



NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

NATIONAL CRIME AND COMMUNITY SURVEY 2023

1. Introduction

1.1 The national Neighbourhood Watch Crime and Community survey has run for the past four years and was developed by Neighbourhood Watch Network to better understand the impact of Neighbourhood Watch on levels of crime victimisation, fear of crime and feelings of safety, neighbourliness, community cohesion and loneliness, and the current reach and diversity of Neighbourhood Watch.

1.2 The original design of the survey was supported by University College London and informed by previous research from Nottingham Trent University into the Crime Survey of England and Wales. This year the survey has been sponsored by Simplisafe, an industry partner who helped develop the survey and analyse the results.

1.3 The findings of the national survey will be used by Neighbourhood Watch Network as a national baseline and support the development and evaluation of the 2020 -2025 Neighbourhood Watch Strategy.

2. Methodology

2.1 The survey was conducted online using the Survey Monkey platform from 30 October – 13 November 2023. All responses were anonymised and were analysed in aggregated groups to avoid any attempt at identifying individuals or groups 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, press releases, social media, and through the communication channels of our partners. This methodology is a non-probability sampling technique, and the sample can therefore not be guaranteed as representative of the general population.

Link Communicated By	RESPONSES COLLECTED
Alert Direct Email Link	26,970
Social Media	44
Our News	1535
Simplisafe Customers	360

2.3 A total of 28,909 responses were received. This represents an increase on the responses for the 2022 survey (25,293). A 90% completion rate was recorded, and it took respondents an average of 8m:19s to answer all questions.. **Executive Summary**

3.1 A clear link can be seen between Neighbourhood Watch membership and how safe people feel in their local areas. NW members are much more likely than non-members to think that crime has decreased, have more trust in police and significantly more likely to be satisfied with their personal safety. They feel a connection with their locality and regularly interact with their neighbours.

3.2 It should be noted that some of the same questions have been included in our surveys over the past years, and wherever possible, we have included the results from those in order to highlight any trends. With some we can see the decline in the feeling of connection in an area since COVID/Lockdown times when the sense of community was at its peak.

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Which region do you live in?



Comparing the data, we can see that a greater proportion of Neighbourhood Watch members live in the south east and south west, and generally lower representation in the north and Wales.

All respondents	%	Number	NW members only:	%	Number
South East	19.60%	5,666		25.27%	1611
West Midlands	16.42%	4,747		14.60%	931
East Midlands	13.76%	3,979		13.57%	865
Yorkshire and Humber	13.09%	3,785		9.66%	616
North West	10.99%	3,176		8.01%	511
South West	10.54%	3,047		12.94%	825
North East	5.21%	1,505		3.89%	248
East of England	5.11%	1,478		6.16%	393
Wales	3.22%	930		2.18%	139
Greater London	2.06%	596		3.72%	237
TOTAL	28,909				6,376

What kind of area do you live in?



Although there was not much difference (less than 5%) between the three categories for both groups, the largest number of the General Public was the Suburban category (35%) for Neighbourhood Watch Members or Volunteers this was Rural (35%).

In the past year do you think crime levels in your neighbourhood have?



Neighbourhood Watch Members/Volunteers are less likely than non-members to think crime levels have increased (50% v 59%) and 8% more likely to think crime levels have remained stable.

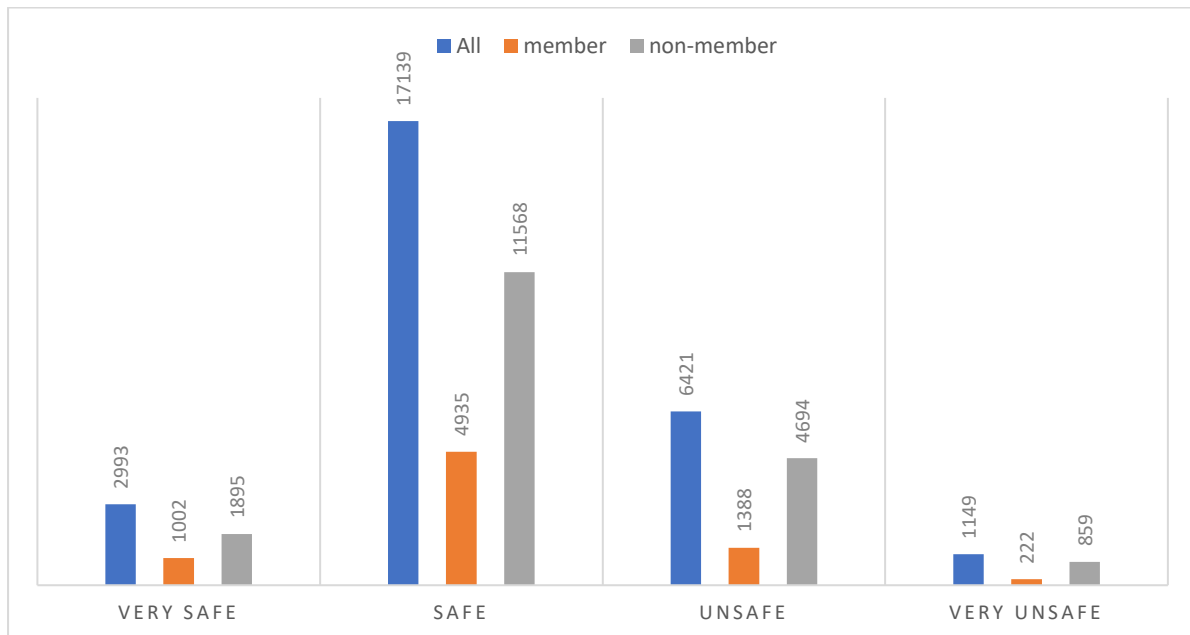
All responses over time:

	Increased	Remained Stable	Decreased
2023	43.97%	31.84%	1.78%
2022	45.86%	33.60%	2.74%

Opinion on Crime Level Increase

- Over 44% of people think crime has increased in 2023, with less than 2% saying it's decreased.
- People think crime has increased the most in Greater London (56%), followed by West Midlands (55%) and Yorkshire (47%)
- Conversely, people believe crime has stabilised or decreased most in the South West (40%), Wales (39%), and East England (38%)
- For region types, 50% of people think crime has increased in urban areas, compared to 45% in suburban and 37% in rural

In general, how safe do you feel personally?



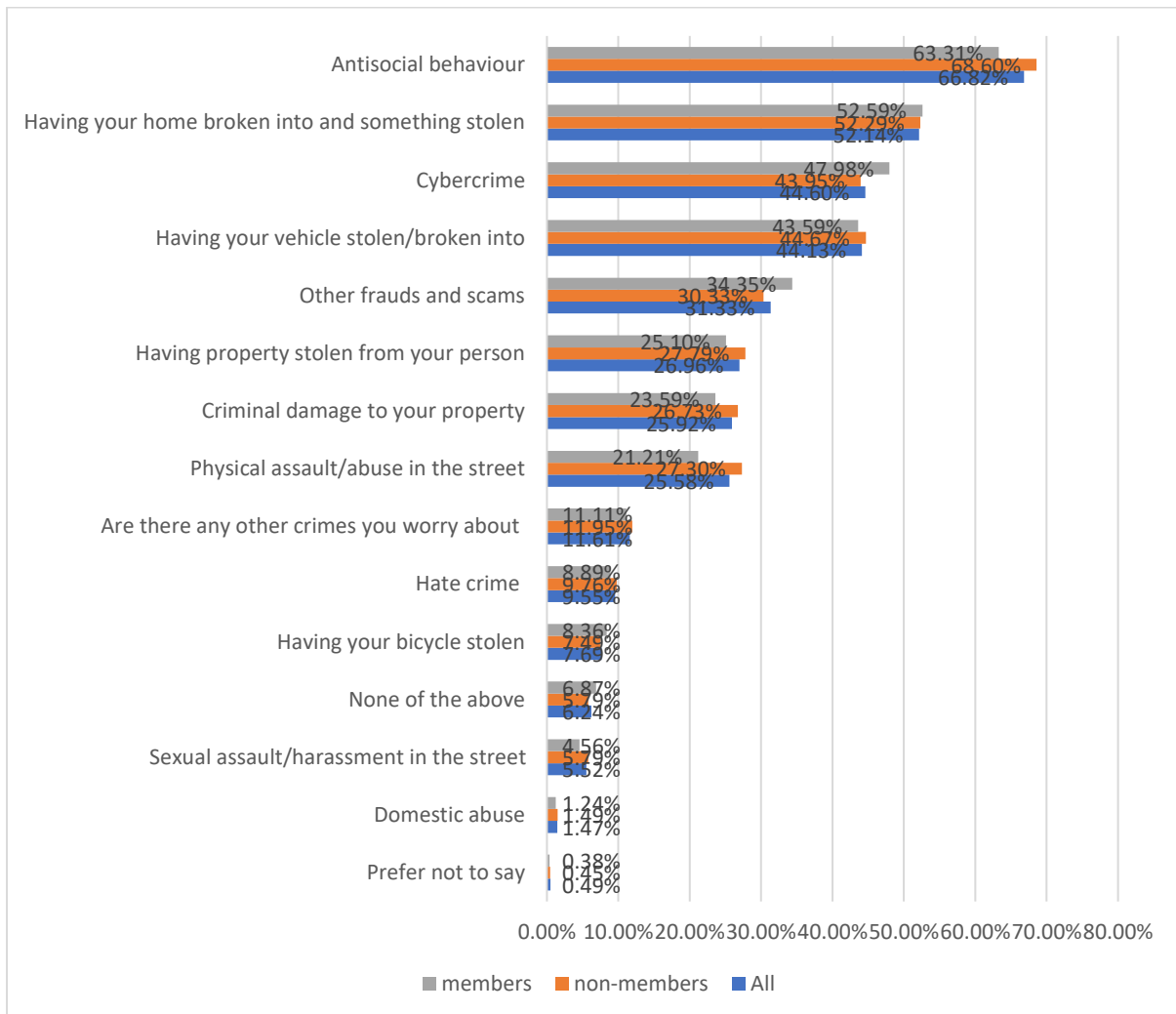
Neighbourhood Watch members/volunteers feel safer than the general public, they also say they feel less unsafe and very unsafe. The widest points of difference is on feeling 'safe' where non-members are at 63% safe and non-members are 58%. 18% of our members feel unsafe compared to 24% of the general public.

