisingly, given that many COVID restrictions have been lifted over the past 12 months, and people are now out of their homes and on the streets more frequently, results from all respondents show that their perception that crime has increased is higher than in last year's survey for both Neighbourhood Watch members and non-members. Neighbourhood Watch members, however, remain less likely than non-members to think that crime has increased (38% vs 44%).
- 3.3 While the percentage of all respondents who reported having been a victim of crime remained similar to the 2020 survey figures at 20%, the types of crimes that people were experiencing changed considerably. A lower percentage of people who had been a victim of

crime experienced a burglary (9% vs 30%) and vehicle crime (16% vs 31%) while a higher proportion of people reported having been a victim of online or other fraud (37% vs 29%). Neighbourhood Watch members remain less likely than non-members to have experienced any crime (18% vs 23%)

- 3.4 The crime that most people experienced remained unchanged, with 34% of people reporting having been harassed, threatened or verbally abused in the street in both years' surveys.
- 3.5 Peoples' worry about personally experiencing certain crimes tended to reflect those that had previously been more prevalent in neighbourhoods than respondents' current experience suggests. Burglary and vehicle crime remain the crime people most worried about being a victim of, even though survey results show that the incidence of these crimes has been much lower over the past year.
- 3.6 Peoples' concerns about crimes also differed between those they were concerned about as a national issue and those they were concerned about locally. Some of the more serious, hidden or under-reported crimes such as knife crime, violence against women and girls, modern slavery, domestic abuse and hate crime were considered much more of a concern nationally than locally. Fly tipping, burglary, antisocial behaviour, car crime, speeding, drug dealing, and online crime and other fraud were the crimes that most respondents were most concerned about in their local area.
- 3.7 Results about how people feel about their local area show a positive overall trend from the previous survey in 2020. Results from all respondents show an increase in their feelings of personal safety and satisfaction with their local area. While those living in a Neighbourhood Watch area and those who don't both report feeling safer and more satisfied with their area, Neighbourhood Watch members are still more likely than non-members to be satisfied or very satisfied with their local area (92% vs 84%) and their personal safety (73% vs 66%).
- 3.8 A similar trend is apparent in people's feelings about their community. While Neighbourhood Watch members remain more likely than non-members to have a positive perception of all aspects of their community, a larger proportion of all respondents reported that they felt that they lived in close-knit community where people were friendly, trusted and looked after each other. Respondents were more likely than the previous year to perceive that people would intervene if anyone in their area is causing a disturbance, that if they needed help there are people who would be there for them, that people would help the police and other agencies to resolve problems, call the police if someone is acting suspiciously and help others if they sensed trouble.
- 3.9 The percentage of all respondents who think that the police in their area do an excellent or good job shows a significant reduction from the 2020 survey results, reducing from 42% to 33%. However, the more respondents think crime has decreased the better they think of the police. 56% of those who think crime has decreased think the police do an excellent or good job, compared with just 19% of those who think crime has increased.

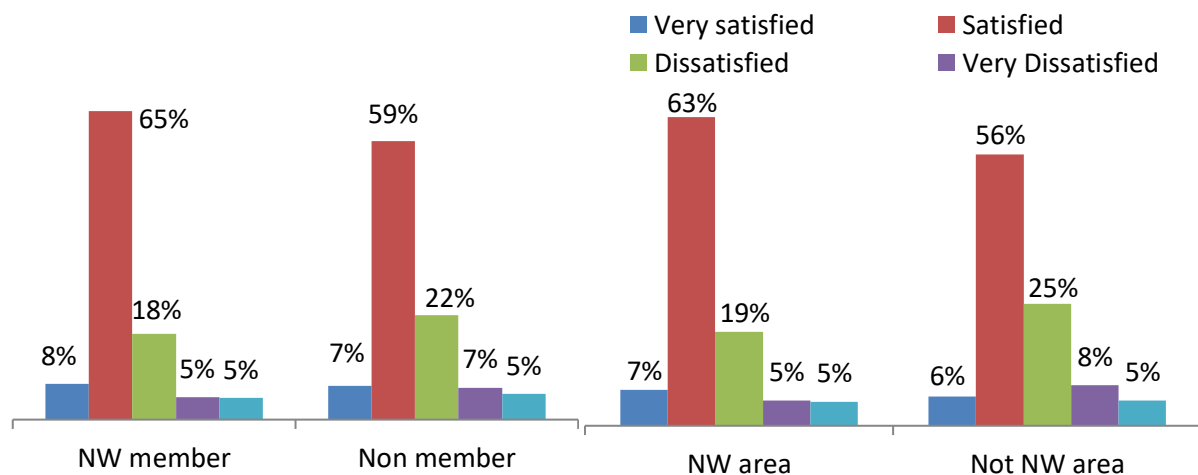
#### 4. Perception of Crime and Safety

4.1 Those living in a Neighbourhood Watch area are less likely to say that crime has increased than those who don't live in a Neighbourhood Watch area (40% vs 47%), with Neighbourhood Watch members in those areas even less likely to think that crime has increased (38%), and more likely to think crime has decreased or remained stable (45% vs 38%).



