

Supporting Older Neighbours

Neighbourhood Watch

Coordinator training manual

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Supporting Older Neighbours

Introduction

This training pack has been produced to help you as a Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) Coordinator to work effectively with older people. AgeUK and Neighbourhood and Home Watch have developed the content.

Neighbourhood and Home Watch believe in strong, active communities, working in partnership with the police. A sense of shared values is focused on bringing local people together to build safer and stronger communities and neighbourhoods.

Strong communities are made up of everyone who lives in them, including older and potentially vulnerable people who may need additional support. This pack provides useful information and advice aimed at helping you and your group to offer assistance for older people in your area – whether you're a Community, Ward, Area or Street Coordinator. It highlights what to look out for, what action to take and the most appropriate agencies to contact when professional help is needed.

The pack will also help to build up your own communication and presentation skills and provide crime prevention advice aimed specifically at older and more vulnerable people.

Let's acknowledge straight away that not all people of pensionable age are the same. The tired stereotype of the frail, needy pensioner is outmoded when you consider the healthy and active lives that many people live long into retirement. Older people can't be labelled any more than teenagers can, or any other group of people, if we classify them by solely by age. People who have reached retirement age come from a huge variety of backgrounds and ethnic groups and have different hopes and desires.

So why produce material aimed specifically at supporting you and your colleagues to work with such a diverse group? The reason is that while acknowledging the huge differences among individuals, when we look at the whole population, older people do have some characteristics in common. These include a greater likelihood to fear crime and a greater likelihood to be more adversely affected than a younger person if they do become a victim of crime. Older people are also more vulnerable to specific types of crime, such as distraction burglary.

If you have been involved in Neighbourhood Watch for a number of years, you may already feel confident about some of the advice given in the following pages, but you should still find information that will support you further in carrying out this important role. Plus we hope that you will pass it on; not everyone is able to attend a training session, but you can ensure that your colleagues have access to this information.

If you're a new Coordinator, this pack will assist you to work even more effectively with elderly and vulnerable residents in your community by helping you to:

- Identify and recognise some of the issues facing your older and potentially vulnerable neighbours.
- Know when it is appropriate to ask for the involvement of other agencies, including the police.
- Locate resources and sources of help and support to help your neighbours remain independent in their homes for longer.

This manual is divided into four sections.

The **first section** provides context, highlighting facts and figures about our ageing population. If ever you needed evidence to show how elderly people comprise a growing proportion of our communities, and the kind of issues and problems they face, you'll find it here. This section also provides information about older people and crime – victimisation, fear of crime, the risk of isolation and the abuse of the elderly.

The **second section** provides information to improve your own skills, and those of others, in carrying out the role of a Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator. You'll learn about effective communication techniques and how to deliver a good talk or presentation.

The **third section** provides specific crime prevention advice for older people including key information for reducing risk and guidance on how to assist an older person that has experienced a crime.

The **fourth section** gives details of organisations that exist to help and support older people to enable them to continue living independently. These include national, regional and local statutory bodies as well as voluntary and community groups. These may prove useful in your co-ordinating role, as you may be able to make use of or pass on some of the information provided here.

This manual is also available to download as a PDF from the Neighbourhood and Home Watch website at www.mynhw.co.uk

Age Concern and Help the Aged

On 1 April 2009 the four national Age Concerns in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland joined with Help the Aged to create four new national charities dedicated to improving the lives of older people.

We speak with one voice on behalf of all older people.

We are listening to what older people want as we improve our services and activities so that we can achieve our vision of a world in which older people flourish.

We cannot achieve this on our own. We do not just work on behalf of older people, we engage with them in all that we do: listening to what they say, campaigning for the change that they want, providing services where others are not and selling products where the markets have failed.

Last year, between us, we reached over 5 million older people with our services, information and products.

We work with partners to ensure that together we can improve the lives of older people. The key partners are the four national charities, all of which share a name and vision; and the many Age Concerns across the UK, which provide services for older people in their area.

From Spring 2010 Age Concern and Help the Aged will be known by our new name – AgeUK.

Supporting Older People

The aim of this government-funded pathfinder project is to support the needs of the most vulnerable older people in communities. The project will engage directly with Neighbourhood Watch and Home Watch Coordinators through a series of cascade training courses in order to maximise the reach of crime prevention messages across communities.

The three key objectives of this project are:

1. To enable NHW Coordinators to identify the most vulnerable older people in communities and to understand their needs and concerns.
2. To provide Coordinators with information on the support available to help older people to remain living independently in the community.
3. To enable Coordinators to communicate and present crime prevention advice for older people to other NHW Coordinators within the network.

This project will initially involve training a total of ninety NHW Coordinators with a view to rolling training out across England and Wales. The training resources – provided in this manual – will be available to all Coordinators via the Neighbourhood Watch website at www.mynhw.co.uk

SECTION 1: Our changing population

The population of England and Wales is changing. The proportion of elderly people living in communities throughout the country has increased over the past 25 years and the rate of increase is going to speed up over the next 25 years. For Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators, this means that older people form a special audience with its own concerns.

This section of the pack gives some useful context and information about the balance of the population in England and Wales, then looks at dependent and vulnerable groups and the types of vulnerability.

1.1 Population growth

The UK population continues to age. The Office for National Statistics has estimated that in 2008 the UK's population, broken down by age, was as shown in the table below (numbers are in thousands).

	Persons	Male	Female
Under 16	10,222	5,234	4,988
Under 18	11,642	5,965	5,677
16-44	21,759	10,977	10,782
45-64/59*	11,979	6,715	5,264
65/60** and over	10,478	3,854	6,625

*64 men/59 women; ** 65 men/60 women
Source: The Office for National Statistics

The figures show that almost 10.5 million men aged over 65 and women aged over 60 were living in the UK in 2008 – almost 16% of the total population.

The next table shows a regional breakdown of these figures by the Government regions in England and Wales. Once again this is based on estimated figures for 2008, published by the Office for National Statistics and the numbers are again in thousands.

Estimated Population of England and Wales in 2008 by region

	Persons All Ages	Persons 0-17	Persons 18-49	Persons 50-59	Persons 60-69	Persons 70+
ENGLAND	50,468	10,927	22,474	6,144	5,285	5,637
WALES	2,945	632	1,222	380	347	363
GOVERNMENT OFFICE REGIONS						
North East	2,528	528	1,096	332	276	295
North West	6,752	1,485	2,943	843	727	753
Yorkshire and The Humber	5,120	1,104	2,281	628	539	567
East Midlands	4,346	929	1,891	548	486	491
West Midlands	5,323	1,193	2,290	653	578	609
East	5,625	1,225	2,409	699	623	6688
London	7,520	1,639	3,9478	762	552	618
South East	8,173	1,781	3,521	1,023	888	960
South West	5,080	1,040	2,095	655	616	675

Source: The Office for National Statistics

The UK population as a whole has increased by 9% over the past 25 years. Between 1983 and 2008 the population changed in the following ways:

- Under 16s fell from 21% to 19% of the total population
- Those aged 16 to 64 increased from 64% to 65%
- Those aged 65 and over increased slightly to 16%
- However, those aged 85+ increased from 0.6 million in 1983 (1% of the total population) to 1.3 million (2%) by 2008.

The number of people aged 85 and over has doubled in 15 years.

1.2 Future population trends

Government figures estimate that by the year 2033, older people will form almost a quarter of the total population.

- Those aged 65 and over will increase by 6.5 million to 16.4 million (23% of the population)
- Those aged 85+ will reach 3.3 million (5% of the population)
- The proportion of the population aged 16 – 64 will fall from 65% to 59%.

By the year 2033, an estimated 3.3 million people aged 85 and over will be living in the UK.

Estimated and projected population and percentage of UK population by age

Age	2008		2033	
	Population (millions)	%	Population (millions)	%
0-15	11.5	19	12.8	18
16-64	8.6	14	13.1	18
65-84	8.6	14	13.1	18
85 and over	1.3	2	3.3	5
All	61.4	100	71.6	100

Source: Office for National Statistics. Mid-year estimates 1983 and 2008, ONS, GROS, NISRA; 2008-based National Population Projections.

All of this means that by the year 2033, there will be about 2.8 people of working age to each person above the state pension age. Without the planned changes in pensionable age, the figure would be closer to 2.2 people of working age for every one above pensionable age.

1.3 Life expectancy

Average life expectancy is now 77.4 years for men and 81.6 years for women, a rise of 6.3 years and 4.6 years respectively over the last 25 years.

