



MARCH 2025



OUR NEWS

FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH SUPPORTERS ACROSS ENGLAND & WALES

What's in March's newsletter?

The spring sunshine is starting to appear, and there's plenty going on in local Neighbourhood Watch groups across England and Wales for us to share and celebrate. In this month's newsletter, you can read guidance on building strong passwords to protect your devices - it takes just three easy steps! BT share a guide on their Digital Voice initiative and how you can help those around you; ERA recommends ways to stay cyber secure; and Patlock share their online safety tips with you!

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We are delighted to welcome **Charmian Walker-Smith** to the Central Support Team, joining Neighbourhood Watch as the Head of Communications and Digital.

As a creative content specialist, she loves telling stories and helping people and organisations to communicate well. She previously led communications at [Kaleidoscope](#), a health and care consultancy. Earlier in her career she delivered press and public relations for the [Stroke Association](#), and managed events at [The Guardian](#).



Protect your Pa\$\$w0rd...

Home security doesn't just mean locking your doors and windows - protecting your digital devices with strong passwords is also important to keeping yourself and your personal data safe.

Perhaps you received a new phone or laptop at Christmas, or you want to help keep your family members digitally safe.

Creating a strong password doesn't need to be complicated. Using three simple steps, you can protect your devices and digital data...

1

Create a separate, strong password for your email. Your personal email account contains lots of important information about you and is the gateway to all your other online accounts, including banking, social media and online shopping. If your email account is hacked, all your other passwords can be reset, so it's important to use a strong password for your email, that is different to all your others.

2

Use 3 random words to build your password. Using three random words is the recommended way of generating passwords, as it's easier to remember and takes trillions of years for a computer algorithm to crack. Remember to not use obvious words like your surname or the names of your pets!

3

Use 2 factor or multi-factor authentication on your devices. Two-factor authentication is a free security feature that gives you an extra layer of protection online and stops cyber criminals getting into your accounts - even if they have your password. Two-factor authentication reduces the risk of being hacked by asking you to provide a second factor of information, such as getting a text or code when you log in, to check you are who you say you are.

Visit our website for more advice on building strong passwords to protect your digital devices!

Spotlight on your local NW groups

Litter picking in South Wales



A huge well done to the local Hawthorn Neighbourhood Watch group in South Wales, who shared tales from their litter picking efforts on 9th Feb: *“Quite a cold day yesterday, everyone else was tucked up inside watching Wales lose - again (but hey, not by so much and they did get a point too - so that's something). It wasn't raining or drizzling and we hardy souls were wrapped up warm, so enjoyed a good couple of hours out of doors. There were lots of big smiles and laughs about the odd items which were found: a pair of green plastic spectacles; two traffic cones (which were returned to where they had come from); a drain pipe; a large sheet of metal grille; two glasses; and a pair of pooey school trousers! It is amazing what you find, even on a short little street pick! Everyone enjoyed themselves and felt better for it afterwards. Thanks to everyone who came along!”*

Board games in Denholme, Bradford



Denholme's local Neighbourhood Watch group shared these images from their first board games morning: *“Our first games morning along side this mornings Denholme's Reports. Chess, dominoes, cake and conversation enjoyed by all. Already looking forward to next months.”* We love this wonderful community session, a great way to welcome neighbours of all ages and board game-abilities to come together!



Transitioning to digital landlines: everything you need to know

You may have heard that landlines are changing and that the UK's telephone network is going digital. These changes will affect everyone who has a landline they'd like to keep using. You needn't worry: for most people, the switch is incredibly simple. Here's what you need to know and how you can help friends or family members who may be concerned.

Earlier this year, BT and Neighbourhood Watch partnered to help communities navigate this change, particularly in rural and hard-to-reach areas, across England and Wales. With 250 events planned, our volunteers are busy raising awareness, answering questions and supporting the switch.

However, there's still work to be done to ensure everyone, particularly vulnerable people, know about the switch, what it means to them, what they need to do to prepare – and how you can help them.