This question was asked in a different way in 2022, and so useful comparisons cannot be made.

Current feeling of Safety

- 27% of people lack a current feeling of safety, with 4% of those feeling "very unsafe".
- The region that feels the safest is the South West, with 81% of people feeling "safe" or "very safe".
- The region that feels the most unsafe is the West Midlands, with 37% of people feeling "unsafe" or "very unsafe".
- Age wise, over 65s feel the safest, with 79% feeling "safe" or "very safe", compared to those aged 45-64 at 67%, and under 44s at just 62%.
- Of Neighbourhood Watch members, 79% of Members and Volunteers feel "safe" or "very safe", compared to non-members (71%).
- People who own their home outright feel the safest (78% selecting safe or very safe). Those who rent from a housing association or local authority feel the least safe (49% saying they felt "unsafe" or "very unsafe").

Do you worry about personally experiencing or witnessing any of the following crimes over the next 12 months? (Pick a maximum of 5)



Members are more concerned about Cybercrime than non-members (Cybercrime/online crime is steadily growing as evidenced by [Government statistics](#))

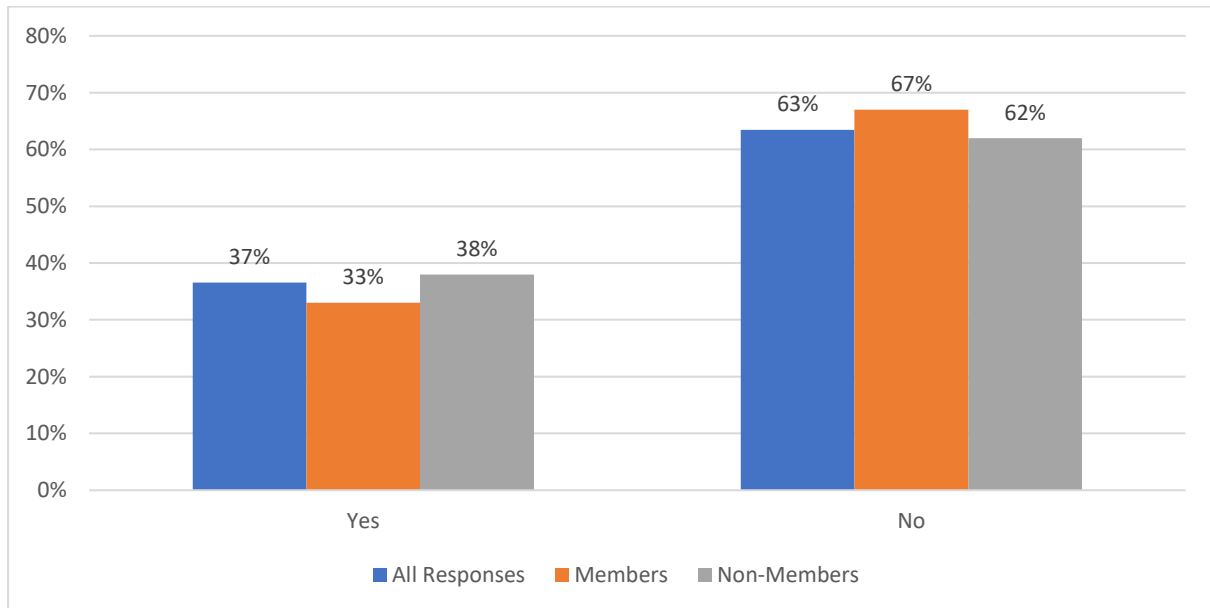
Non-members are more concerned about physical assault/threatening behaviour (27%) compared to (21%) of NW members.

- The top 3 crimes people worry about are antisocial behaviour (66%), having your home broken into (52%) and cybercrime (44%).
- Some crimes are feared in similar percentages by different age groups, whereas others are age-dependent.
- For example, 50% of over 65s fear cybercrime, compared to 43% of 44-64 year-olds or 27% of Under 44's.
- In contrast, only 21% of over 65s fear physical assault, compared to 31% of 44-64s and 35% of Under 44s.

From the 'Other' category:

- Drug dealing/drug related crime/misuse
- Road rage/Aggressive Driving/Speeding
- Dog attacks/thefts
- Issues with neighbours
- E-scooters and bikes driving on the pavement
- Poor parking

Have you been a victim of, or witnessed, any crime in the past 12 months? (whether or not it was reported to the police)



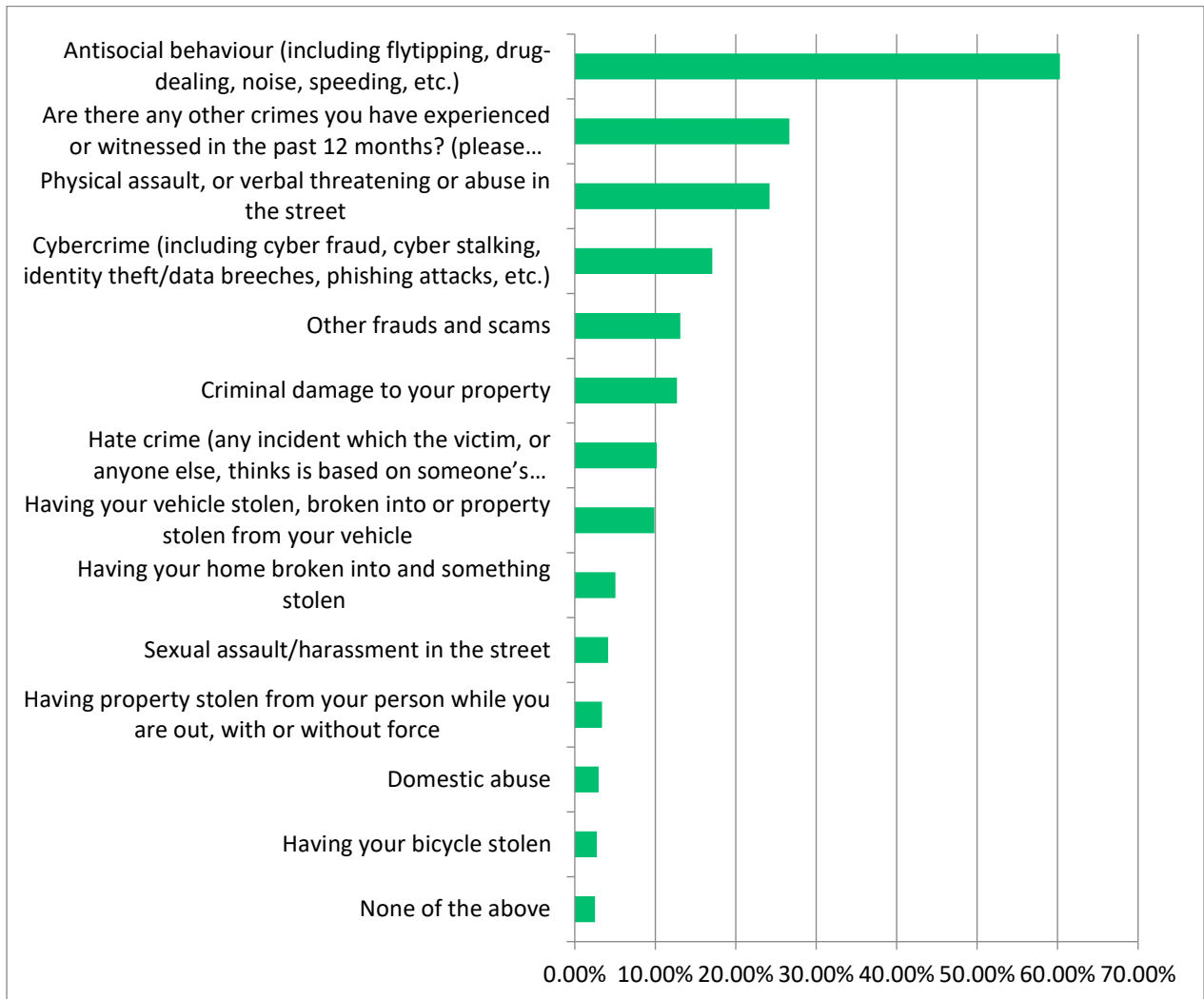
63% of all respondents said they had not been a victim or witnessed crime over the past year. 37% said they had.