Across the UK, England has the highest life expectancy at birth, with Scotland the lowest. Figures for Government Office Regions show that the highest life expectancy in England and Wales is in South East and South West England, with the lowest in the North East of England.

In 2009, government statistics reported 9,300 people in England and Wales aged 100 or more. One hundred years before, just 100 people aged 100 or over were alive.

Since the Second World War, the number of centenarians has increased by about 6.4% a year. For every man who reaches 100 there are seven women, although this ratio is now beginning to fall.

1.4 Other useful figures

- Each year, about 650,000 people turn 65.
- People aged 50 and over account for more than a third of the UK population (21 million).
- Black and minority ethnic (BME) groups make up over 16% of the population of England, but make up only 8% of people in England aged 60 and over.
- Between 575,000 and 810,000 people over State Pension Age are estimated to be gay.
- The population over 75 is projected to double in the next 30 years.

While large numbers of older people are isolated and may be vulnerable, this is by no means the whole story. Many surveys have painted a more positive picture of the older population.

1.5 Doing well

While help and support for the elderly often highlight the plight of those who are lonely, isolated and vulnerable, many older people maintain a good standard of independent living. For example, a survey of households conducted at the turn of the 21st Century showed:

- 91% of elderly people can move around the house with no difficulty.
- 72% can get up and down stairs with no difficulty.
- 77% per cent can go out on their own with no difficulty.
- More than two thirds (68%) of householders aged 65+ own homes outright without a mortgage.

These figures imply a fairly fit and active older population. We also know from studies of particular diseases that most older people enjoy good mental health. To turn the usual statistics on their heads:

- 95% of people aged between 70-80 are unaffected by dementia.
- 80% of those aged 80-90 do not have dementia.
- 85-90% of people over 65 do not suffer from depression.

1.6 Vulnerability and dependency

As we've seen, many elderly people have a good quality of life, but large numbers are vulnerable to crime and ill health. But what does it really mean to be 'vulnerable'? The Government defines it like this:

“A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or maybe unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.”

But of course, many older people are 'vulnerable' in the everyday sense of the word, of being exposed, at least potentially, to harm. This might be for any number of reasons, including ill health, forgetfulness, poverty, isolation or a relationship problem.

The needs of older and vulnerable people are met in a variety of ways, including supported housing, residential housing or support in the home. Vulnerability can be temporary or permanent and care needs may be long or short term. Specialist agencies often provide help with practical tasks like housework, personal hygiene, preparing a meal, or taking essential medication.

This vulnerability can leave people open to abuse or crime from unscrupulous tradesmen, thieves, con artists, cold callers, opportunist thieves or anti-social neighbours. For some older people, this unacceptable treatment may be long term and some of it may be criminal and need police involvement.

Some legislation has addressed these issues specifically. For example, in England and Wales, the Protection of Vulnerable Adults Scheme for care homes and domiciliary care agencies introduced a list of care workers who have harmed a vulnerable adult or put them at risk of harm. The aim of this list is to ensure known abusers do not rejoin the care workforce. Full details of this scheme can be obtained at www.doh.gov.uk.

Studies show that when older or vulnerable people are victims of crime, such as burglary, they may suffer significant long-term harm. This may mean they can no longer live independently and, therefore, they are more likely to move into residential care than their non-burgled neighbours.

Older and vulnerable people tend to need more support when they have been a victim of crime and to prevent them from becoming a victim again. This is where caring neighbours and Neighbourhood or Home Watch members can really come into their own, helping the elderly to feel and remain safe, secure and confident in at home.

The 2008/09 British Crime Survey showed that households who were involved in Neighbourhood or Home Watch schemes were less likely to be the victims of crime and less likely to be worried about crime. Neighbourhood or Home Watch members can make a real difference to the lives of the older members of their communities.

1.7 Home alone

The number of single person households increased by 73% (from 4.3 million to 7.5 million) between 1981 and 2008, with approximately two thirds of these people over the state pension age.

Isolation prevents older people from enjoying life and receiving help and support that could improve their quality of life. For Neighbourhood Watch, helping older people who don't take part in voluntary activities can be difficult. Sometimes the best support comes from professional carers, particularly if the elderly person's family are no longer alive, live far away or do not visit. This means that Coordinators who make links with statutory services may be able to reach out and help those who are home-bound or unable to attend meetings.

To put this into perspective, surveys show:

- 10% of those aged 65 and over in the UK say they are often or always lonely.
- Almost half a million people aged 65 and over do not leave their homes more than once a week in the UK (2007).
- Less than two thirds (63%) of pensioners in Great Britain take up their entitlement to concessionary fares on public transport.
- 71% of people aged 65 and over in the UK have never used the internet.
- 62% of women aged 75 and over are widowed.

Isolation can lead to health problems, with depression a common – but not inevitable – part of ageing. Figures from the Department of Health indicate that a quarter of people over the age of 65 (22% of men and 28% of women) have symptoms of depression. This grows to two in five people aged 85 and above. An estimated 40% of people in care homes have depression.

1.8 Elder abuse

Neglect and mistreatment of older people are sadly not uncommon, and this can happen in care environments as well as private and rented accommodation. The charity Action on Elder Abuse (AEA) defines elder abuse as: “a single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person”.

AEA has identified five primary categories of abuse:

1. Physical
2. Psychological
3. Financial
4. Sexual
5. Neglect

Its helpline reports psychological abuse as the most common (34% cent of calls), followed by financial abuse (20%), physical abuse (19%), neglect (12%) and sexual abuse (3%).

More men are reported as individual abusers than women, while two thirds of those reporting abuse are women. The majority of abuse takes place in people's own homes, while 23% of calls come from people in care homes, where just 5% of the older population live.

SECTION 2: Communication skills and public speaking

2.1 Effective communication

Effective communication is essential to Neighbourhood Watch. Listening to and talking with others is fundamental to everything we do, so this section looks at how we can ensure that our interpersonal communication is as effective as possible.

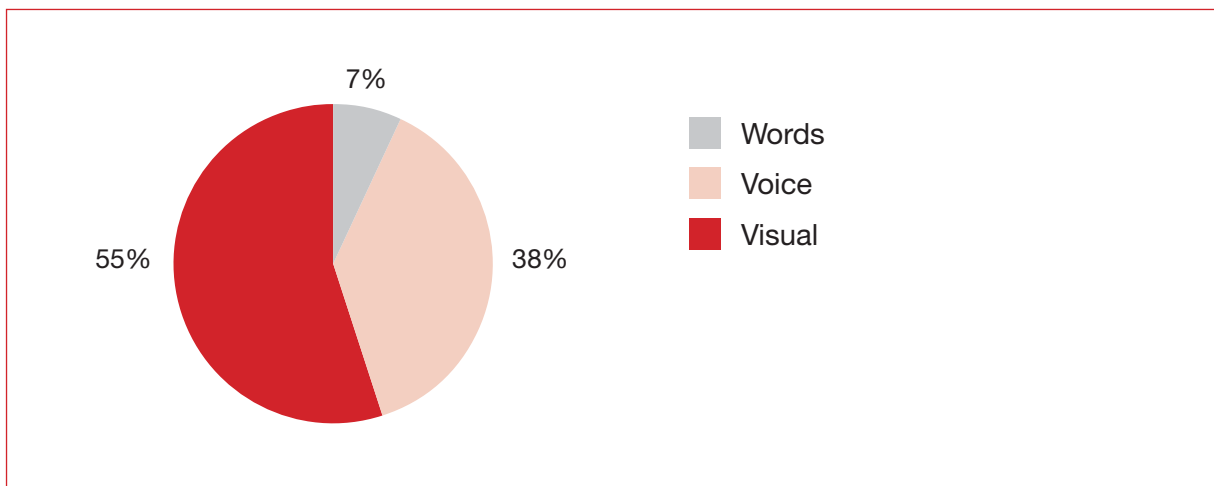
We communicate for lots of reasons: for example, to express emotion, provide information, argue a case or try to influence others.

EXERCISE A

In small groups, discuss some of the types of communication we use and the reasons why we communicate. You could write some of your ideas here.

When we are face to face, listening to someone talking, we don't just take in the words they use, but the whole image in front of us. Some studies have analysed the relative importance of the tone of voice we use, the visual impression we make and the words we use in any conversation or face-to-face interaction. This shows that visual cues are much more important than you might have thought, especially when we're expressing our emotions.

What counts when we express our feelings



2.2 Barriers to effective communication

As you can see, the words we use are just one aspect of our communication; body language, gestures, our voice, our accent and a variety of other factors all have a role to play.