4.2 Survey results indicate that people are generally feeling safer in their communities. Responses show a significant increase in those who feel satisfied or very satisfied with their personal safety across all respondents. The 2020 Crime and Community Survey showed that 59% of those living in a Neighbourhood Watch area and 45% of those who didn't, said they were satisfied or very satisfied with their personal safety. In this year's survey, these figures have risen to 70% and 62% respectively.

4.3 Members of Neighbourhood Watch remain even more likely than non-members to be satisfied or very satisfied with their personal safety (73% vs 66%).

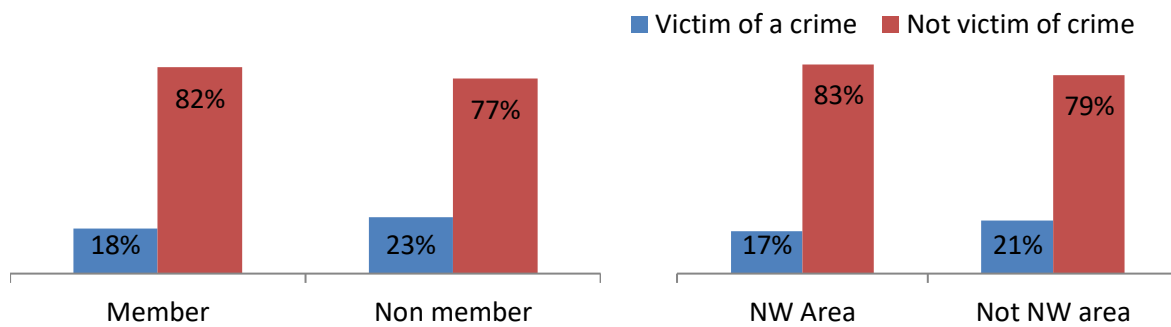


## 5. Experience of Crime

5.1 20% of all respondents had been a victim of a crime in the last 2 years.

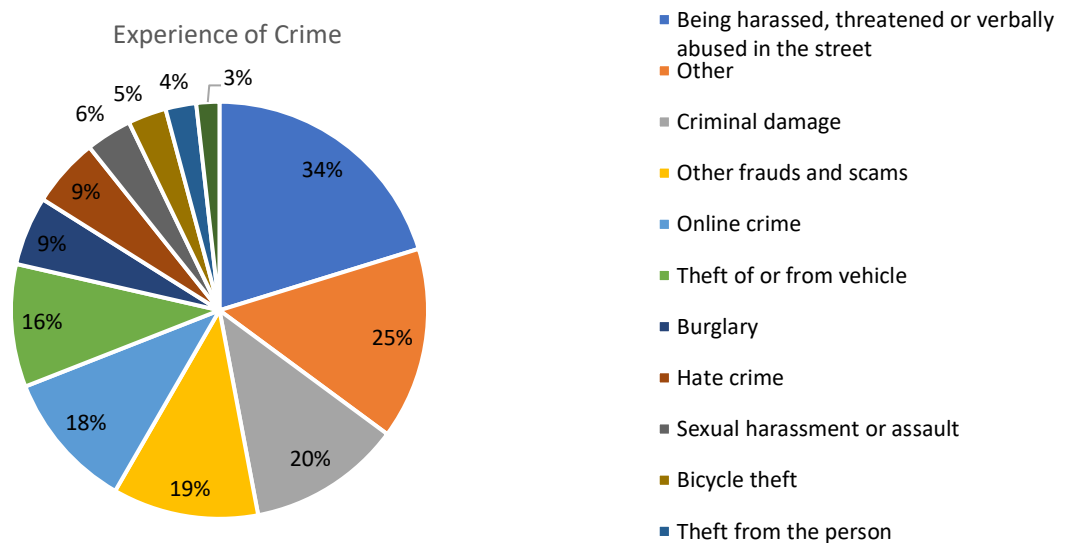
5.2 18% of Neighbourhood Watch members had been a victim of crime in the past 2 years vs 23% of non-members.