When we extract member data just 32% replied 'yes' and 65% 'no' with the remainder answering 'don't know' or 'prefer not to say'.

Victims or Witness to a Crime in the Last Year

- 37% of people have experienced a crime in the last year.
- Regionally, this was highest in Greater London (46%), followed by North East (44%) and West Midlands (41%)
- On the other end, it was lowest in the South West (29%), followed by East of England (34%) and South East (34%)
- Age wise, 58% of Under 44's have experienced a crime, compared to 46% of 44 to 64 and just 27% of Over 65's.

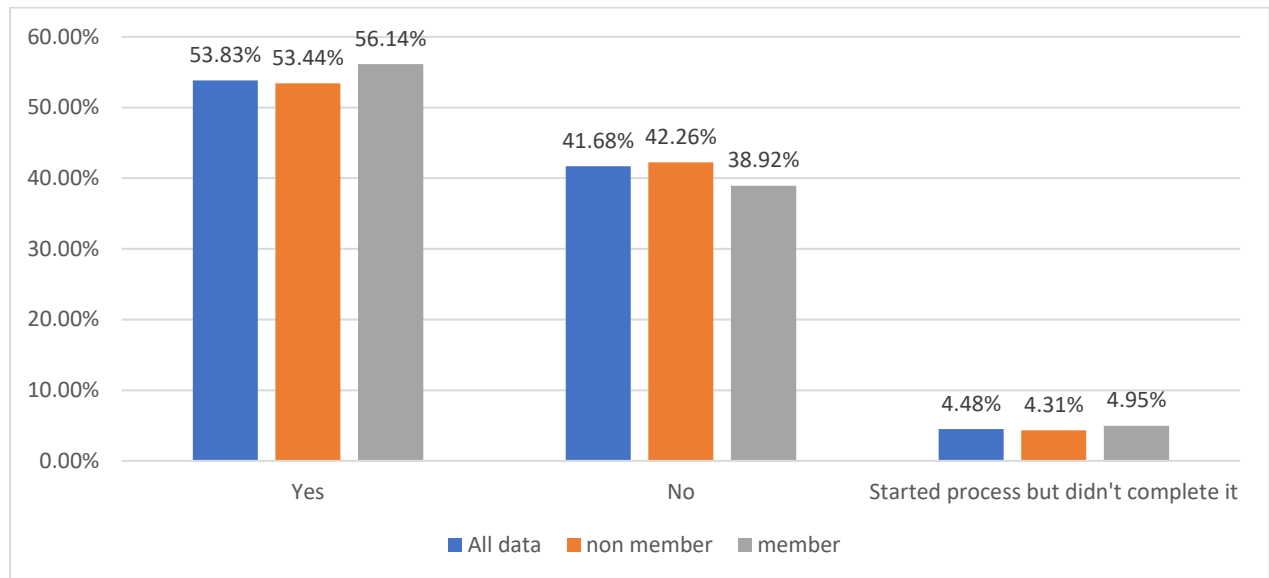
Please specify which crime(s) you have personally experienced or witnessed in the past 12 months? (please select all that apply)



Other crimes identified were:

- Shoplifting
- Rural theft/farm theft
- Drugs and drug dealing
- Shed thefts/allotment thefts
- Bike thefts
- Drink/drugged driving
- Speeding/poor parking
- Harassment
- Hare coursing/Dangerous dogs

Did you report the crime(s) to the police?

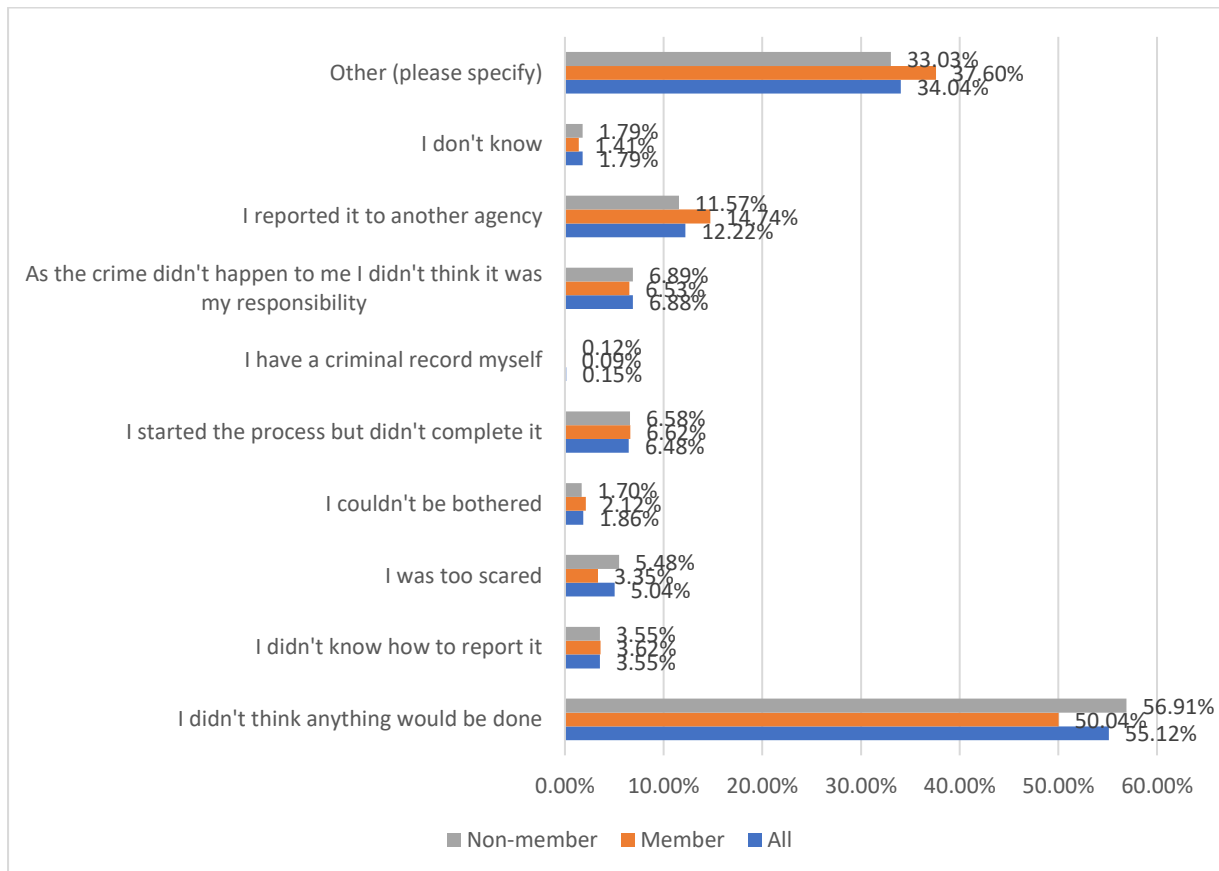


The chart above shows that the majority of people across the categories did report the crime they had been a victim of to the police, but a worrying number of people did not. The data here shows that Neighbourhood Watch members indicate that they are more likely to report to the police. This is borne out by the graph below which shows 5% fewer NW members indicating that they didn't think anything would be done.

Crime Reporting

- 46% of people who experienced a Crime either didn't report it or stopped before completing the report.
- Under 44's are most likely to report a crime, at 68%, dropping down to 57% at 44 to 64 and just 46% for Over 65's.
- Women are slightly more likely to report crimes, at 55% compared to Men's 53%.
- The Region most likely to report Crime is Greater London, at 62%. On the other end, the Region least likely to Report a crime is the South East, with only 50% of people reporting.
- People who own their house with a Mortgage are the more likely to report a crime, at 61% - strangely, people who own their home outright are the least likely to report, with only 50% of homeowners doing so.

Why did you not report the crime(s) to the police?