If we agree that we want people to understand our message – and possibly act upon it – then we need to be aware of the potential barriers that get in the way. These barriers are often physical, environmental and/or personal.

EXERCISE B

Now discuss some of the barriers to effective communication. You could write down some of your ideas here, under the following headings. An example is given in each category to help you.

Physical barriers
Distance

Environmental barriers
Noise

Personal barriers
Speech impediment

Other barriers
Fear

2.3 General principles

Over the years, voluntary groups representing all sorts of people – the elderly, the young, those with disabilities – have pushed the message that whatever your age or health status, you should be treated with respect. That is a basic rule of effective communication with older audiences: don't talk down to people. Condescending, simplistic or childish language won't go down well with anyone.

Regardless of whether you're speaking to a group, writing a letter, sending an email or making a phone call, good communications have a few things in common. These include:

- accuracy
- unambiguous – clear and easy to understand
- well timed
- to the right person
- two way – enabling feedback.

Inaccurate messages cause inconvenience at least and major problems at worse. If you inform someone of the wrong time for an appointment, then it's a pain, but wrong information in a court of law could have disastrous consequences.

The golden rule for Neighbourhood Watch is: **don't communicate what you are not sure about.**

Good communication is a two-way process. This means that if someone provides you with some information, they like to know what you did with it – otherwise they may think that it was ignored. Apart from basic courtesy, giving feedback encourages people to speak with you and report things on other occasions without thinking it was a waste of time.

2.4 Communications techniques

When we're speaking with another person or group of people, some things help us to improve dialogue and understanding. At the same time, several things can reduce the chances of effective communication.

Do: face the person you are talking to; maintain eye contact, use silence (it can indicate patience and provide thinking time).

Don't: cross your arms and legs, stare, look away for long periods, fidget or doodle.

Do: ask questions – it shows a genuine interest in what the other person is saying and shows you want to understand what they mean.

Don't: keep interrupting – try to let the other person come to a natural pause before responding.

Do: be aware of the person's demeanour. For example, if they are worried or concerned about something, they may be:

- restless/shifting about
- slouched
- unable to maintain eye contact
- looking downwards

Don't: assume that a person feels down because of any of these factors – try to be open and helpful.

Do: be self aware, so that you are familiar with your own habits and mannerisms that may affect how well people listen to what you've got to say.

Don't: assume that because you are interested in what you have to say that the other person is.

2.5 How we listen and learn

When communicating with people, it's worth bearing in mind that people learn and listen in different ways. You should bear this in mind when talking or presenting to a group of people. Some people estimate that:

- 30-40% of us are 'visual learners' – we gain a lot from pictures and images i.e. "I see what you mean".
- 20-30% are 'auditory' learners – we respond well to words and sound i.e. "I hear what you say".
- 30-50% are 'kinaesthetic' learners – we prefer to learn by doing i.e. "I can feel that...".

When considering how we interact with others, a lot of factors play a part in how well we get our message across.

2.6 Being a good listener

'Success' in anything rarely happens without some sort of help or input from others. This is particularly true in Neighbourhood Watch, where we depend on working together for the common aim of safer communities.

So how can we make the other person feel important when we want to speak with them and encourage them to become involved? As well as being honest with them – and remembering their name! – listening to them is a great start.

So how can we be more effective listeners?

Firstly, we have to want to. By showing an interest, we may actually become interested, may learn something and – at the very least – make another person or group of people feel good that we have taken some time out to pay attention to them.

Sometimes the extroverts of this world seem to hold all the best cards when it comes to communicating well. Their lack of shyness or nerves gives them certain advantages. But while this is true to some extent, it's also true that listening and observing are not necessarily two of the aces they hold. Introverts may be better listeners – but like all communication skills, it can be learned, practiced and improved upon.

Listening done properly should be an active process; an active paying of attention to what the other person is saying and what they mean.

And what do they mean? When you really pay attention, you may begin to see nuances in their language, their posture, their tone of voice, which betray their real thoughts and feelings, which may give you a further insight into what they're really trying to say or what they really want. This combined listening and observing may give you some verbal and physical (if you're in the same room) cues as to the best way to respond in a given circumstance.

The following ten tips will help you to develop your listening skills

- 1 Stop talking – give the person space to speak.
- 2 Prepare yourself to listen.
- 3 Put the talker at ease – the talker’s needs and problems are important to him/her.
- 4 Remove distractions – focus your mind on what is being said.
- 5 Empathise – try to see, and meet half-way, the point of view being expressed.
- 6 Be patient – a pause, even a long pause, doesn’t always mean that the speaker has finished.
- 7 Avoid personal prejudice – don’t allow irritation at things said, or the person’s accent or manner, for example, to distract you.
- 8 Listen to the tone of voice – it can give important clues to what the person’s feeling.
- 9 Listen for ideas, not just words – you want to get the whole picture, not just isolated bits and pieces.
- 10 Watch for non-verbal communication – gestures, facial expressions and eye movements can all be important if you are talking to someone face to face.

2.7 Questions, questions

How else can you show that you are interested in what another person has to say? It’s difficult to underestimate the importance of **asking questions**, especially open-ended questions that invite more than a single word answer, usually ‘yes’ or ‘no’.

Open ended questions indicate genuine interest on our part and create a proper conversation; a dialogue in which we are seen to value the other person. By asking questions we’re inviting the other person to take part and get involved. This can help them to feel more important and increase the chance of their becoming committed.

Questions can lead to you finding out very useful information, which may help you now or in the future, or in securing the co-operation of another person or people.

2.8 Communicating with a group

When you’re with a group, the challenges and difficulties in getting your message across can be multiplied. Some may be difficult to deal with; others may feel they know more than you, while others may not be interested.

You need to be prepared for this as a Coordinator, and not take it too personally if some people don’t seem to care very much about issues that mean a lot to you.

The next section provides much more detailed advice on how to deliver an effective presentation in front of a group of people.

2.9 Public speaking

Neighbourhood Watch regularly involves face-to-face contact with people – whether one to one, a couple, a family or a larger audience. This section takes you through ways of preparing for and presenting your message. The tips here are particularly useful if you have to speak to an audience of many people. However, you may find the advice helpful whenever you need to attract attention and help your message stick. Whatever the size of your scheme, the chances are that at some point you will speak to a group of people.

You may be confident about this, or you may feel nervous, but either way, you can take steps to improve your chances of getting your message across in a clear and effective way.

2.10 Getting started

Let's introduce PAM. PAM is a useful reminder about any form of communication. She stands for:

Purpose

Audience

Message

PAM works best as one beautiful whole, but she can be split into her component parts and then put back together again. So let's think about the first piece.

2.11 Purpose

Another way of saying this is your aim or objective. You should be clear before you begin what it is you want the audience to come away with at the end. This may sound obvious, but it really helps to spell it out to yourself from the start. For example, your purpose might be:

- Raising awareness of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.
- Launching a new initiative.
- Persuading people to do something, e.g. join in/recruit more volunteers.
- Informing your audience of specific risks in their area.
- Providing crime prevention advice.

Presentations often work best if you can focus on one or two main points that you want to say and want your audience to know about. You may have lots of things to say, which is fine, so long as you're clear in your own mind. You should also ensure that the people you're speaking to are clear about it too. Don't forget that members of your audience have their own reasons – their own purpose – for being there. You need to make sure that you fulfil their expectations too.

Which takes us nicely to the next part of PAM...

2.12 Audience

We've seen in Section 1 of this training pack that older people in England and Wales don't form a coherent group, but are made up of a wide variety of people from different backgrounds, social classes, ethnic origins, and so on.

From your local knowledge you may be aware of clubs or social groups that older people attend, such as lunch clubs, day centres, older people's forums, church groups and so on. Local charities, like AgeUK, can help you, as can your local authority, which runs a wide range of services for the elderly. The local police Community Support Officer should also be able to help.

EXERCISE C

Think of a story from your area that illustrates the effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch. Jot down the main points here and then share the story with others.

Whoever it is you're speaking to – residents of a sheltered housing project or a residents' association, for example – it's a good idea to try to find out in advance who the audience will include and what they're expecting. The best recruitment speech ever made for a new Neighbourhood Watch scheme might not go down very well if the audience had been waiting for some straightforward crime prevention advice.

Before you go to speak to any group of people, try to find answers to the following questions:

- Roughly how many people will be there?
- Will the audience be mainly men or women, or a mixture of both?
- What have they been told about the event? What are their expectations?
- Do they have any specific or current concerns?
- Do they have any previous knowledge or experience of Neighbourhood Watch?