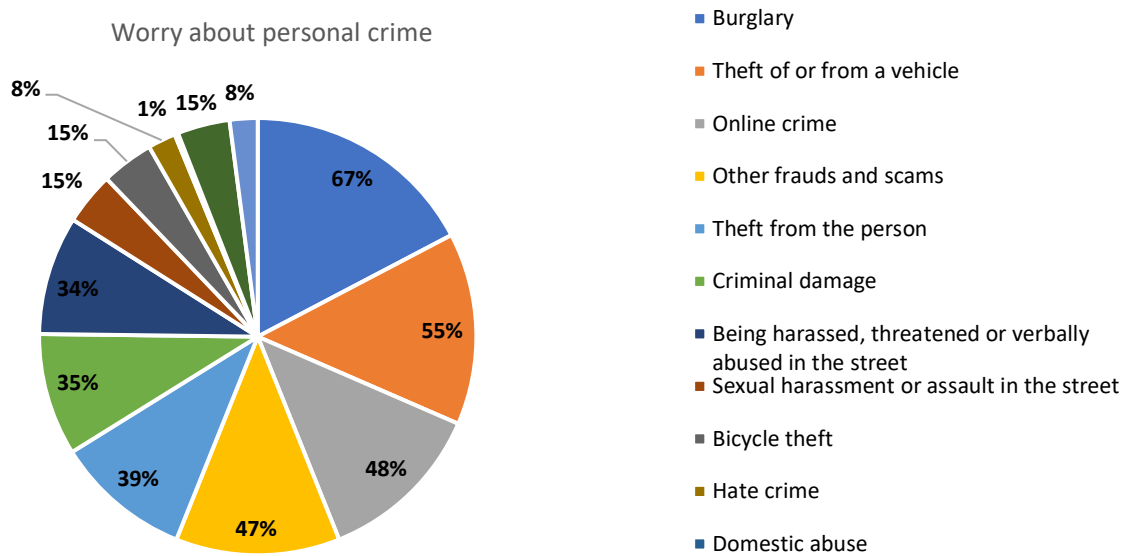
5.3 17% of respondents living in a Neighbourhood Watch area had been a victim of crime in the past 2 years as opposed to 21% of those not living in a Neighbourhood Watch area.



## 6. Experience of crime compared with worry about crime

6.1 The crimes that respondents reported having experienced or being worried about personally experiencing are set out in the two charts below: -

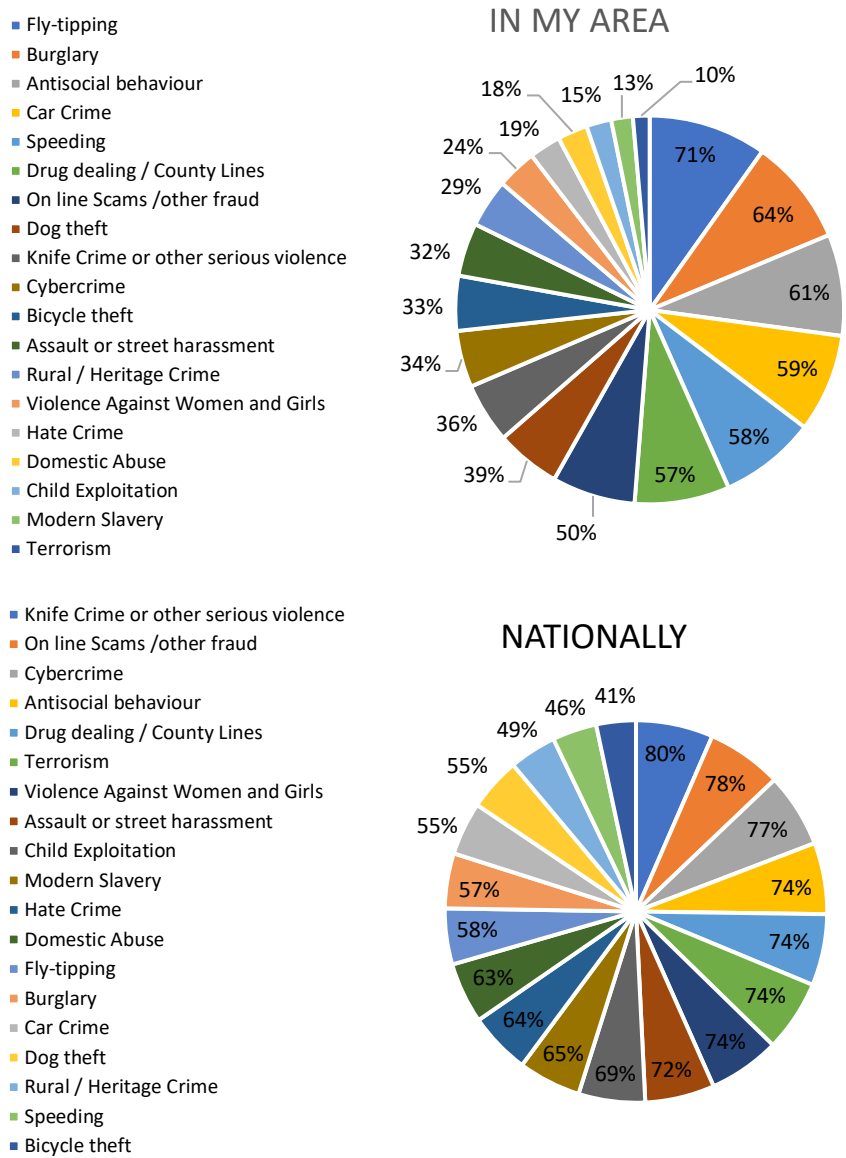




- 6.2 Across all age groups, up to and including those aged 65-74, respondents were more likely to have experienced harassment, threats or verbal abuse in the street than any other crime. Over a third of all respondents who had been a victim of crime over the past year had suffered street harassment (34%), with the same percentage reporting being worried about being a victim of this crime.
- 6.3 18% of victims of crime had experienced online crime and 19% other fraud, with those aged 75 and over most likely to have experienced these sorts of crime.
- 6.4 However, burglary remains the crime that worries people most, with 67% of respondents concerned that they would personally experience this crime, even though only 9% of those who had been a victim of crime over the past year had been burgled.
- 6.5 Theft of or from motor vehicles, on and offline fraud, theft from the person and criminal damage were other crime types where the level of worry about becoming a victim was far higher than the reported incidence of these crimes.