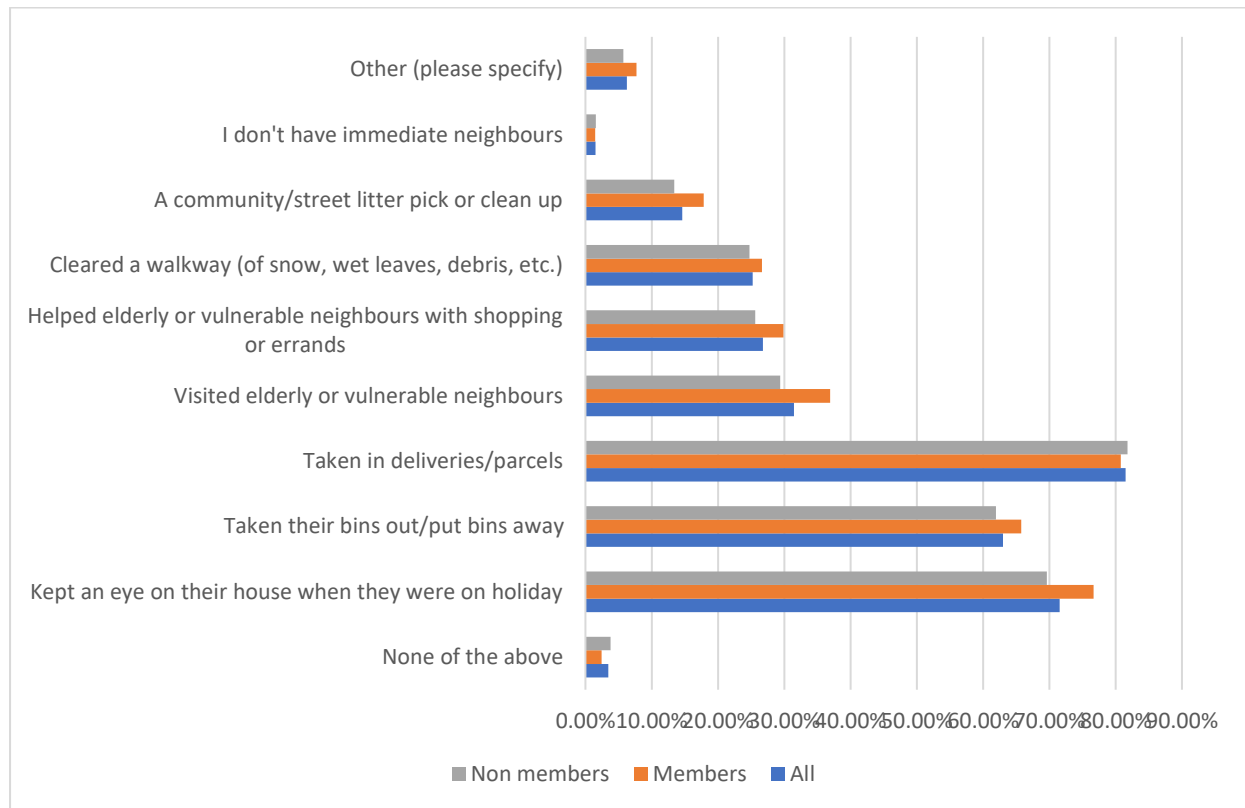


More than half of all respondents gave the reason they did not report the offence as 'I didn't think anything would be done'. We could gather from this that some people will think that the police have fewer resources and therefore some crimes are not fully investigated. It is also the case that many frauds have few leads/evidence for the police to follow up on.

The 'other' category was the next most popular choice and the following rounds up most of the individual answers:

- reported to bank/credit card company/other agency
- somebody else reported it
- no confidence in police
- police already on their way
- worried about reprisals
- did not have enough evidence

Which, if any, of the following things, have you done for your neighbours over the 12 months (select all that apply)?



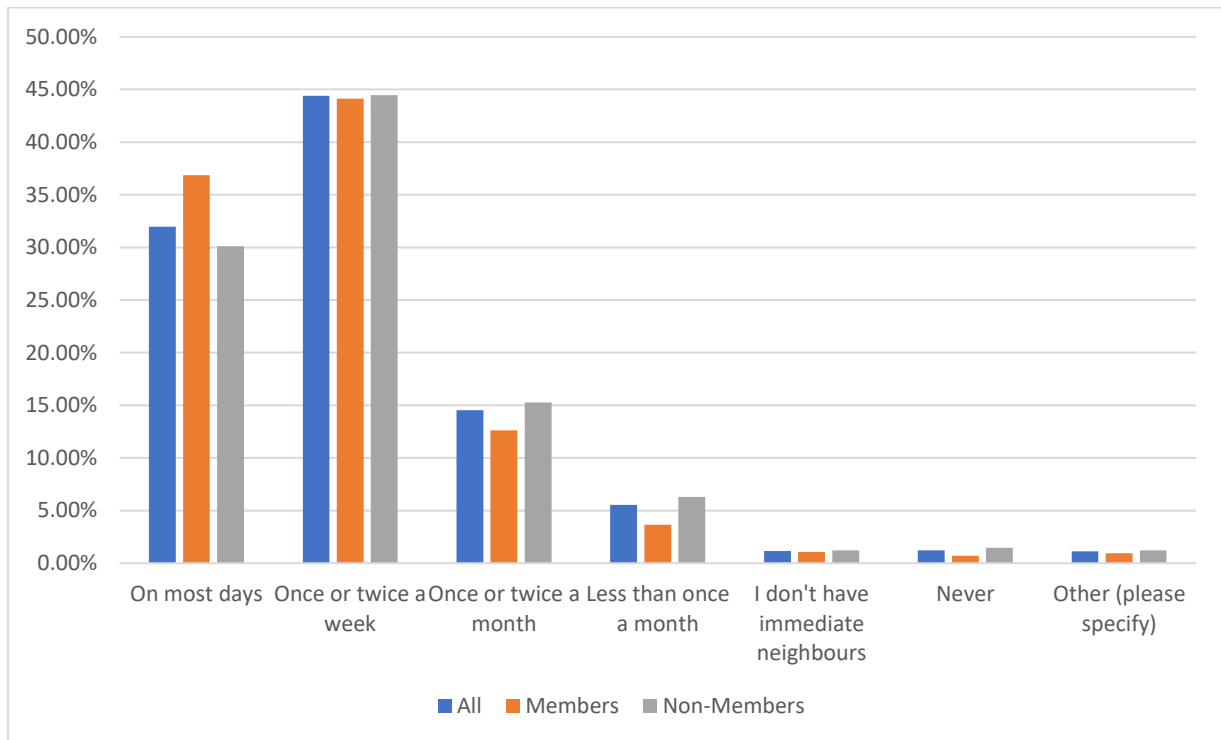
Responses show that our respondents are very neighbourly, taking in parcels or deliveries, wheeling in bins, and generally looking out for each other. Very few people either did nothing or didn't have immediate neighbours. NW members are 7% more likely to keep an eye on neighbours' properties whilst they are away, and 7.5% more likely to visit elderly or vulnerable neighbours. Since we first asked the same question in 2021, the amount people say they do for their neighbours have declined, in particular the visiting of elderly or vulnerable neighbours. - 81% of people have taken in a delivery for a neighbour, compared to just 14% that have contributed to a community clean up.

Other things that respondents did for their neighbours include:

- Looking after neighbours' pets whilst they are away
- Help to run allotments and repair cafés.
- A bit of gardening
- Lending out items/equipment
- Offering and giving lifts to neighbours
- Sharing crime information and reporting through street WhatsApp group

	2023	2022	2021
Kept an eye on their house when they were on holiday	72%	79%	83%
Taken in deliveries/parcels	81%	85%	89%
Taken their bins out/put bins away	63%	68%	71%
Visited elderly or vulnerable neighbours	27%	38%	44%

How often, if at all, do you chat to your neighbours?



Pleasingly, 76% of respondents said that they speak to neighbours either on most days or once/twice per week. Very few (1%) say they never speak to neighbours.

Neighbourhood Watch Members are 7% more likely to speak to neighbours on most days than non-members.