Finding out this information will help you to prepare for and plan your presentation. It should also give you confidence that you're on the right lines.

Companies go to great lengths to find out about the audience for their products and services; the people that make up their market. For you, and your fellow Coordinators throughout the country, it's a bit more straightforward as your potential audience is everyone who lives in a particular geographical area.

You're reading this because you care about the quality of life in your area and you want to help. So the chances are you meet a lot of people and already know a lot about what's happening where you live. This is exactly what you need to help you identify elderly people who may benefit from the kind of help and advice you provide.

In relation to the audience you're meeting with and speaking to, it's worth asking a question from their point of view:

“What's in it for me?”

Sometimes this is an unconscious question that determines whether we buy one product or another, keep watching that television programme rather than another one; buy *The Sun* or *The Daily Telegraph*, and so on. Thinking from your audience's point of view will help you to develop a message that will provide something of interest to them.

And that takes us to PAM's third aspect.

2.13 Message

The message is the crucial content of your presentation: what it is you're actually going to say.

As well as being, literally, a verbal or written communication, a message is also defined as a significant point or central theme. "Do you get the message?" is a question we sometimes ask one another.

In general, whatever your message is and however you're going to communicate it, good messages have a few things in common. If possible, try to make them:

- clear and easy to understand
- written or spoken in plain English
- accurate
- concise

Another thing to remember when communicating any message is this: trying to communicate more than one theme or point can often result in confusion, so it's a good idea to try to keep things short and simple.

Most of us have probably been on the receiving end of a rambling speech or poorly thought through presentation. Even if we're interested in the subject matter, we find that our attention wanders; we get bored and start thinking about lunch or what we're going to do afterwards.

People are usually polite when you give a presentation. Unlike an email, which people can delete without reading, or a leaflet, which can be ignored or thrown away, you have a captive audience; but that doesn't mean they'll be captivated by what you have to say.

Being clear about your purpose and audience really helps here; keeping focused on what you really want to say and making the message relevant to the people listening will help to make it memorable rather than forgettable.

2.14 How to make your message stick

We all respond to different things. Some people love facts and figures, while others' eyes glaze over at the mere mention of 'data' or 'statistics'. Others relate better to images and pictures or 'things'. Remember the previous section about how some of us are 'visual', some are 'auditory' and some are 'kinaesthetic' listeners and learners? So how can you try to ensure that as many people as possible gain something useful out of the important things you have to say?

One way is by **telling stories**.

Stories aren't just for children; people of all ages relate to them, whether in novels, plays, films or newspapers, there's something about stories that helps to get a message across.

Can you give a real life example? Do you know how Neighbourhood Watch helped an elderly person, or gave him or her a new lease of life? This will bring home your message much more effectively than something more abstract, or some facts and figures alone. Stories can also provide an emotional connection with your audience, so the message becomes more meaningful, especially if your stories are about people like them, places they're familiar with and the kinds of issue and problems they face in their day to day lives.

EXERCISE D

Think of a story from your area that illustrates the effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch. Jot down the main points here and then share the story with others.

Another factor to improve your presentation is to remember that people prefer something **concrete** to something abstract. Real, specific examples tend to work much better than abstract things, so although 'fairness' and 'justice' may matter in life, giving some real examples will probably work better in a presentation.

Making things concrete, with stories and real life examples, will also help to make your message **credible**. Belonging to Neighbourhood Watch really helps as it's a well known organisation and will give you some credibility with your audience before you've even said a word. But the way you convey the message will really help too.

You have a much better chance that people will relate your stories to their own lives than if you just quote facts and figures or use abstract concepts. That's not to say there's no place for facts and figures, because there is, but you shouldn't base a whole presentation on them; that would be a lost opportunity.

2.15 Preparing for your talk

Write down in advance the key points that you want to make. Unless you feel you can't do it any other way, it's best to speak from notes rather than writing down an entire 'speech' or monologue as a script that you just repeat in front of everyone.

A few notes will help you to plan and order your talk – they're like hooks to hang the rest of your ideas on and keep you on track if you get sidetracked by questions. This can happen to the most experienced public speakers, which is why most of them use notes.

With your notes, give each section a simple heading or title, like:

- "Why I'm here today."
- "Crime in our area."
- "What Neighbourhood Watch can do and what you can do."

As well as noting down your main points, think about the kind of questions you might be asked. If you've already thought through your purpose and audience, you will be better prepared, as you'll know about your audience's main concerns.

Sometimes you may be asked a completely unexpected question. If this happens and you don't know, say so. You're a volunteer doing his or her best to help and can continue to help by saying that you'll try to find out and will get back to them.

While we're on questions and answers, you should decide in advance how you would prefer to deal with questions. You might be happy to respond to them during the presentation, or be more comfortable leaving questions until the end. Whatever works best for you, just make sure you tell your audience at the beginning. If you're not sure, then leave the questions until the end, as you might be put off or distracted by them during the presentation.

2.16 Planning the day

If you have arranged to give a talk, this **checklist** may help you to ensure that it goes off smoothly before the big day.

1. Check the date, time and venue.
2. Ensure you have contact numbers for the venue in case of problems.
3. Double check that you and your hosts are clear about what your talk or presentation is about.
4. If there are to be other speakers, try to find out who they are, what they will be talking about and what order you'll be speaking in.
5. Equipment – do you need any, and if so, will you bring it or will the venue provide it?
6. Try to confirm how many people will be present.

On the day:

1. Give yourself plenty of time to arrive.
2. If you have any leaflets or anything else to hand out, make sure you bring enough.
3. Check the venue and ensure there are enough chairs etc and that they are set out in a way you're happy with.
4. If you need to set up any equipment, do it soon after you arrive – and check that it works.
5. As members of your audience arrive, mingle and talk to them, then you won't be giving your talk to complete strangers.
6. Try to relax – a couple of deep breaths may help.

This level of planning and preparation will help you to feel more confident and feel relaxed.

Remember – the best way to relax is to be prepared.

2.17 Structure

The structure of your talk or presentation determines the order in which you will present your material. A good structure for a presentation is as follows:

- Introduce yourself and what you're going to say. You might say how long you intend to talk for and explain how you're going to handle questions.
- Explain your overall message – the key point or points that you're going to talk about in more detail.
- Present your key points in more detail – use your notes and try to keep to the point.
- Anticipate any questions people may have before they ask them and answer them in the presentation – “Now, you might think that isn't possible, but let me give you an example to show you that it is...”.
- Draw to a conclusion – not just a summary of what you've said, but an appeal or call to action works well. Let the audience know that you've reached the end.

2.18 During the presentation

Once you're clear about the purpose of your presentation, know something about your audience, have thought through your message, planned for the event, structured the content, and liaised in advance with the venue, all you have to do now is deliver it!

If that fills you with dread, don't worry. Remember, you're volunteering for something that matters to you and speaking to a group of people who at the very least have some personal interest in what you have to say.

2.19 Rehearse

Before you get started, you might want to rehearse what you want to say, particularly if you're nervous or a bit unsure. Practising is one way of helping to calm your nerves, so running through your presentation in front of someone you trust might be a good way of getting feedback. You might consider looking at yourself in the mirror to see if you have any distracting mannerisms or habits. Most of us do! So if you fiddle with your watch, keep taking off your glasses, scratch your nose, or keep saying “um” before every sentence, be aware of it. These habits are not the end of the world, but ask yourself “would I be put off by that?” if someone was giving a presentation to you. If you would, try to do something about it.

You can take plenty of other steps to try to ensure that your talk will be well received. Here are a few tips:

- Try to sound enthusiastic – if you're not, why should the audience be bothered?
- Give them something – maybe a leaflet or sticker that you can hand out as a give-away.
- Varying the speed of the presentation can help to ensure that it doesn't become monotonous.
- Use stories, anecdotes and concrete, real-life examples to keep it interesting.
- Give a small number of very telling facts and figures – but don't overwhelm people with statistics.

- Try to maintain eye contact with people in the audience and keep your energy up right the way through.
- Get to the point quickly.

2.20 Involving the audience

One way of making your presentation interesting is by involving the audience; for example, by asking them a question or for a show of hands, or asking for personal anecdotes. But you need to be wary here. Some people may be willing to get involved, but you can bet that others won't. You want your audience to be relaxed and receptive to your message – making them nervous won't do you or them any good. Try to judge the mood.

Good delivery can make an average presentation a good one, so take some time to ensure you're well prepared.

2.21 To stand or not to stand?

Standing in front of a group of people is scary to many, but it helps to give you authority. If you do, remember to stand up straight and maintain some eye contact with people in your audience.

