Evaluation of Neighbourhood Watch

Final report

July 2012
Contents

Glossary of terms ................................................................. 1
1. Executive summary .......................................................... 2
   1.1 Residents and co-ordinators – key findings ................................................. 2
      1.1.1 The operation of Neighbourhood Watch ................................................. 2
      1.1.2 Views on the effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch ............................ 3
      1.1.3 Relationships with stakeholders ......................................................... 4
   1.2 Stakeholders – key findings .......................................................... 5
      1.2.1 Involvement in Neighbourhood Watch scheme .................................... 5
      1.2.2 Effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch scheme ................................... 5
      1.2.3 Areas for improvement and development .......................................... 6
   1.3 Conclusions and recommendations .................................................. 6
      1.3.1 Reducing crime, the fear of crime and antisocial behaviour ..................... 6
      1.3.2 Enhancing the relationship between the police and the community and other partners/agencies ......................................................... 6
      1.3.3 Promoting community spirit .................................................................. 6
      1.3.4 Type of schemes ..................................................................................... 7
      1.3.5 Recommendations ................................................................................. 7
2. Introduction ................................................................................. 9
   2.1 Aims and objectives of the research .................................................... 9
3. Approach ...................................................................................... 10
   3.1 Group discussions ............................................................................... 11
      3.1.1 Recruitment of participants to groups .................................................... 11
      3.1.2 Topic guide design .................................................................................. 12
   3.2 Stakeholders in-depth interviews .......................................................... 13
   3.3 Quantitative surveys .............................................................................. 13
4. Residents and co-ordinators - Key findings ................................. 15
   4.1 The operation of Neighbourhood Watch .............................................. 15
      4.1.1 Why were the schemes developed? ....................................................... 15
      4.1.2 Awareness of Neighbourhood Watch scheme .................................... 16
      4.1.3 Contact with and involvement in Neighbourhood Watch Schemes ........ 17
6. Conclusions ........................................................................................................ 57
   6.1 Reducing crime, the fear of crime and antisocial behaviour ........................................ 57
   6.2 Enhancing the relationship between the police and the community and other partners/agencies ......................................................................................................................... 58
   6.3 Promoting community spirit .......................................................................................... 58
   6.4 Type of schemes ......................................................................................................... 59
   6.5 Recommendations ....................................................................................................... 60

Appendix A - Residents survey ................................................................................. 62
Appendix B - Stakeholders’ survey ............................................................................. 69
Appendix C - Topic guide ............................................................................................. 73

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## Glossary of terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NPTs</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Policing Teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPPs</td>
<td>District Policing Partnerships</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSPs</td>
<td>Community Safety Partnerships</td>
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<tr>
<td>NIPB</td>
<td>The Northern Ireland Policing Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘The Board’</td>
<td>The Northern Ireland Policing Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSNI</td>
<td>The Police Service of Northern Ireland</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSU</td>
<td>Community Safety Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>DoJ</td>
<td>Department of Justice</td>
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<td>PCSPs</td>
<td>Policing and Community Safety Partnerships</td>
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<td>PACT</td>
<td>Partners and Community Together</td>
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1. Executive summary

The Neighbourhood Watch Steering Group consisting of Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) and Community Safety Unit, Department of Justice (CSU, DOJ), commissioned Perceptive Insight to conduct qualitative research with residents of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes. This work was undertaken alongside quantitative surveys, conducted by the Policing Board’s statisticians who are on long-term loan from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), to obtain the views of residents, co-ordinators and other stakeholders. A further study was conducted by Dr. John Topping, University of Ulster to map Neighbourhood Watch Schemes across Northern Ireland.

The aim of the research was to assess the views and experiences of residents on the impact and effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch in relation to the following areas:

- Reducing crime, the fear of crime and antisocial behaviour;
- Assisting the local police in detecting crime;
- Enhancing the relationship between the police and the community and other partner agencies;
- Promoting community spirit; and
- How Neighbourhood Watch in Northern Ireland should be developed.

The qualitative research consisted of a total of eight focus group discussions with residents and co-ordinators of Neighbourhood Watch schemes. Three in-depth interviews were conducted with each of the organisations responsible for managing Neighbourhood Watch.

Overall 1,561 households were included in the sample for the residents’ survey of which 309 residents responded (20% response rate). In addition a second survey was conducted with scheme co-ordinators from which we received 289 responses and stakeholders including NPT (90), DPP (21) and CSP managers (20) from which we received 139 responses (this included 8 who did not provide details of their role). A total of 428 stakeholders and co-ordinators completed the survey.

1.1 Residents and co-ordinators - key findings

1.1.1 The operation of Neighbourhood Watch

The qualitative research shows that the majority of residents (89%) were aware that their area was part of a Neighbourhood Watch scheme. Of these 60% had been asked if they wanted to be included, 68% knew their co-ordinator and 62% knew how to contact them.