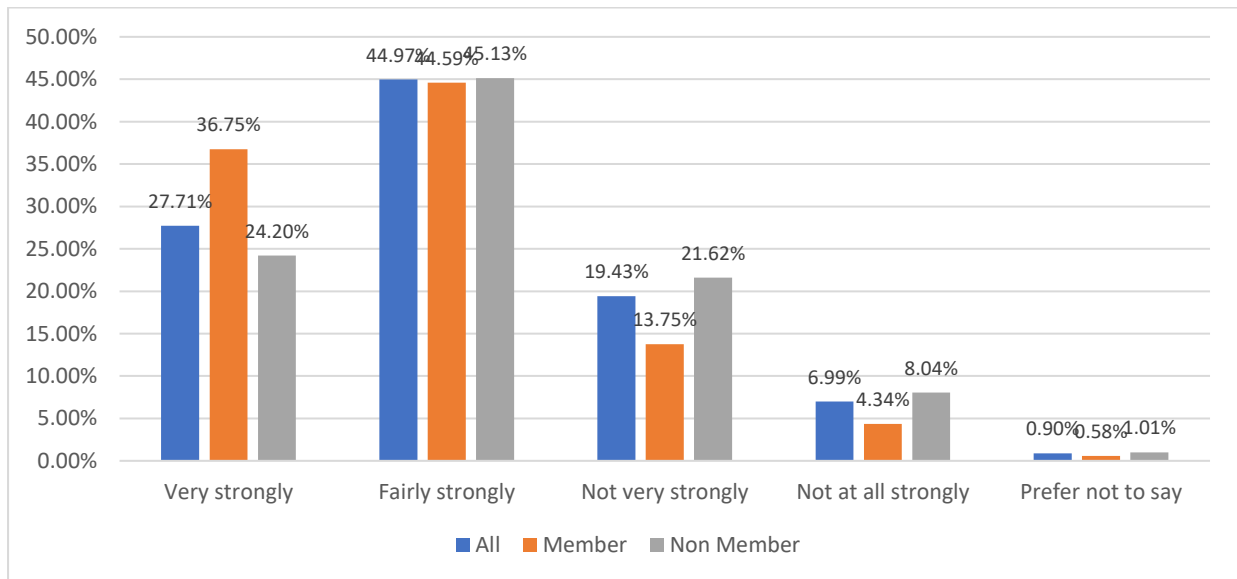
How often do you speak to your Neighbours?

- Regionally, the friendliest area is North East, with 82% talking over once a week. The lowest is Greater London, with just 73%

- Age Wise, 83% of 65+ people talk to neighbours at least once a week, with 44 to 64 at 76% and under 44's at 70%

- Neighbourhood watch members are more likely to talk to neighbours at least once a year - non-members are only at 78%, with increase to 82% for members, and 87% for active Volunteers

How strongly, if at all, do you feel you belong to your neighbourhood?



In putting together this questionnaire, we were keen to ascertain how connected respondents felt to their local community. Looking at all respondents, the majority felt either very, fairly or not very strongly connected, with just 7% stating they felt not at all strongly connected.

Neighbourhood Watch members feel a very strong sense of belonging to their neighbourhood and score more than non-members on this question. 72% of non-Neighbourhood Watch members feel they belong in their community, which rises to 82% for members, and then 88% for Volunteers

When we turn to the same question that was asked in previous years, we can see a slight decline in the feeling of belonging. This was felt most keenly during the pandemic and perhaps as people return to pre-lockdown life, they spend less time in their locality.

	2023	2022	2021
Very strongly	28%	32%	34%
Fairly strongly	45%	43%	43%
Not very strongly	19%	18%	17%
Not at all strongly	7%	6%	5%

- 25% of people feel like they don't belong in their neighbourhood

- Regionally, the closest-knit region is the South West, at 78%, compared to the sparse West Midlands and Greater London, both at 72%.

- Age wise, 65+ people feel the most included, at 79% feeling like they belong dropping to 71% at 44 to 64, and down to 64% for under 44's.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

All Responses	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
If I needed help, there are people in my community who would be there for me	17.47%	57.25%	9.94%	3.46%	11.89%
Most people in this community are willing to challenge troubling or antisocial behaviour	4.43%	30.55%	30.51%	9.54%	24.97%
Most people in this community are willing to work with the police and local agencies to resolve problems	15.80%	52.51%	9.70%	3.37%	18.61%
Most people in this community would call the police if they notice suspicious or criminal behaviour	17.60%	52.64%	13.02%	3.68%	13.06%
If I sensed trouble whilst in this area, I could get help from people who live here	13.56%	54.23%	13.48%	3.80%	14.94%
I have at times felt left out or isolated from others in my community	3.52%	16.34%	49.68%	21.12%	9.34%

The majority of people responding to this question clearly feel positive about their area, it is interesting to see a very balanced split between those who feel that fellow residents would challenge troubling/anti-social behaviour and those who think they wouldn't.

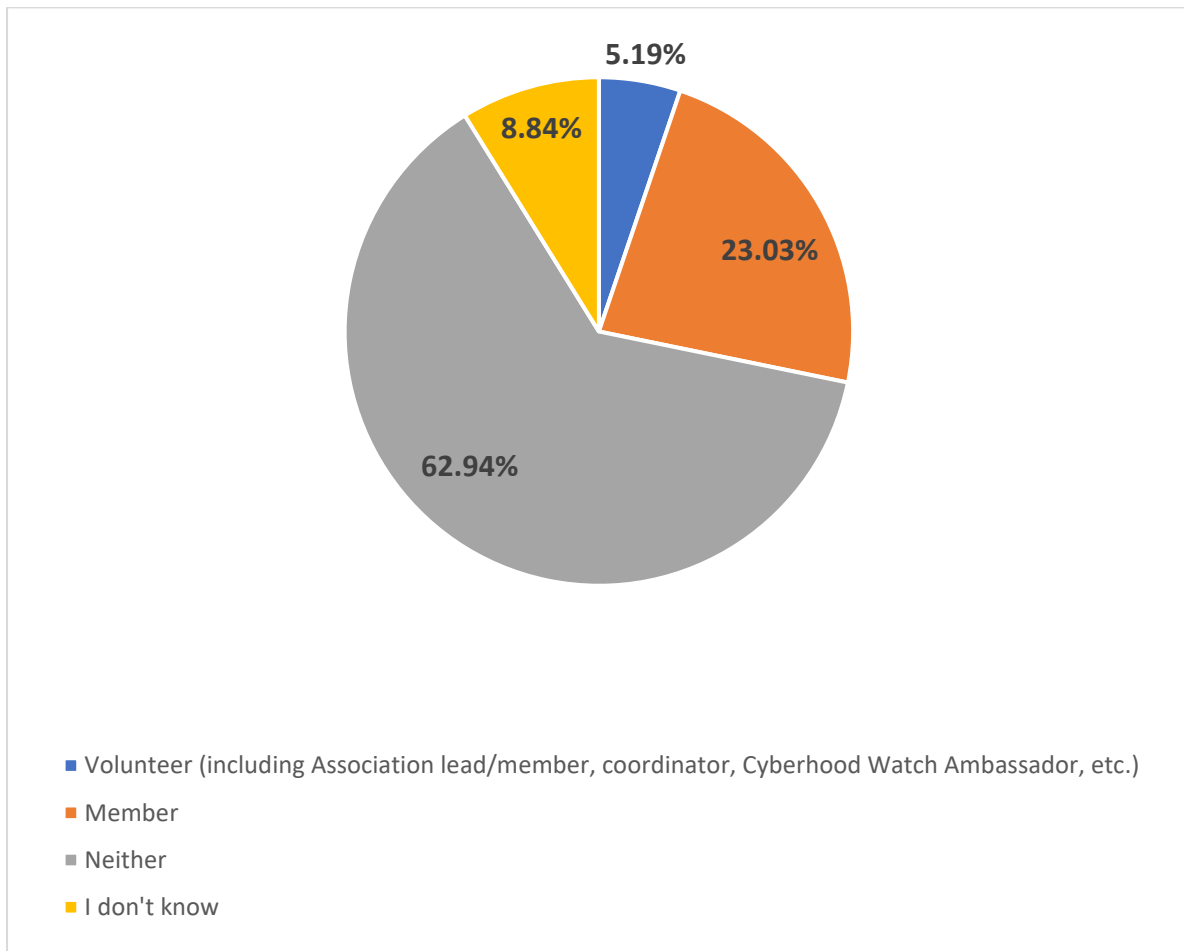
Members tended to feel more confident about the reliability of their neighbours:

	non-members		members	
	Agree or Strongly Agree	Disagree or strongly disagree	Agree or Strongly Agree	Disagree or strongly disagree
If I needed help, there are people in my community who would be there for me	72%	15%	83%	9%
Most people in this community are willing to challenge troubling or antisocial behaviour	32%	43%	44%	33%
Most people in this community are willing to work with the police and local agencies to resolve problems	65%	14%	77%	10%
Most people in this community would call the police if they notice suspicious or criminal behaviour	67%	18%	77%	13%
If I sensed trouble whilst in this area, I could get help from people who live here	65%	19%	76%	12%
I have at times felt left out or isolated from others in my community	21%	69%	17%	76%

Following the pattern of previous questions,

- 15% more of Neighbourhood Watch Members Agree or Strongly agree that their area has a close or tight-knit community.
- 7% more members agree/strongly agree that their area is a friendly place to live
- 13% more members agree/strongly agree that their area is a place where local people look after each other
- 12% more members agree/strongly agree that most people who live in their area trust one another