**7. General concerns about crime**

7.1 Respondents' concerns about the incidence of crimes in their local area and the crimes that they felt were of concern at a national level are set out in the two charts below: -



7.2 Fly tipping, burglary, antisocial behaviour, car crime, speeding, drug dealing, and online crime and other fraud are the crimes that most respondents were most concerned about in their local area. However, apart from online crime and other fraud and anti-social behaviour, these crimes were of much lower concern at a national level.

7.3 Knife crime and serious violence was the highest concern nationally, with 80% of respondents identifying it as a national issue – however, only 36% felt that it was an issue of concern in their local area. Similarly, other serious offences featured much more prominently as a concern for respondents nationally than locally.

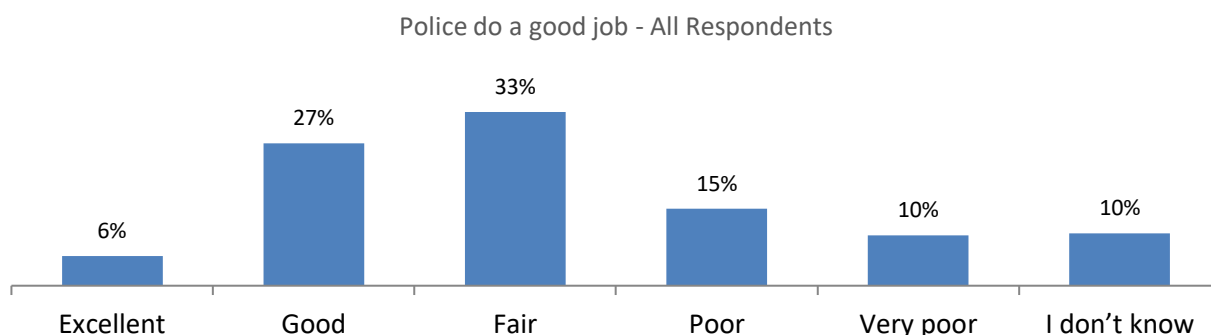
Of particular note are: -

	Nationally	In my area
• Violence against women and girls	74%	24%
• Terrorism	74%	10%
• Street harassment	72%	32%
• Modern slavery	65%	13%
• Child exploitation	69%	15%
• Domestic Abuse	63%	18%
• Hate Crime	64%	19%

## 8. Satisfaction with the Police

8.1 33% of all respondents think the police in their area do an excellent or good job. This is a significant reduction from the 2020 Neighbourhood Watch Crime and Community survey when 42% of all respondents thought the police in their area do an excellent or good job.

8.2 This reduction is most evident in Neighbourhood Watch membership. In 2020, 50% of Neighbourhood Watch members thought the police in their area did a good or excellent job; in 2021 this has reduced to 37%. Neighbourhood Watch members are still, however, more likely than non-members to think the police do an excellent or good job (37% vs 34%).



8.3 The more respondents think crime has decreased the better they think of the police. 56% of those who think crime has decreased think the police do an excellent or good job, compared with just 19% of those who think crime has increased.