If you're really nervous, and if you're speaking to a small group of people, perhaps around a table, or in someone's house, then it's fine to sit down – and might look odd if you stood up. But if you're talking to large numbers in a room, some people may struggle to see you if you don't stand, which will do nothing to get your message across.

2.22 Tone

You don't have to be a communications expert to know that the way we speak has an impact on what other people think of us. It also affects the credibility of what we say. Whether we have a deep and sonorous voice or a squeaky high pitched one does make a difference. We make all sorts of assumptions based on our own upbringing and background if we hear a 'posh' accent or a 'working class' one; whether it's northern or southern. We may harbour prejudice one way or another and let this get in the way of the message being communicated.

But rather than worry too much about how you speak, or how anyone else speaks for that matter, you should concentrate on preparing the message and communicating it in the best possible way.

EXERCISE E

List three occasions when you had to speak in public

1.

2.

3.

How confident do you feel now if you have to speak in public?

Discuss in a small group some of the feelings - positive and negative - you feel when you give a talk or presentation. How do you deal with nerves?

EXERCISE F

Pick a topic you know about - it could be a hobby, a well known person, a TV show or a news item - and spend two minutes making brief notes. Use this structure:

- **Introduction - what the talk is about**
- **Middle - three or four main points**
- **Conclusion - sum up or make a call to action**

Now deliver the talk and take turns listening to and providing feedback to others in your group.

2.23 Remember

Don't forget PAM – the **Purpose** of your talk, who your **Audience** is and what **Message** you want to communicate.

Throughout your talk you need to constantly reinforce the relevance of your message.

- “This is important to you because...”
- “Here is an example of something that will help you...”

You should also remember the outcome you want to achieve – this is closely linked to your purpose. What is it that you want to happen next, after your presentation is finished? If you simply want to inform your audience of something, is there a way you can check that they've understood? If you want your audience to do something as a result, how can you check whether or not it's happening?

At the end of your presentation, as well as finishing on time, you should reinforce what you hope to happen next – even if it's just leaving your details so that people can get back in touch with you.

2.24 Comfortable with a computer?

Most presentations you do will probably be quite informal, where you simply talk to an audience with the help of a few notes.

If, however, you use a computer to help get your message across, you can take steps to ensure that your presentation is effective. One theory of communications says that we can take in and retain information if it is spoken to us, or if we read it – but not both at the same time. That is bad news for PowerPoint enthusiasts! So, if you are going to use a computer:

- Focus on the audience, not the screen.
- Don't stand in front of the screen.
- Ensure your slides are in the right order.
- Don't read out the content of the slides word for word, it's very boring.
- If using PowerPoint, learn animation, so that any bullet points come onto the screen one at a time – it's harder to concentrate on a visual and your voice at the same time.
- Give out any notes or copies of the presentation at the end.

SECTION 3: Crime prevention advice

Older people are susceptible to certain types of crime, and as a Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator, you have an important role in helping to communicate appropriate crime prevention advice.

As with any other crime prevention support and advice, you need to take care not to worry people unduly, but to educate and inform them of the risks and what they can do to minimise them. This is, perhaps, particularly important with older people.

NHW members have the opportunity to build trusting relationships with elderly neighbours. You are not there to do a risk assessment, but to be the friendly eyes and ears of the community.

Remember: it takes time to build a good, trusting relationship.

You should respect the language and lifestyle of your neighbours and deal with them in the way they would like to be dealt with, without making demands.

If appropriate, introduce yourself to family members or carers, so they know there is a friendly face nearby. Many elderly people have a routine, with carers visiting on regular days and times, which may help you to keep an eye out for them. If you see an unusual change in circumstances, report it to the police.

Case Study

Following a burglary of an older person, police in Hertfordshire carried out house to house enquiries. Neighbours reported seeing a white transit van parked outside the house during the day and knew this was not a vehicle belonging to a regular carer of the occupants. They were able to give detailed information about the arrival and departure time of the van, the driver and the direction of travel. These neighbours instantly recognised changes to the regular routine of their neighbours.

When a relationship has been built and mutual respect and a good rapport established, you will become more sensitive and more aware of the changing needs of your older and vulnerable neighbours. You are not there to do any form of social, health, risk or financial assessments.

Remember: You are a neighbour first and a Neighbourhood Watch member second.

EXERCISE G

Discuss ways in which you can help elderly neighbours to feel safe and secure. What are the possible warning signs that all may not be well?

3.1 Bogus callers

AgeUK believes that there is significant under-reporting of bogus callers to the police so the problem may be more common than statistics indicate.

As we've seen, older people in general are less likely to be victims of crime than other age groups, but bogus callers – also known as distraction burglars – do target the elderly with the aim of tricking their way into a private residence to steal money and valuables.

In years gone by, a lot of business was conducted at the front door, so this particular type of crime poses a greater risk for the elderly, who are often more familiar with door-to-door salesmen than younger people. National figures show that the 'average' victim of this type of crime is an 81 year-old woman, living alone and at home in the afternoon.

The main types of bogus callers older people face are:

- Fraudsters – taking money with no intention of doing the work
- Impersonators – callers impersonate officials, including council, social services and utilities staff, usually with fake ID
- Distraction thieves – one caller engages the householder at the front door while another sneaks into the house at the rear
- Overcharging workmen – a common scam is for a workman to offer to tar a drive and quote a price of, say, £50. After laying the tar (usually poor quality) he demands £50 per square yard – often £800 or more
- Pressure salesmen – this is a civil offence, which involves aggressive/ oppressive salespeople getting into the house and staying for hours to wear the householder down
- Bogus repairmen – often charging for roof work, tiling, guttering or landscaping, which is not needed, then either not doing it or doing it to a very low standard.

By providing the advice below, you can help potentially vulnerable older people in your area to reduce the risk of becoming a victim of crime and able to deal confidently with unsolicited callers.

Increasing your own awareness of these risks and what to watch out for will help you and other Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators to communicate them throughout your area.

3.2 Top safety tips

- **Lock:** Keep your front and back doors locked, even when at home.
- **Stop:** Think if you are expecting anyone. Check that the back door is locked and take the key out. Look through the spy-hole or the window to see who it is.
- **Chain:** If you decide to open the door, put the door chain or bar on first. Keep the bar or chain on while you are talking to the person on the doorstep. (Normally, when the door is shut and locked, leave the bar or chain off in case you need to get out in an emergency.)
- **Check:** Ask for and take the time to check their identity card. Call the company they say they are from using the phone directory. Don't call the number on the ID card as it may be fake.

Be extra cautious of callers who:

- Say they need help urgently.
- Ask you to step outside.
- Want to come in.
- Ask to make a phone call.
- Want to use your toilet.
- Ask for a glass of water.

Only go to help if you have someone else with you. Don't worry if you decide not to help – it is not rude or unfriendly.

The best advice is: **If in doubt, keep them out**

3.3 Do's and don'ts

As we've seen, some of these unwelcome callers may offer to do repairs or sell something. Sometimes these may be **rogue traders**, who try to force the elderly into all kinds of unnecessary building work at inflated prices.

To prevent this, the best advice you can give is to encourage people to:

- **Ask** friends or relatives to recommend builders or gardeners they have used before.
- **Obtain** quotes from two or three companies if you think work needs to be done in your home – don't agree to pay for work when someone knocks on your door.
- **Don't** keep large sums of money in the house; use a bank or building society.

If any elderly person believes that a bogus caller has called at their door, the best advice is to report it to the police immediately.

3.4 Password schemes

All utility companies should offer password schemes for elderly people – or anyone else for that matter – that can be set up so that when an official calls they will be expected to tell you the agreed password to prove that they are genuine.

For more details on password schemes and other free services, contact Energywatch on 0845 906 0708. Alternatively, your local Age Concern/Help the Aged (AgeUK) may be able to help. See the final section of this manual for contact details.

Case Study

Janet was called upon by two men offering to resurface her driveway.

“I answered the door and the older of the men explained that they'd been driving past and saw my drive needed some work doing on it. I couldn't see much wrong, but they made it sound urgent. I asked for a business card, but the one they gave me only had a mobile number on it and no address. I remembered I'd seen a story in the local paper about dishonest workmen charging as much as ten times their original estimate and driving one man to the building society to get the money out. I said I'd have to think about it and that my daughter was coming round later so I'd talk about it with her. I contacted Trading Standards afterwards and they said you should never use firms who cold call offering to do your drive or roof.”