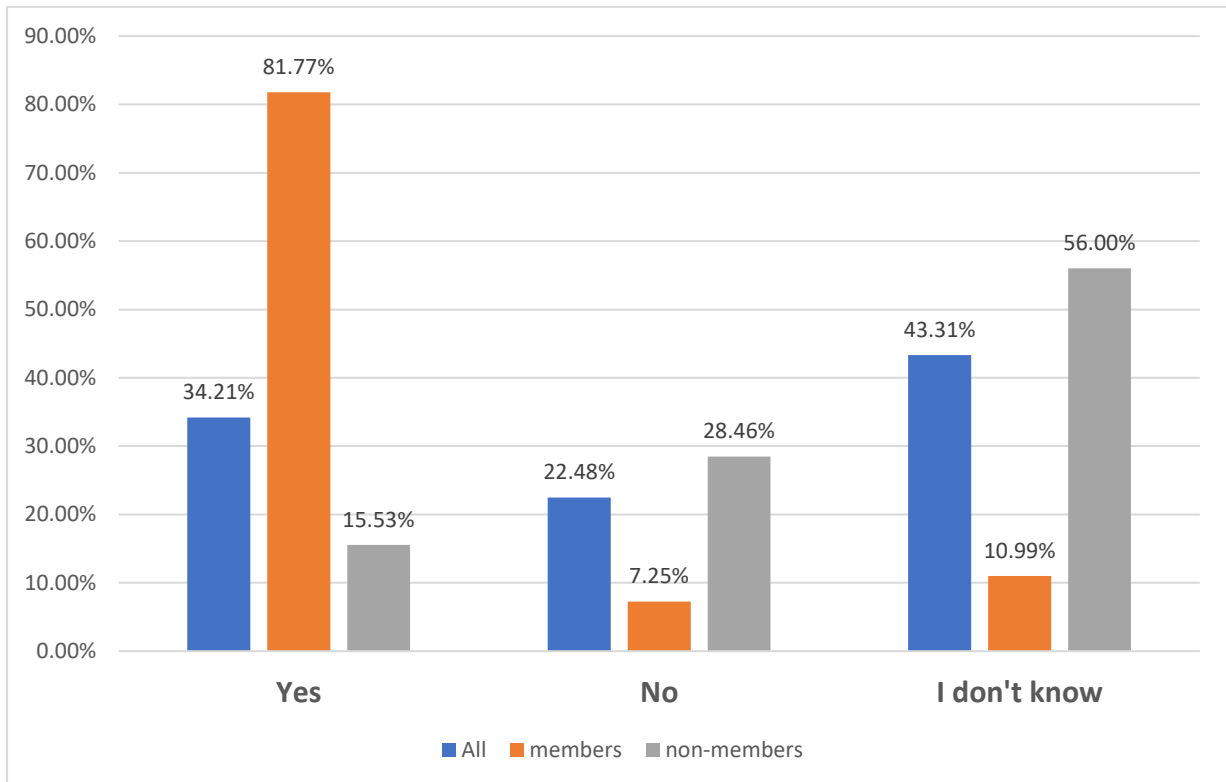
Are you currently a member or volunteer of Neighbourhood Watch?



Almost two thirds of respondents are not members, demonstrating that our reach with publications, social media and surveys is far wider than our membership.

The distribution and source of respondents is discussed in the methodology section on page 1.

Is there a Neighbourhood Watch group covering the area where you live?



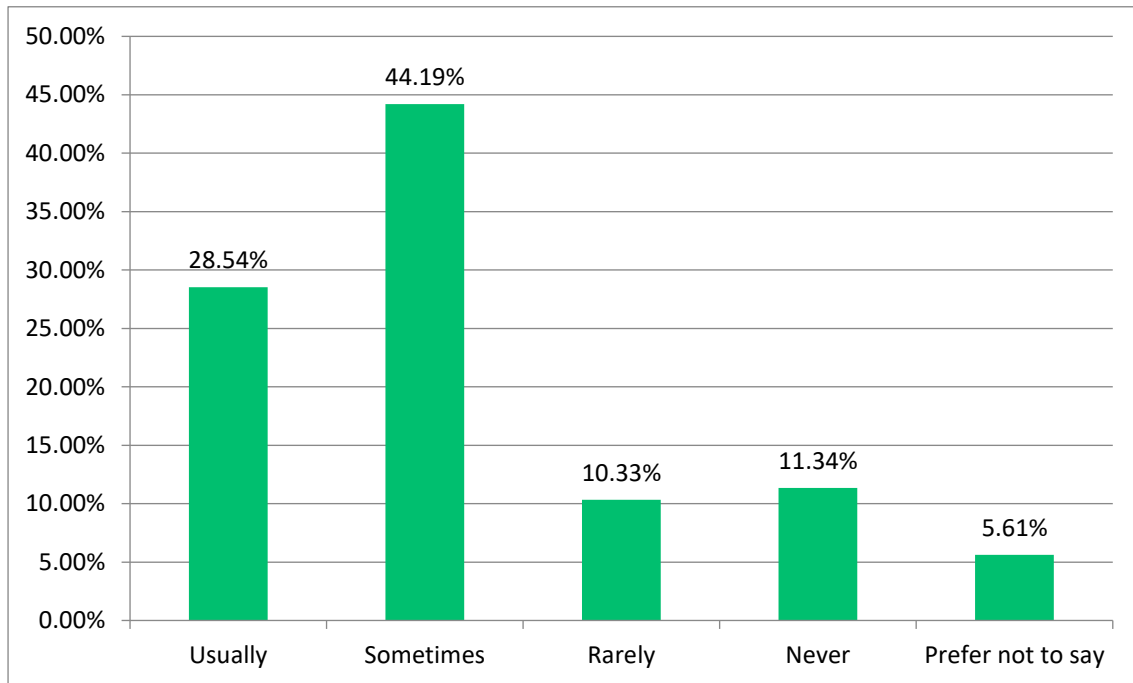
This question shows the greatest variance between members and non-members. It is to be expected that members would know whether or not there was a group covering their area, but also they could be a member or coordinator locally.

34% of people are aware of a Neighbourhood Watch in their area, with 43% being unsure if there is one nearby. This is down from last year's results, with 45% being aware, and 35% being unsure.

The most aware region is Greater London, with 57% knowing about their local Neighbourhood Watch. The most unsure is the North East, with 53% not knowing if their area has a Neighbourhood Watch.

Rural areas are more likely to know about their Neighbourhood Watch, where as Urban areas are more unaware.

Do you use any of the crime prevention advice/suggestions offered by Neighbourhood Watch?

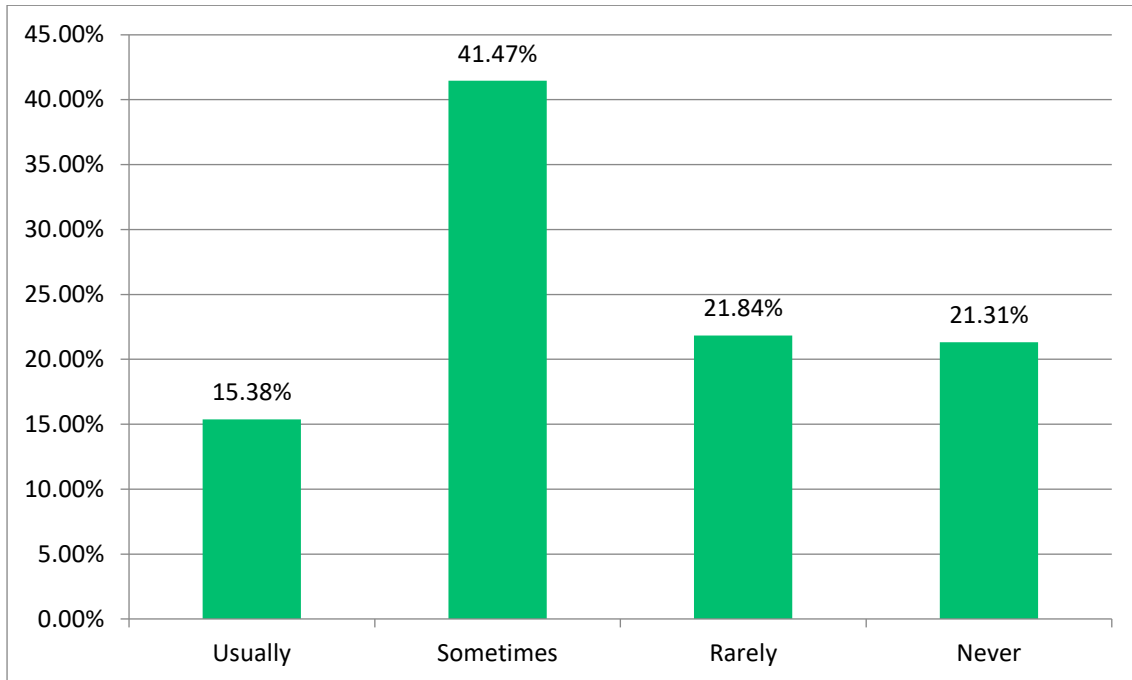


30% of people usually follow Neighbourhood Watch crime prevention advice - whereas 12% of people never do. This is down from last year, where a reported 45% of people acted on advice, with only 3% never using it.