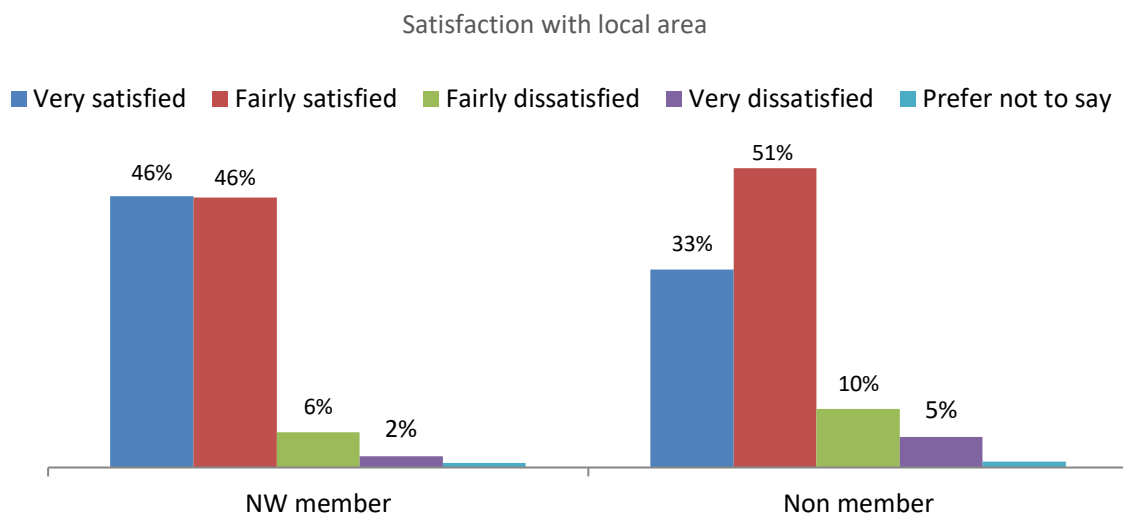
## 9. Neighbourliness

9.1 The main things that neighbours help each other with are keeping an eye on their house when they are on holiday (83%), taking their bins out/put bins away (71%), taking in deliveries/parcels (89%), visiting (44%) or helping elderly or vulnerable neighbours with shopping and errands (35%).

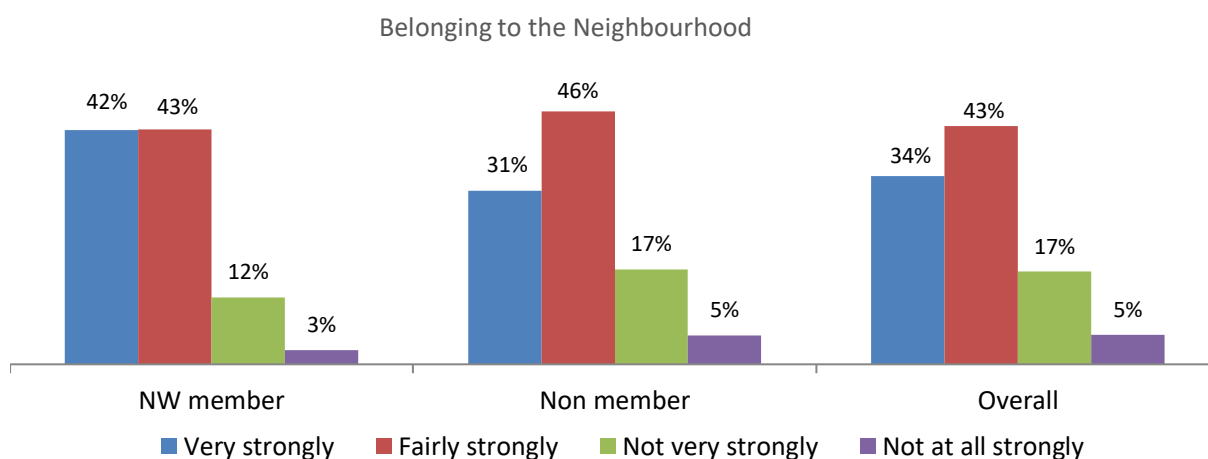
9.2 Neighbourhood Watch members are slightly more likely than non-members to help their neighbours with day-to-day issues and to speak to their neighbours daily, more than just saying hello (36%).

## 10. Sense of Community

10.1 Neighbourhood Watch members are more likely to be satisfied or very satisfied with their local area than non-members (92% vs 84%). In particular, they are much more likely to be very satisfied with their local area (46% Neighbourhood Watch members vs 33% non-members).



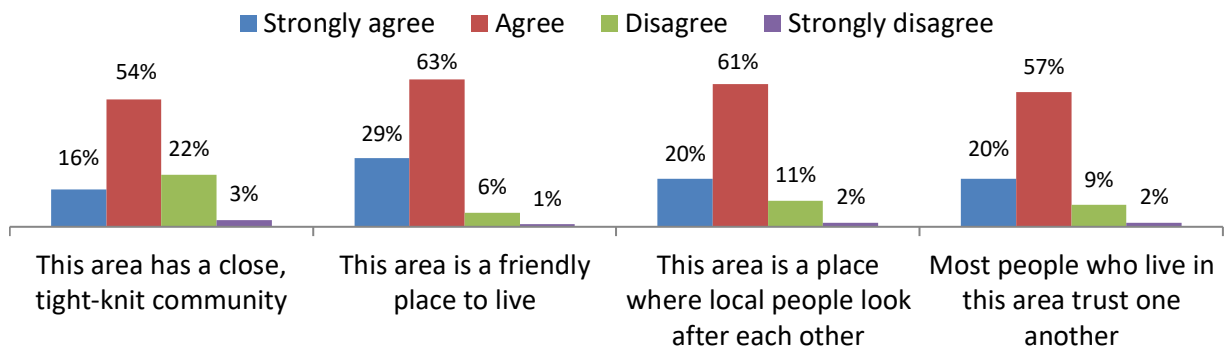
10.2 Neighbourhood Watch members are more likely to feel part of the neighbourhood than non-members (86% vs 77%). In particular, they are much more likely to very strongly agree that they feel part of the neighbourhood (42% Neighbourhood Watch members vs 31% non-members).