Source: Age Concern

Sometimes callers may be trying to scam elderly householders. Scams can range from a hard sell on the doorstep of a 'new' product, or an attempt to sell services such as insurance or investments. Scams are also common via email, post and telephone.

As a Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator, you have a role to play in helping to prevent the elderly becoming victims – and even help to support those who have. Your contacts with the local police Crime Reduction Officer and Victim Support will be very useful at times like these.

Additional crime prevention advice

3.5 Lock up

Most break-ins are not the work of professional burglars. Many are carried out by opportunist thieves who get into homes through an open or insecure door or window.

When you go out:

- Be sure to lock all the outside doors and check that all the windows are closed whenever you go out, including garage doors and windows if you have one.
- Keep any ladders or garden tools locked away.
- Always keep keys in a safe place – not under the mat or on a piece of string; never leave keys in the locks or lying around the house.
- If you're out for the evening, leave a front room light on (not the hall). Draw the curtains, leaving a gap at the top so you can see the light from outside.

If you are going away on holiday:

- Remember to cancel milk, newspapers and other deliveries.
- Don't close curtains or blinds as they are a giveaway, especially during the day.
- If possible, ask a friend or neighbour to keep an eye on your home for you.

As a Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator, you should have a stock of useful leaflets and information that will help to bring the message home. Again, the local Crime Prevention Officer is a very useful source of information.

3.6 Protecting belongings

Good insurance cover will ease the financial worry of replacing stolen items. Many insurance companies offer reduced premiums for people with good home security and to members of Neighbourhood Watch schemes.

You can also encourage homeowners to mark their possessions and keep a record of serial numbers, putting them in touch with a supplier of this service and proving them with a window sticker.

3.7 Personal safety when out and about

Crimes in public places are rare, but elderly people can take steps to stay safe.

- Keep valuables out of sight and don't carry large sums of money or count money in the street.
- If you think you are being followed, keep moving and head for a busy area; tell someone what is happening or call the police. Shout loudly to attract attention in an emergency.
- Consider carrying a personal alarm.
- Try to wait for public transport in busy, well-lit areas.
- On a bus or train, you may feel safer if you sit near other people if possible; if someone makes you feel uncomfortable move away.

3.8 If a crime takes place

If an elderly person in your area does fall victim to a crime, the best advice you can give them is to call the police as soon as they can.

In the case of a burglary, do not go inside in case the intruder is still there, but call the police from a neighbour's phone and wait until they arrive. If you are sure the burglar has gone, you can go inside; but try not to touch anything and contact the police straight away.

After the police have gone make a list of missing items and contact the insurance company. If it asks for the crime reference number, you should be able to get it from the police the following day.

If an elderly person is robbed in the street, in addition to trying to give the police the best description possible, they should:

- Change the locks if any keys have been taken
- Cancel any stolen bank cards – the phone number should be on bank statements or the bank's cash point
- If a mobile phone is taken, contact the network and the police so it can be cancelled immediately.

3.9 When to call the police

You should call 999 if:

- There is a risk of injury or to life
- There is an immediate concern for safety or welfare
- There is a risk of serious damage to property
- You suspect a crime is in progress.

You should call your local non-emergency number:

- To contact your local police Watch Liaison Officer, Older Person Liaison Officer, local Police Community Support Officer or member of police staff. Not all areas will have all of these roles. As a Coordinator, you should ensure that you have quick access to all of the essential contacts in your area.
- For general police enquiries, advice and information.
- To report an incident or a crime that has happened (not an incident or crime in progress as this should be a 999 call).

3.10 Crime and the fear of crime

Older people are sometimes accused of 'worrying over nothing' when it comes to crime, because it is – mistakenly – believed that there is a wide gap between the levels of fear older people experience and their likelihood of falling victim. Some older people are at increased risk of some kinds of crime, while fear of crime can increase feelings of isolation and decrease involvement in the local community. Where older people are victimised, evidence suggests that the experience often worsens their health and well-being.

Neighbourhood Policing and the Policing Pledge are developments that put the local community and responding to local needs at the heart of crime prevention and response. Neighbourhood Watch is of course a vital partner in local efforts to reduce crime and the fear of crime, which will improve the quality of life for many elderly and vulnerable residents.

The evidence

So what does the evidence show us when considering older people and crime?

Survey findings on the impact the fear of crime has on older people are mixed. Some surveys have found high levels of concern about crime amongst older people, but the most recent British Crime Survey found that people over the age of 65 were **less likely** than average to perceive themselves as very or fairly likely to be victims of specific crimes.

Older people generally are less likely than the general population to report that fear of crime has had a significant impact upon their quality of life. However, this ignores the increased impact amongst those aged 65-74. A close to average proportion of this group reported that fear of crime has a high or moderate impact on their quality of life in the 2007/8 and 2008/9 British Crime Surveys.

These surveys also show:

- 8% of people aged 60+ in England and Wales say they live in fear of crime.
- As an age group, the 75+ group is least likely to have a high level of worry about burglary, car crime and violent crime.
- People aged 65-74 are less likely than the average to have a high level of worry about car crime and violent crime.
- Older people (aged 65+) are most likely to feel that crime is increasing “a lot” in the country as a whole. However, older people are no more likely to perceive a similar increase of crime at a local level 59.

The tables below, provide some more details.

Perceived themselves to be likely or fairly likely victim						
2008/9	Burglary		Car crime		Violent crime	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
All 16+	14%	19%	22%	25%	17%	17%
16-24	13%	20%	21%	26%	30%	26%
65-74	14%	14%	21%	21%	14%	15%
75+	10%	9%	13%	11%	9%	8%

2008/9	Perceive more crime across the country (a little more or a lot more)		Perceive more crime in local area	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
All 16+	70%	79%	34%	38%
65-74	77%	85%	29%	32%
75+	77%	83%	31%	33%

Source: British Crime Survey.

One factor that plays a part in the fear of crime is increased physical and mental frailty, which can increase the sense of vulnerability. As they become older, some older people may feel that their personal safety is no longer in their own hands.

An Age Concern survey about the Fear of Street Crime among older people found that this sense of vulnerability increased with age. For those aged over 75, the fear of crime was also mixed in with a fear of bikers and skateboarders – anything that might injure them or cause them to fall.

3.11 Increased isolation

Loneliness is another big factor affecting older people. The loss of a partner can severely affect an individual's confidence in their own abilities, but physical frailty also makes it much more difficult to travel to see friends and family, or participate in social events.

In the Age Concern survey, one in five of the respondents aged 75 and over said that they rarely see their friends and families because of the fear of crime. The same survey found that apart from Neighbourhood Watch and Crimestoppers, older people knew very little about any of the other crime prevention work being done by local authorities or police in their area. Often their knowledge and fear of crime was informed by local media stories.

A vicious circle can easily develop where individuals are scared to step out of their front door because of fear of crime, which fuels their isolation and in turn their fear of crime.

Case Study

Intergenerational Programme in Durham County

As part of a Community Safety Initiative to break down the barriers between younger and older people and reduce the fear of crime, one project enabled younger volunteers to interview older people about their experience of housing for a short documentary. Other projects included older volunteers spending the day with children at the 'Old Toy Room' in Preston Hall Park, showing them how to skip and use a spinning top whilst the children dressed up in Victorian clothes. The project also led to the creation of a play, which examined the issue of fear of crime, and the prejudices that older and younger people often feel towards each other.

Both groups are represented on a steering group, which supports the project. Proposals are always discussed first with prospective participants to ensure that it is something that will interest them and that they will want to do. The project is co-ordinated by Age Concern.

Source: Home Office

EXERCISE H

What can Neighbourhood Watch do to help reduce the fear of crime among elderly people?

Discuss what you do now - or could do in the future - and feed back in groups.

3.12 Victimization

The most recent figures show that older people are less likely to be victims of violent crime, burglary and theft from the person (see below).

2008/9	Violent crime		Burglary	Theft from person	
	Men	Women	Men and Women	Men	Women
All 16+	4.4%	2.1%	2.5%	1.0%	1.9%
16-24	13.2%	5.5%	7.2%	2.8%	3.9%
65-74	0.7%	0.4%	1.2%	0.2%	1.2%
75+	0.3%	0.2%	0.9%	0.6%	1.9%

Overall, older people are less likely than average to be victims of crime. But older people are at increased risk of some crimes, such as distraction burglary. In 2007-08, there were 10,635 recorded distraction burglary crimes. In 2008/9 women aged 75+ were at average risk of theft from the person.