That's why we're looking for your help in spreading the word. Here are four things to know about the switchover – and how you can help your loved ones:

1. **Now is the time to inform and educate:** ensure family members and friends understand the switch, why it's happening, and how to prepare. Households will receive at least four weeks' notice before switching.
2. **It's easy – and comes with added benefits, too:** switching is simple, requires no extra cost, and includes features like spam call blocking for enhanced security. BT's Enhanced Call Protect prevents around 20,000 scam calls a day.
3. **Notify us of their circumstances:** if you or someone you know has additional needs, a Telecare device or healthcare pendant, or feels they need extra support with the switchover, contact your home phone provider. Free engineer visits and battery backups are available to ensure a smooth transition.
4. **What if they don't have broadband?** A dedicated landline service will be provided to maintain traditional landline functionality without requiring broadband.

We're inspired by our volunteers' dedication to spreading awareness and ensuring everyone stays connected.

Have questions or need help? [Visit the Connected Together website](#) or if you're a BT customer, call 0330 1234 150.

Staying Cyber secure with ERA

ERA

With the rapidly increasing popularity of internet-connected home technology, cybercrime is a growing concern for many. While smart home devices can offer convenient solutions to everyday problems, vulnerabilities must be addressed – particularly when it comes to home security.



IoT Explained

The Internet of Things (IoT) is a network of connected smart devices and systems that enable data to be exchanged to provide innovative services. While the IoT enhances lives and businesses, its complexity also means that criminals may attempt to breach its security to steal data, hack devices, or even enter buildings.

Connected Smart Security

With ERA Protect, you have one system, working seamlessly via the fully integrated ERA Smart Home App – and being wireless, the system can be tailored to your needs, adding up to 96 additional accessories.

Dual path technology means your system will remain fully operational even if your internet is down, offering you ultimate security confidence. Fitted with GDPR compliant cloud storage, data is fully encrypted and tested to the British Standard Kitemark for IoT devices.

Choosing ERA to protect your home

Sumier Foster-Shah, Customer Service Manager at [ERA](#), explains “Accessible from anywhere in the world via a secure, encrypted system, the ERA Smart Home Alarm system works to provide round-the-clock monitoring and alerts, all stored securely to the cloud. With over 185 years of security experience combined with the latest technology and functionality, our customers know that they can have complete confidence in our smart security solutions.”



Patlock's guide to staying cyber secure

ANTIVIRUS SOFTWARE

When used together, firewalls and antivirus software help to block unauthorised access to your network while detecting and removing malware. certified software products can enhance cybersecurity and increase protection of your devices.

UPDATE SOFTWARE

Regular updates of your operating systems, browsers, and applications can protect against security vulnerabilities. This applies to phones, tablets, laptops and computers.

TWO FACTOR AUTHENTICATION

Enabling 2FA on your accounts adds an extra layer of security. This requires a second form of verification, such as a code sent to your mobile phone. You can also use an authenticator app to generate codes.

CYBER SECURITY

Cybersecurity is essential in today's digital age. Implementing robust security measures can safeguard sensitive data from unauthorised access and cyberattacks, helping to maintain privacy and confidentiality.

PUBLIC WI-FI

When accessing the internet on public Wi-Fi, a Virtual Private Network (VPN) will encrypt your data and protect your privacy. By masking your IP address, a VPN helps protect you from the risk of being targeted by hackers.

PASSWORDS

Create strong passwords for your online accounts and avoid using the same one across multiple sites. Consider changing them regularly and using a password manager to keep track of all your passwords securely.

EMAILS

Be cautious with emails: Phishing attacks are common and can compromise your data. Deleting emails from unknown senders can help reduce the risk of attack. Only click on attachments or download files if you trust the source.

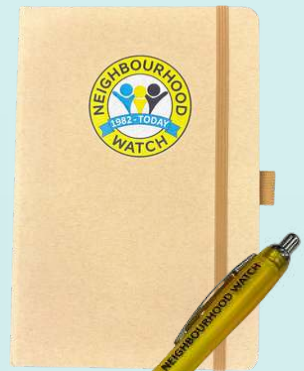


Information provided in association with



IT'S TIME TO GO SHOPPING!

We've launched some new products on the Neighbourhood Watch shop - have you bought yours yet? We've also restocked some of our most popular products, including window stickers and crime prevention booklets.



Don't miss out - go shopping now!