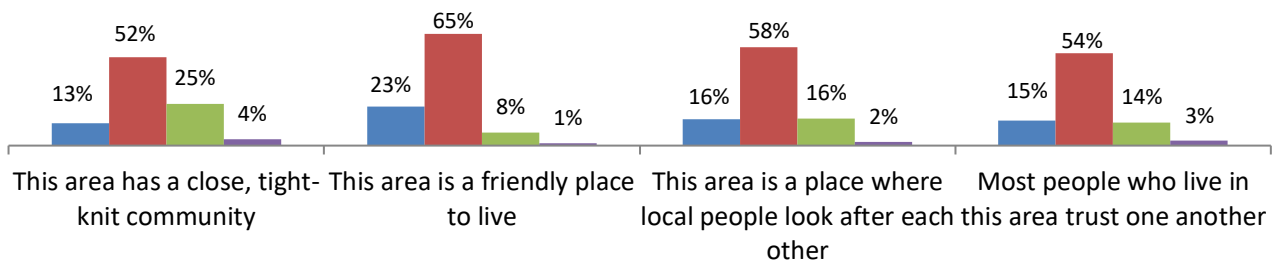
10.3 Neighbourhood Watch members are more likely than non-members to agree that they are part of a close-knit community (70% vs 65%), live in a friendly place (92% vs 88%), live in an area where people look after each other (81% vs 74%) and can trust people who live in the area (77% vs 69%).



Perception of Community - NW members



Perception of Community - Non NW members



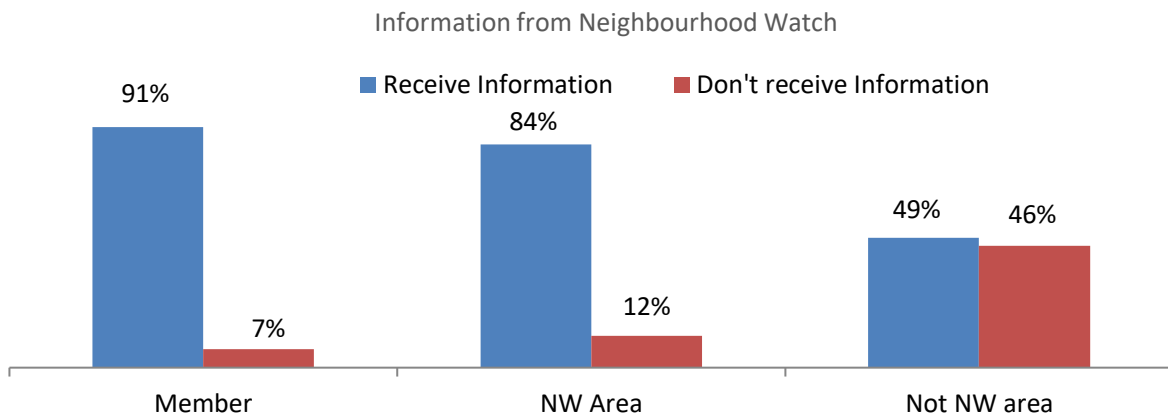
10.4 Neighbourhood Watch members are more likely than non-members to perceive that people would intervene if anyone in their area is causing a disturbance (56% vs 50%), if they needed help there are people who would be there for them (90% vs 85%), that people would help the police and other agencies to resolve problems (84% vs 79%), call the police if someone is acting suspiciously (81% vs 77%) and help others if they sensed trouble (78% vs 71%).

10.5 In general, Neighbourhood Watch members are less likely to feel lonely in their local area than non-members. Neighbourhood Watch members are between 2% and 4% more likely to say they said they hardly ever or never lack companionship, are left out or feel isolated.