3.13 Urban versus rural areas

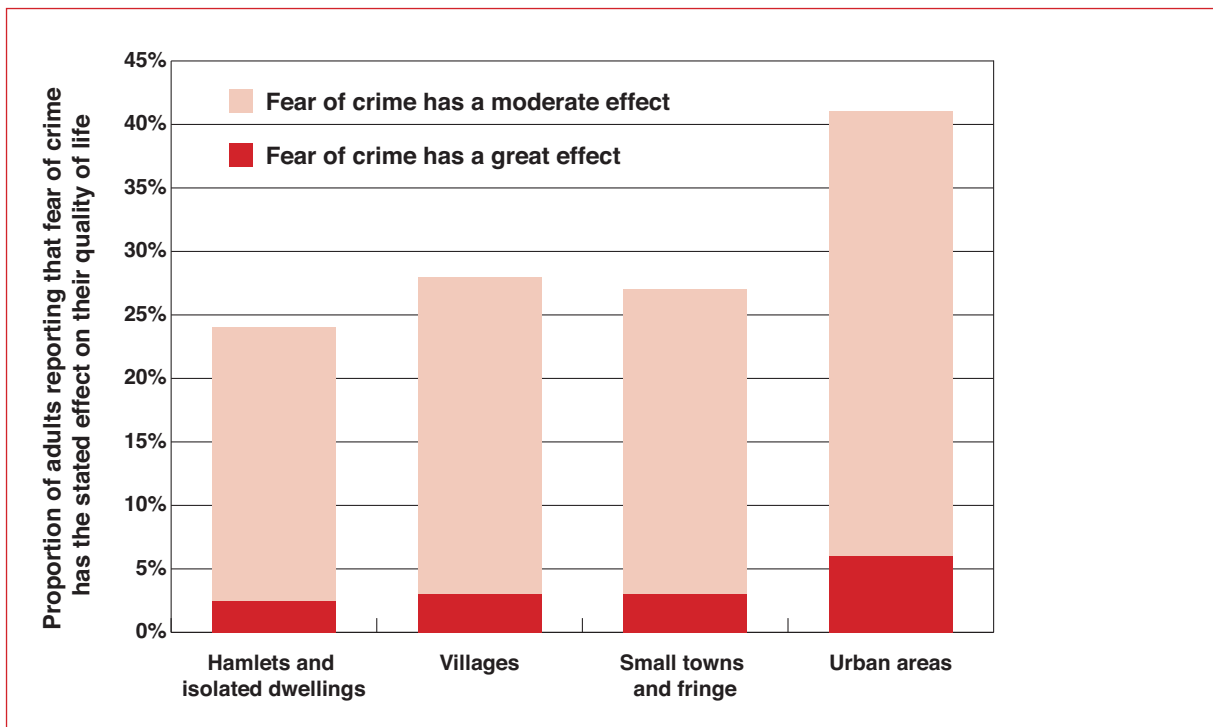
Crime and the fear of crime are higher in urban areas than rural areas – and highest of all in deprived areas.

A survey by Help the Aged – ‘Growing older in socially deprived areas’ – highlighted the lives of 600 people aged 60 and above living in the most deprived electoral wards of Liverpool, Manchester and Newham, East London. At the time, these were the most deprived local authorities in England. This found:

- 40% of respondents had been a victim of crime in the past year or two.
- 22% had experienced one type of crime; 12% two types; 6% three or more types.
- 28% had recent experience of property crime.
- 21% had experienced a break-in or attempted break-in of their homes.
- 18% had experienced vandalism to their property.
- 15% had experienced either assault or theft from their person.
- 11% had experienced theft from their person (that is, of something being carried in hands, pocket or bag).
- 3% had experienced a physical attack because of their ethnicity or religion.
- 4% had experienced a physical attack for any other reason.
- There was substantial variation in victimisation by ethnicity, with 59% of Pakistani, 56% of Indian and 49% of Somali respondents falling victim within the previous two years, as opposed to 34% of Black Caribbean and 39% of White respondents.

Other evidence backs up the claim that the fear of crime is lower in rural areas, as shown by British Crime Survey findings (see below).

Fear of crime in rural and urban areas



Source: British Crime Survey, Home Office; the data is the average for 2005/06 to 2007/08.

Recent evidence from the Commission for Rural Communities supports the idea that fear of crime also varies geographically and by income level, and is higher in urban areas than rural areas.

3.14 The impact of crime

While elderly people are less likely to be victims of most types of crime, burglary is a real cause for concern among women aged over 75. If elderly people do become burglary victims, whether 'ordinary' burglary or 'distraction' burglary through bogus callers, their health and well-being can be hit hard. For example:

- One Home Office study found that after two years, older burglary victims were 2.4 times more likely than other older people to have died or have entered residential care.
- A separate study found that 40% of distraction burglary victims reported that the incident had had a detrimental impact upon their quality of life.

While elderly people are generally at a much lower risk of being burgled, in high crime areas this risk can increase substantially. In these areas, repeat victimisation is not uncommon. One study of offenders found that some homes and other venues were returned to because of "low risks, high rewards and ease of access". This adds urgency to the work of Neighbourhood Watch to ensuring that those elderly and vulnerable receive good crime prevention advice and support.

We should not, however, fall into the trap of thinking that elderly people are especially gullible or naïve; sometimes ‘bogus callers’ may push past an older person, who may be frail or physically weaker than they are.

A current study, ‘Helping Aged Victims of Crime’, by University College London, is investigating the psychological impact of crime upon older people and ways of helping to reduce it. The head of the study said:

“Crime can wreak havoc on older peoples’ lives, with depression, anxiety and post traumatic stress disorder being the main psychological problems victims can experience. Such trauma may also produce social withdrawal and isolation that can have a negative effect on mental health.”

3.15 Anti-social behaviour

Over the past decade, initiatives to tackle anti-social behaviour have proliferated and the police and local authorities have been given new powers to help them deal with the problem.

An Age Concern survey found that nearly one in five elderly people had personally experienced verbal abuse or harassment on the street, but were often unsure what, if anything, they could do about it.

Anti-social behaviour covers a broad range of activities and circumstances, including:

- Nuisance neighbours
- Yobbish behaviour and intimidating groups taking over public spaces
- Vandalism, graffiti and fly-posting
- People dealing and buying drugs on the street
- People dumping rubbish and abandoned cars
- Begging and anti-social drinking
- The misuse of fireworks
- Reckless driving of cars or motorbikes.

Compared to younger generations, older people are likely to have lower perceptions of anti-social behaviour and have greater confidence in the police and other agencies to deal with the problem. However, the impact of anti-social behaviour on the lives of the elderly can be enormous – and the evidence suggests that they worry disproportionately about their chances of becoming a victim.

A key message for older people in your community is that they **do not have to suffer in silence**. The police, local authorities, social landlords and other agencies have tools and powers to tackle the kind of anti-social behaviour outlined above.

3.16 Where can you find help?

As a Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator, you can offer additional support and advice to elderly residents whose lives are blighted by anti-social behaviour. You should ensure that you know where you, your colleagues and the elderly people in your communities can go for help and support.

The directgov website <http://localcrime.direct.gov.uk> has recently been updated to provide easy access to information on tackling local problems and finding out who can help. This website has a postcode search, which enables you to find contact details of local police and anti-social behaviour coordinators.

The police and other agencies have various tools and powers they can use to tackle anti-social behaviour, with the goal of any action to:

- Protect victims, witnesses and the community
- Enable perpetrators to understand the consequences of their behaviour
- Make sure the perpetrator changes their behaviour.

Action can be started by the police, local authorities, registered social landlords, housing trusts and youth offending teams. Full details of the powers available are on the anti-social behaviour website: www.asb.homeoffice.gov.uk. The most common steps taken to deal with anti-social behaviour are outlined below:

- Warning letters and interviews, contracts and agreements
- Fixed penalty notices and penalty notices for disorder
- Parenting orders, individual support orders, noise abatement notices, injunctions, dispersal powers and Anti-Social Behaviour orders (ASBOs)
- 'Crack house' closure orders
- Possession proceedings against a tenant.

If you or someone in your area has reported anti-social behaviour, but do not feel that action has been taken, you can complain to your Neighbourhood Policing Team or local council through their complaints procedure, to your local councillor, and ultimately to the Local Government Ombudsman.

Case study – dealing with anti-social behaviour

A young man rented a block of maisonettes among a mature community of home owners in Solihull, some of whom were elderly and vulnerable. He cut down a tree to allow room for several old cars and took them to pieces on the grass verge outside the block, playing loud music as he worked on them.