The most advice conscious region is Greater London, with 35% usually following advice. On the other hand, a full 20% of people in Wales never use Neighbourhood Watch advice.

Over 65's have high advice take up, with 35% of people usually following advice. Conversely, 22% of Under 44's never do.

Have you acted on or changed your behaviour after seeing any of our crime prevention social media campaigns? (e.g. burglary prevention and THINK WIDE(N), the 'are you okay?' campaign for street harassment or others)



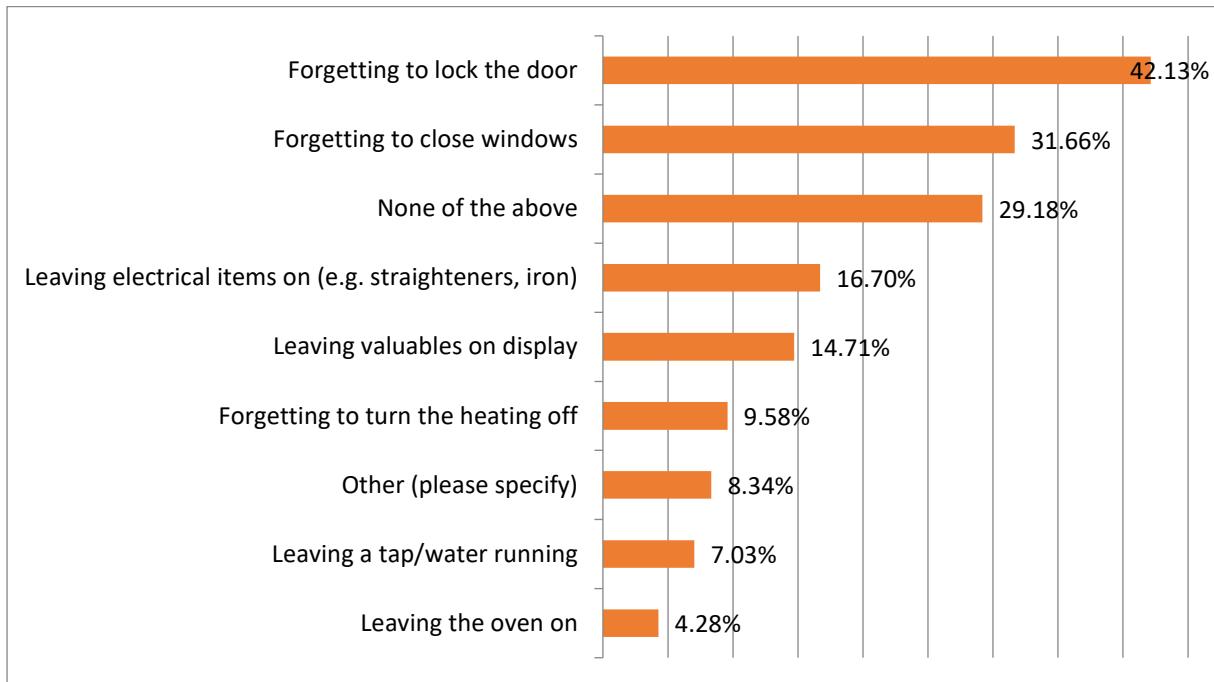
57% of All respondents say that they have changed their behaviour after seeing our crime prevention advice pieces. This compares to 68% of members.

16% of people usually change their behaviour after seeing a Social Media Campaign - whereas 20% of people stay the same.

Regionally, the North West is the most adaptive, with 17% of people shifting their approach after seeing a campaign. The most stubborn is Wales, with 25% of people ignoring campaigns.

As before, older people are more likely to pay attention to campaigns - Only 16% of over 65's ignore Campaigns, against 33% of under 44's.

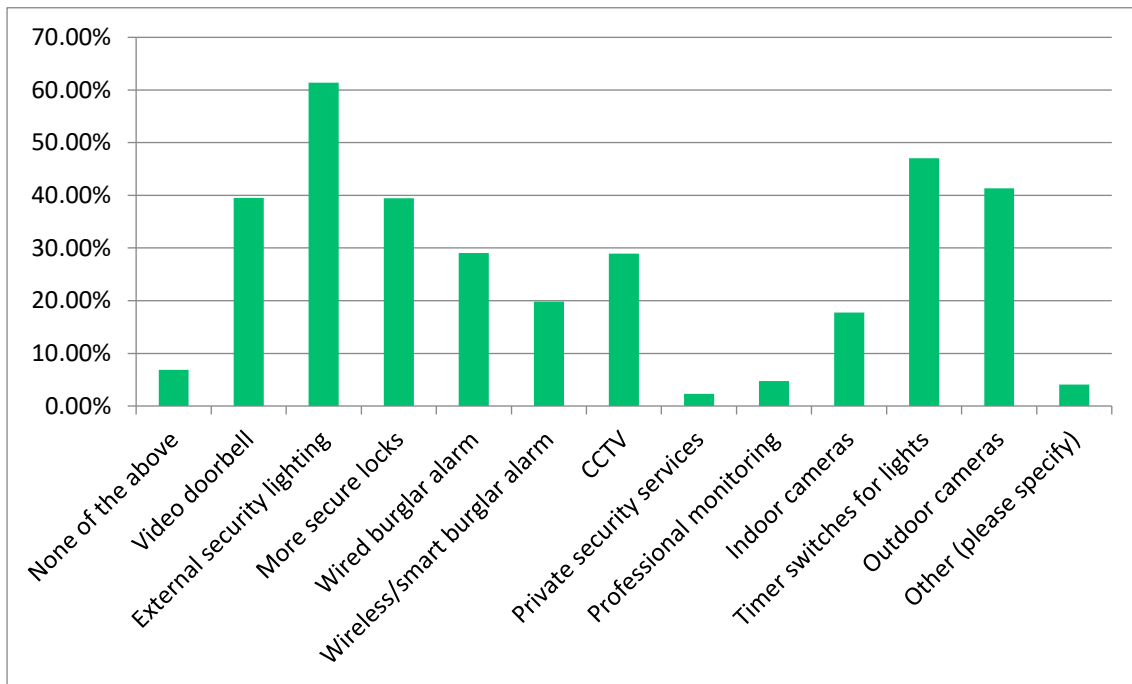
What do you worry about most when you're not at home? (Select the top 2 that apply)



Forgetting to lock the front door was most mentioned by respondents – closely followed by forgetting to close the windows. ‘None of the above’ attracted 29% of the vote and this contained a range of different responses, which included:

- Being burgled/intruders breaking in
 - Forgetting to set the alarm
 - Pets being stolen or harmed
 - Vandalism
 - Leaks
 - Parcels going missing
 - Rechargeable items/batteries left on charge
- Looking at gender, the highest % Difference was Leaving Electrical Items on, 19.37% for Women and 14.14% for Men (5.23% Diff)
 - By Neighbourhood Watch Membership, it was forgetting to lock the door - 42.99% of Non-Members worry about this, compared to just 38.02% for Members and 38.18% for Volunteers (4.98% Diff)

Which of the following items of home security do you have or would you consider purchasing for your home? (select all that apply)