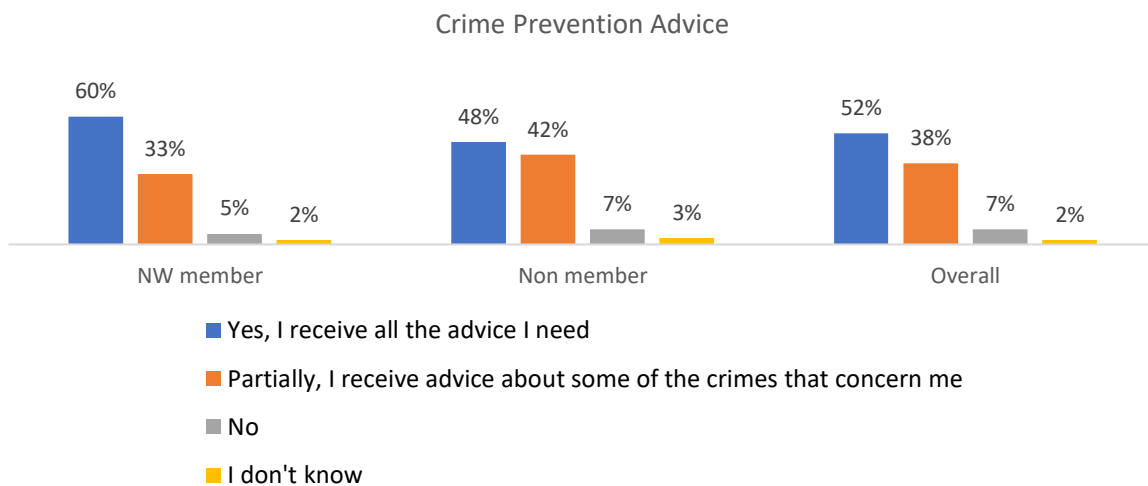
## 11. Neighbourhood Watch Activity

### *Information provision*

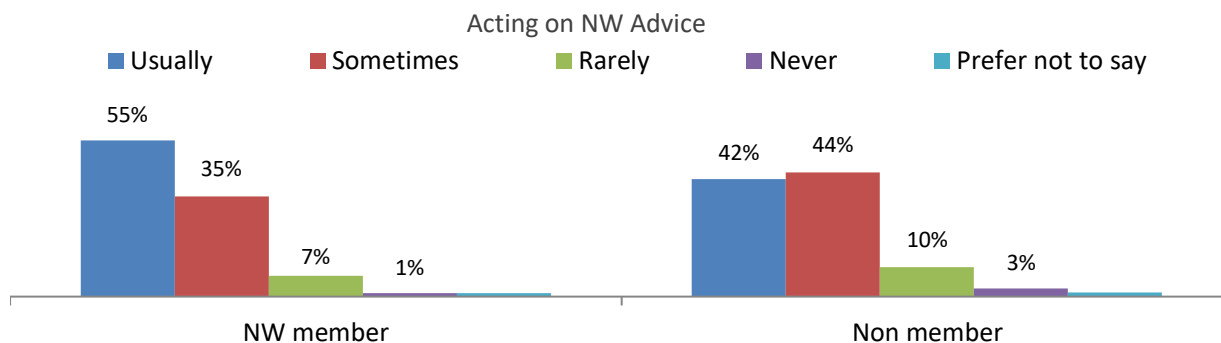
11.1 The vast majority of Neighbourhood Watch members, and non-members living in Neighbourhood Watch areas receive regular information from Neighbourhood Watch. Even in areas where there is not an active Neighbourhood Watch group, nearly half of all respondents receive some communication from Neighbourhood Watch.



11.2 Respondents accessed information through national and local newsletters, directly from their Neighbourhood Watch representative, on national or local Neighbourhood Watch websites, through Neighbourhood Watch social media channels and by attending online webinars and training sessions. 60% of Neighbourhood Watch members and just over half of all respondents stated they received all the crime prevention advice they need.

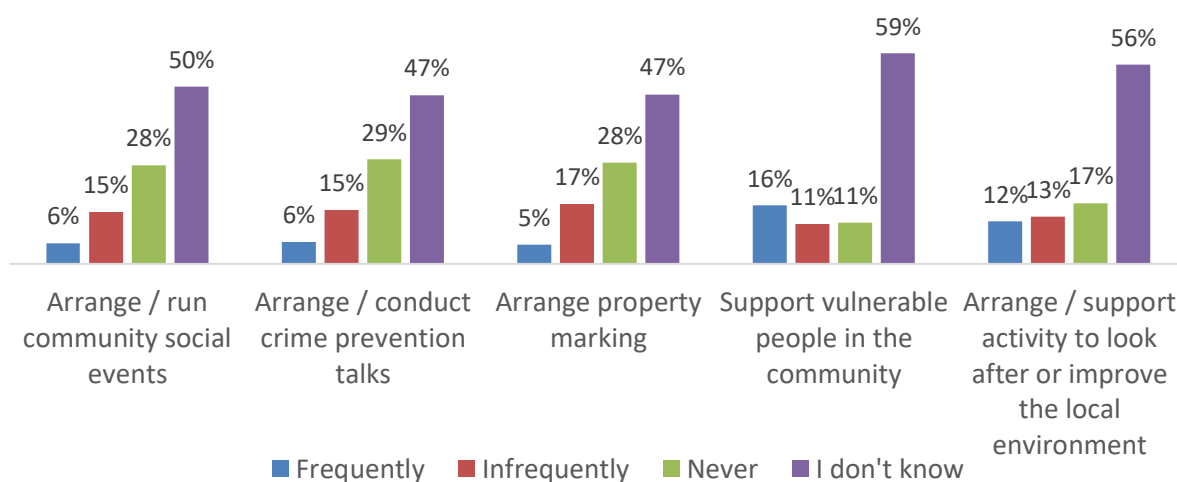


11.3 Both members and non-members are likely to act on crime prevention advice they receive from Neighbourhood Watch, with 55% of Neighbourhood Watch members and 42% of non-members usually acting on that advice, and 35% of members and 44% of non-members sometimes acting on it.