His behaviour attracted more young people, who drove the cars, drank alcohol and were loud and aggressive to other residents, causing a great deal of worry and distress.

One resident complained to the Solihull Community Housing private sector Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) team, which installed a ‘Domehawk’ camera on a modified lamp column in the street, because of the severity of the disturbance. This helped to quieten the nuisance in the street, but it continued inside the property.

After a meeting with the ASB Officer, the landlord agreed to serve a ‘section 8 notice to quit’ under the Housing Act 1988, giving the tenant two weeks notice for breach of the tenancy agreement. Although the noise continued for two weeks, the tenant did leave without the landlord having to go to court – which the ASB team could have helped with if required.

As owner occupiers, the residents did not believe that they would receive any help, but the action has returned the cul-de-sac to a peaceful place to live and the landlord has used the experience to let his property in a more sensitive manner.

3.17 Community Payback

Elderly residents who may be victims of crime can have a say on how criminals pay back to their community through the Community Payback scheme run by the Probation Service. This is when criminals carry out work that benefits the community, such as removing graffiti. They also wear orange jackets so you can see that offenders are paying back for their crimes.

You can find out more about Community Payback at www.direct.gov.uk/localcrime

3.18 Neighbourhood Policing Teams

Many Neighbourhood Watch schemes work very successfully with the local police and other agencies and a key local contact for any scheme is your local Neighbourhood Policing Scheme. Not only can these be very valuable to your work, but you can also help them by bringing to bear your local knowledge and links with vulnerable older people and community groups in your area, creating a virtuous circle in which you share information for the wider benefit of your local community.

Priorities for neighbourhood policing are decided in partnership with local crime and disorder reduction partnerships (CDRPs), local authorities and other local organisations, so Neighbourhood Watch can have a telling influence.

Neighbourhood Policing Teams exist in every area in England and Wales, with the emphasis on visible targeted patrols and partnership working with local communities. They usually consist of uniformed police officers and, police community support officers, and may also involved special constables and community wardens, depending on where you live. A good working relationship with your team can help to improve public confidence and support and ultimately help to reduce crime and improve clear-up rates.

Crime reduction officers are often part of these teams and they are a great contact for home and personal safety and security issues. Put them in your contacts book.

Local police forces have all signed up to the **Policing Pledge**, a set of national standards, which commit the police to treating residents with dignity and respect, attending non-emergency calls from vulnerable people within an hour.

The Pledge also commits the police to provide crime maps for your area and information about local crime and what they are doing about it.

EXERCISE 1

Discuss in a group the agencies your Neighbourhood Watch deals with in your local community. Do you work with organisations that work with older people specifically? Are there any you don't work with? Feed back your findings

SECTION 4: Sources of information

A very wide range of organisations that work with older people or can provide information and advice exists throughout the country. This section of the pack provides contact details for many of these and should act as a useful reference point about a variety of issues.

Some of the contacts included here are primarily for older people themselves, but will still be useful for Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators to pass on.

4.1 Statutory bodies

The Audit Commission

The Audit Commission can provide information on the performance of your local council.

www.audit-commission.gov.uk/cpa

For further details about your neighbourhood, go to www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk

Consumer Direct

A Government-funded service, providing practical consumer advice.

Tel: 0845 404 0506 (lo-call rate)

www.consumerdirect.gov.uk

Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA)

A Government organisation that can pay money to people who have been mentally or physically injured because they were blameless victim of a violent crime.

Tel: 0800 358 3601 (free call)

Textphone: 0141 331 2287

www.cica.gov.uk

Directgov

The directgov website provides useful source of information for a wide range of issues and problems.

www.direct.gov.uk

To find out about your neighbourhood policing team, find your local non-emergency police number, or local anti social behaviour team, or to find out about community payback go to www.direct.gov.uk/localcrime

For further information on neighbourhood policing go to

www.neighbourhoodpolicing.co.uk

Home Office

The Home Office is the lead Government department for policing. Their website that includes statistics and information about crime and crime prevention.

www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk

The Home Office also publishes free booklets: *Be Safe, Be Secure: Your practical guide to crime reduction*; *How to beat the bogus caller*; and *A guide to home security*.

To obtain free copies, call 0870 241 4680 or download them from: www.homeoffice.gov.uk

Mailing Preference Service (MPS)

Free register for individuals who do not want to receive unsolicited sales and marketing contacts by post.

MPS registration line: 0845 703 4599 (lo-call rate)

www.mpsonline.org.uk

Ministry of Justice

The Ministry of Justice is responsible for the criminal justice system, including the courts and prisons, with the aim of protecting the public and reducing re-offending.

For general enquires contact:

Tel: (0)20 3334 3555

general.queries@justice.gsi.gov.uk

Further information is on the website: www.justice.gov.uk

NHS Direct

The NHS helpline provides health information and advice.

Tel: 0845 46 47

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

Office of Fair Trading

Promotes and protects consumer rights in various markets (links to Consumer Direct).

Tel: 0845 722 4499 (lo-call rate)

www.oft.gov.uk

The OFT publishes the leaflets *Scambuster: your guide to beating the scammers* and *How to Recognise a Scam*. Both are available on the website or obtainable free of charge by calling: 0800 389 3158 (free call).

To obtain copies, call 0800 389 3158 (free call) or visit www.oft.gov.uk

Office for National Statistics

The Office for National Statistics provides data about the UK's economy and society.

www.statistics.gov.uk

For statistics about older people visit:

www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=12348

Telephone Preference Service (TPS)

Free register for individuals who do not want to receive unsolicited sales and marketing contacts by telephone.

TPS registration line: 0845 070 0707 (lo-call rate)

www.mpsonline.org.uk/tps

Trading Standards

Run by local authorities, Trading Standards investigates complaints about goods and services and provides information and advice.

www.tradingstandards.gov.uk

Warm Front

The Warm Front scheme helps to make homes warmer, healthier and more energy-efficient.

Tel: 0800 316 2805 in England (free call)

Tel: 0800 316 2815 in Wales (free call)

Winter Fuel Payments Helpline

Contact the helpline if you are having problems paying your fuel bills.

Tel: 0845 915 1515

4.2 Voluntary Sector and other organisations

Citizens Advice

Citizens Advice provides free, confidential and independent advice from over 3,000 locations, including GP surgeries, hospitals, colleges, prisons and courts as well as local bureaux. Advice is available face-to-face and by telephone and most offer home visits and some provide email advice.

They can help with a very wide range of problems, including debt, benefits, housing, legal, discrimination, employment, immigration, consumer and other problems.

Tel: 020 7833 2181 (for local contact details only, not advice)

www.adviceguide.org.uk – provides reliable, up-to-date information

To find your local bureau in England or Wales go to www.citizensadvice.org.uk/index/getadvice

Home improvement agencies

These help older homeowners and private tenants to repair and improve their homes.

In England contact: Foundations

Tel: 01457 891909

www.foundations.uk.com

In Wales contact: Care and Repair Cymru

Tel: 029 2057 6286

www.careandrepair.org.uk

Master Locksmiths Association

The professional body, which can provide a free list of members.

www.locksmiths.co.uk

Safe Partnership

Safe Partnership can provide free, practical and immediate home security to older people who have been burgled or are in fear of being burgled. Contact them to find out if there is a local scheme in your area.

Tel: 0845 230 9090

www.safepartnership.org

The Suzy Lamplugh Trust

A charity specialising in personal safety. It produces a range of guides and personal safety products.

Tel: 020 7091 0014

www.suzylamplugh.org

Think Jessica

An anti-scam campaign, raising awareness of how 'scammers' try to con money out of the elderly and vulnerable.

www.thinkjessica.com

Victim Support

The national body that provides assistance to victims of crime. It has a regional network throughout England and Wales.

Helpline: 0845 30 30 900 (lo-call rate)

www.victimsupport.org.uk

4.3 Age Concern and Help the Aged

Age Concern Information Line – 0800 00 99 66 (free call)

Age Concern Cymru – 029 2043 1555 (national call rate)

HandyVan

This Help the Aged service provides help with obtaining and fitting security devices.

To find out if the service operates in your area call **01255 473999**.

Information guides

Age Concern provides a range of useful information guides, including:

- *Bogus callers: how to protect yourself* (ACIL27)
- *Living well in your neighbourhood* (ACIG13)
- *Protect yourself from scams* (ACIG17)

Free copies can be ordered through the online Information Guide order form
www.ageconcern.org.uk/AgeConcern/InformationGuidesOrder.asp

Insurance

Help the Aged operates an insurance scheme specifically for older people. For more information, call **intune** on 0800 41 31 80 (freecall).