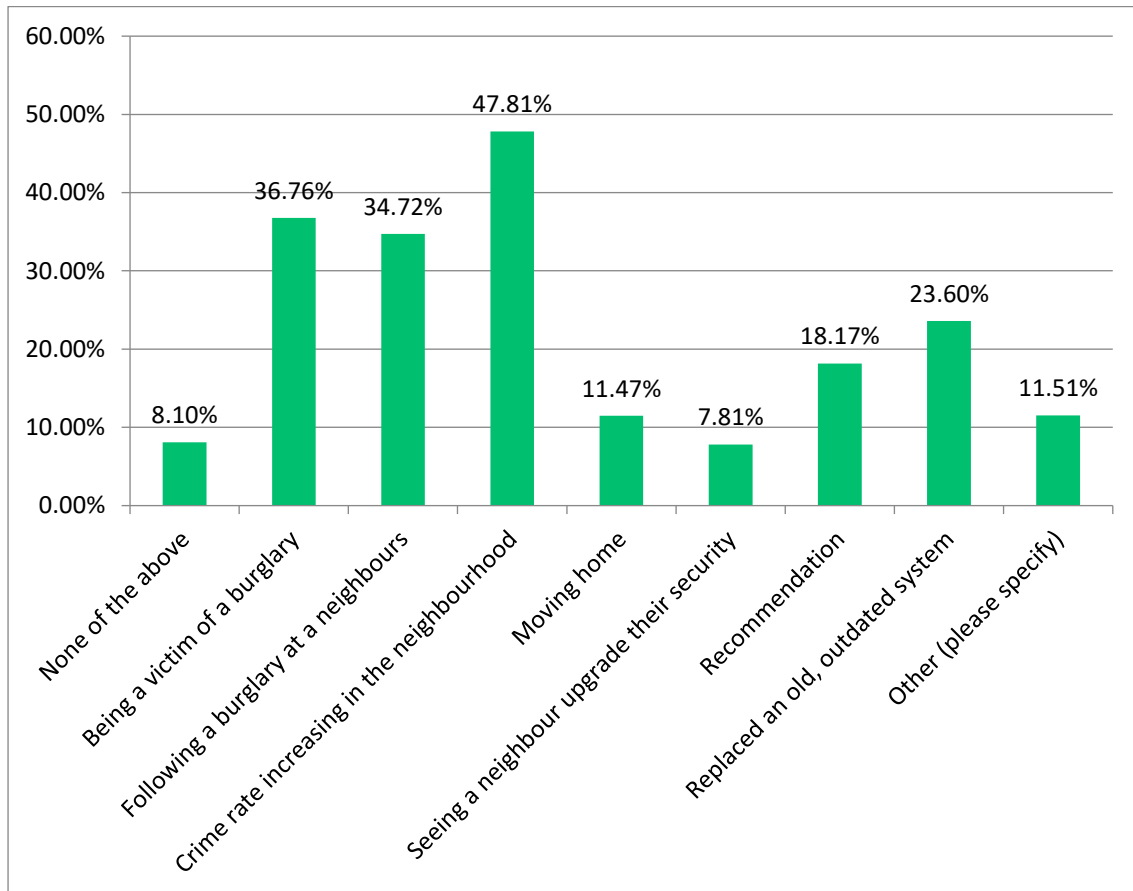
Additional Lighting – external and internal – featured heavily here, followed by outdoor cameras including video doorbells and more secure locks. Burglar alarms were among the lowest. 5% of respondents do not have or would not want any additional home security.

Other items that were suggested are:

- Dog
- Good neighbours
- Electric security gates
- Laminated glass for windows

- Gender wise, the highest % Difference was using Outdoor cameras - only 36.92% of Women use these, compared to 45.17% of Men (8.25% Diff)
- By Neighbourhood Watch Membership, it was Timer switches for lights - Non-Members are 44.57% likely to use these, compared to 51.43% for Members and 51.74% for Volunteers (7.17% Diff)

What made you (or would make you) invest in your home's security? (select all that apply)



There were not huge differences between answers given by members and non-members, all felt that the crime rate increasing in their area would be the biggest motivation, followed by being a victim of burglary or a neighbour becoming a victim of burglary. 18% would be motivated to purchase a security item on recommendation.

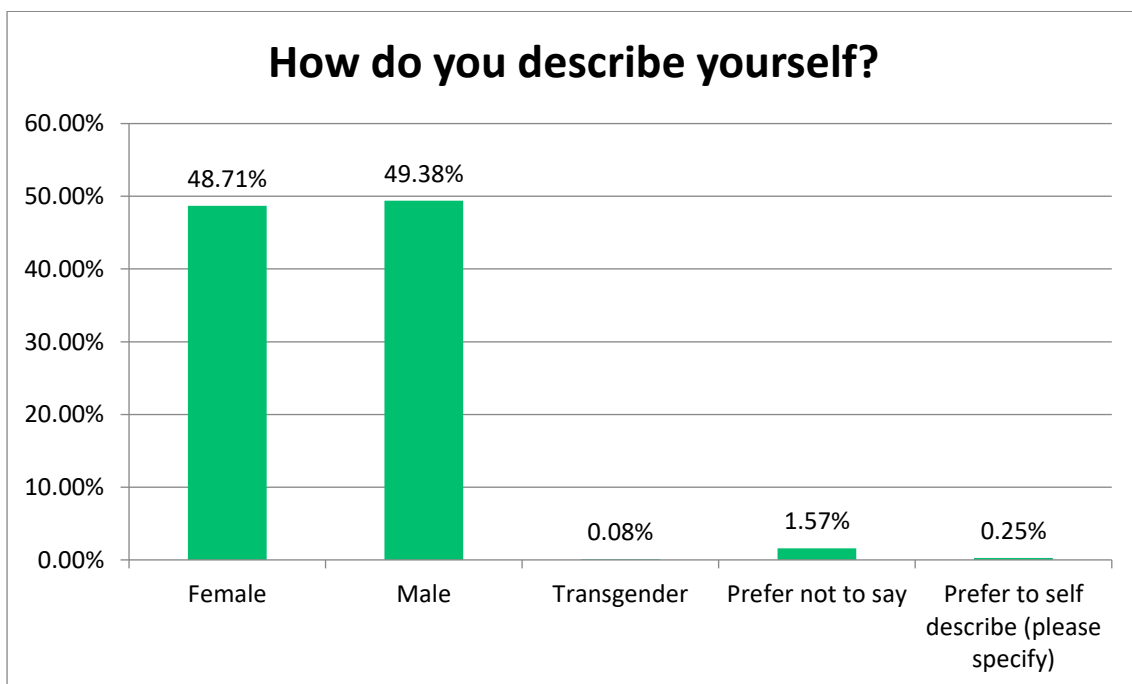
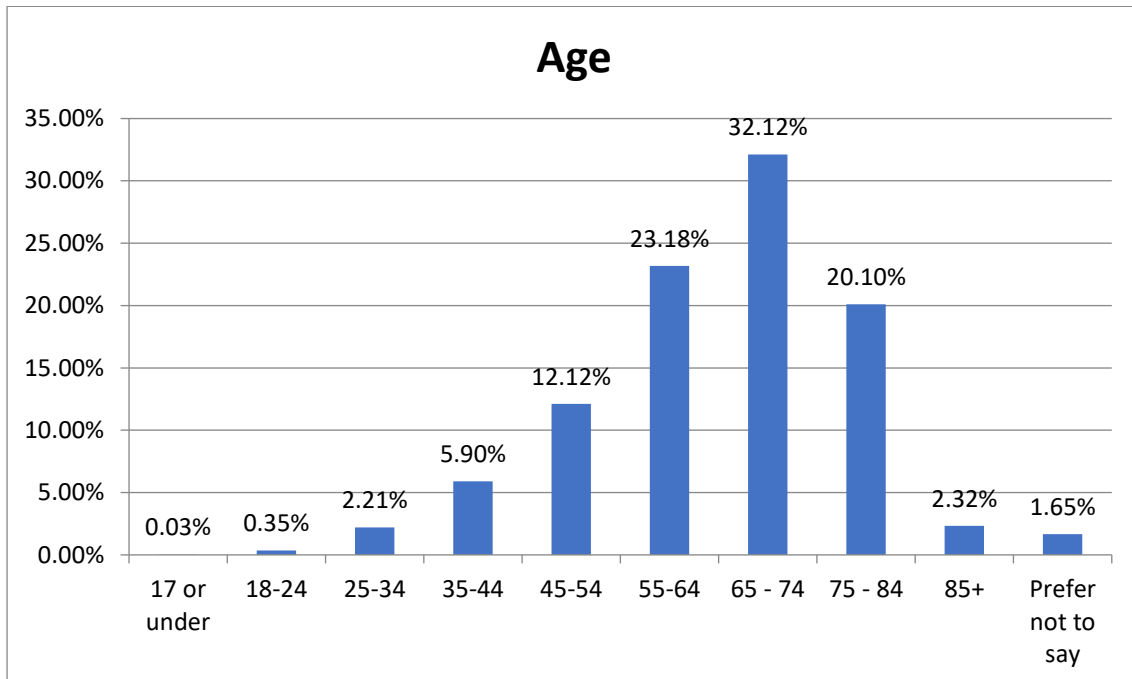
This follows the trend of 36% of people experiencing a crime in the last year (up from 23% from the previous year), as well as 44% of people believing crime rates have already increased.

- within gender, the highest percentage difference was replacing an old, outdated system - 18.70% of women would see this as a reason to invest in Security, compared to 25.09% of men (6.39% Diff)

- By Neighbourhood Watch Membership, the biggest shift was also replacing an old, outdated system - Non-Members only saw this as a valid reason at a rate of 20.49%, compared to 24.31% for Members, and 25.38% for Volunteers (4.89% Diff)

- Looking at Household Income, there's a clear trend across the board that as Household Income increases, so does a person's likelihood to be investing in Household security for any of the reasons given.

Demographic Information



Slightly more men (49%) than women (48.71%) responded to the survey – when we turn to members-only responses this figure rises to 55%.