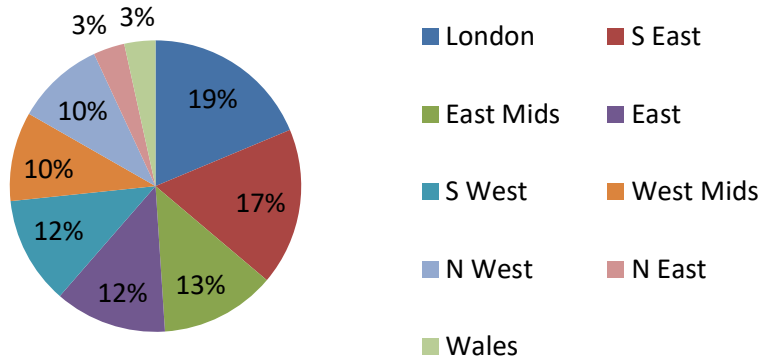
**Other Activities**

11.4 In addition to regularly sharing crime prevention advice, the most frequent activities that respondents were aware that Neighbourhood Watch coordinators do frequently are supporting vulnerable people in the community or improving the local environment. Respondents were, however, generally unaware of what Neighbourhood Watch groups and coordinators do, though visible Neighbourhood Watch activity may have been impacted in many areas by COVID restrictions and concerns over recent years.



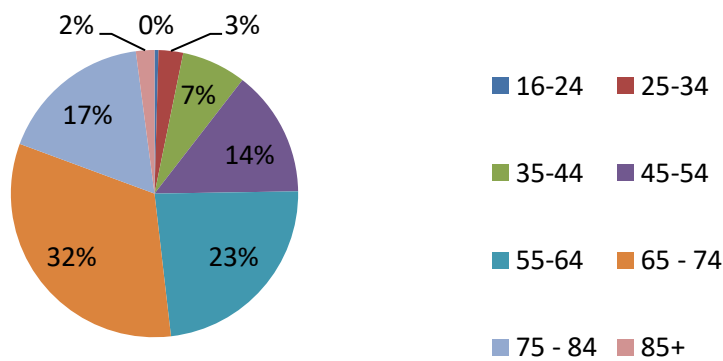
**12. Profile of Respondents**

12.1 The sample size varied across the regions of England and Wales. The largest response rate was from London (19%), followed by the S. East (17%), E. Midlands (13%), the N. East and S. West (both 12%) and the N. West and W. Midlands (both 10%) The lowest response rates were from Wales and the N. East (both 3%).

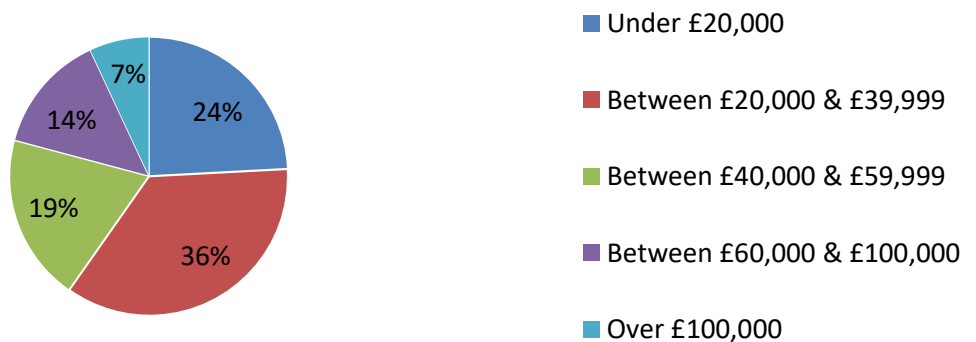


12.2 Respondents were in the main from a White British background (92%), 2% from any other white background, 2% were from an Asian background, 1% from a Black background, 1% a mixed background and 4% from any other ethnic group.

12.3 Respondents tended to fall into older age groups, in particular 65+ (51%). 23% were between 55 and 64, 14% between 45 and 54, 7% between 35 and 44, with 3% of respondents under 35yrs old.



12.4 Respondents had a high level of house ownership (72%), with the majority (60%) earning below £40,000 pa.



### **13. Neighbourhood Watch Membership**

- 13.1 53% of respondents live in a Neighbourhood Watch area, with 47% either not living in a Neighbourhood Watch area or not knowing whether they do or not. Of the respondents who live in a Neighbourhood Watch area, 80% identified as members of Neighbourhood Watch.
- 13.2 34% of the total number of respondents identified as members of Neighbourhood Watch.

### **14. Conclusion**

- 14.1 This report provides a snapshot of the findings of the second national Neighbourhood Watch Crime and Community Survey against which developments in respondents' experience and perception of crime and sense of community can be used to focus and evaluate activity in line with the 2020 – 2025 Neighbourhood Watch Strategy.
- 14.2 Survey results show that people's feelings of safety have improved, even though they perceive that crime has increased over the past year. These results, in the context of peoples' increased satisfaction with, and greater sense of belonging to, the local area and their more positive perception of their community, indicate the positive impact that community cohesion and belonging has on how safe people feel.
- 14.3 Neighbourhood Watch will continue to provide crime prevention advice and support greater community cohesion in order to reduce the likelihood of crime and increase people's feelings of safety.
- 14.4 The survey will be repeated every 12 months to understand any changes in people's perceptions and experiences over time.