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1 Dr John Topping, University of Ulster, Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Watch - Participatory Mapping and Socio-demographic Uptake. [http://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/ni_neighbourhood_watch_good_8211_gis_mapping.pdf](http://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/ni_neighbourhood_watch_good_8211_gis_mapping.pdf)

2 NIPB, CSU, PSNI, Social and Market Research (SMR) in partnership with SRC and IRC. (2007). *Research into*...
Co-ordinators acknowledge that there can be some residents who are ‘hard to reach’ and are not interested in participating in Neighbourhood Watch. In a number of areas such as those with a strong republican background or where there are organised antisocial activities, there are residents who are not in favour of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.

Three in ten residents were aware of a Neighbourhood Watch meeting taking place in their area and of this group half had attended the meeting. The majority of people who attended regarded the meeting as useful. The qualitative research revealed that co-ordinators varied in their approach to holding meetings with some including Neighbourhood Watch as part of a wider regular community meeting, others held them on a regular basis, some on a ‘as and when required’ basis and others very infrequently.

Half had received written information on their Neighbourhood Watch scheme, which the vast majority (96%) found helpful. The qualitative research identified that co-ordinators use a variety of methods to promote their scheme including newsletters, texts, emails, posters, signs, stickers, alarms, and social media.

1.1.2 Views on the effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch
When asked residents were most likely to say that the key purpose of Neighbourhood Watch is reducing crime, reporting crime and reducing antisocial behaviour. However, the majority did not know how effective the scheme was across each of these areas. Residents were most likely to say that it was effective in reducing the fear of crime (31%) and reducing antisocial behaviour (28%). Co-ordinators were more likely to comment on the effectiveness of the scheme. They were most likely to say it was effective in relation to improving relations with NPTs (73%), increasing awareness of NPTs (72%) and reporting of crime (70%).

Almost all schemes reported that crime and antisocial behaviour were issues in their area when Neighbourhood Watch was established and had decreased since it had been in operation. A small number of participants from urban areas reported that crime and the fear of crime was still very much an issue despite the presence of Neighbourhood Watch.

The majority of residents (86%) said that they feel very or quite safe in their local community. This is similar to the findings from the 2007 survey\(^2\). Almost all who took part in the discussions felt that Neighbourhood Watch contributes to reducing the fear of crime due to the presence of the co-ordinators and because the signs are in place.

Over half of residents (52%) said that they would report a concern about crime or safety to their local NPT and 44% would report it to their co-ordinators. The qualitative research showed that while some residents would contact police directly, others would inform their co-ordinator of any concerns that they have – some would do both. Most believed the best way to help police to detect crime is to be vigilant as a community.

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Promoting community spirit was viewed as one of the major benefits of Neighbourhood Watch; however some schemes were better at managing this than others. To a large extent the promotion of community spirit was dependent upon the ‘enthusiasm’ of the co-ordinator and their assistants and the ‘buy-in’ from the community for Neighbourhood Watch. A few schemes used Neighbourhood Watch to develop links between older and younger residents.

1.1.3 Relationships with stakeholders

Figures from the quantitative survey show that just less than half of residents (46%) were aware of DPPs, 45% of NPTs and 24% of CSPs. 11% were aware that DPPs and CSPs will be replaced by PCSPs in 2012 and 13% were interested in becoming a member of PCSPs.

During the focus group discussions all schemes reported that they have links with the police, with most reporting an excellent relationship. Most co-ordinators have either a direct line or mobile number for their community officer. Some spoke positively of informal visits to their area from PSNI. However other co-ordinators said that they don’t receive as many telephone calls or visits as they expected based on the discussions they had with those at an operational level when the scheme was established. Others reported that it can be difficult to get through to their police contacts. Most praised the way in which Neighbourhood Watch has strengthened relationships with police compared to 10-20 years ago, but still wanted more visible policing on the ground. It was reported that there are some areas in which residents, who do not want their activities noticed, are resistant to Neighbourhood Watch.

A number of co-ordinators highlighted that a lack of consistency with the level of support they receive over time was an issue for them. Initially resources such as signs, alarms and leaflets were supplied and communication with those on an operational level was more frequent but was said to have lapsed as time has gone on. Some reported that broken and vandalised signs had not been replaced. Co-ordinators thought this reflected a lack of confidence in the scheme; with others saying that signs had not been erected in the first place.

Some co-ordinators said that funding for printing of leaflets and facilitation of meetings was an issue for their scheme to support their day-to-day operation.

The lack of feedback on the impact of Neighbourhood Watch, for example on whether reported incidences of crime had been resolved, led some to question whether the initiative was successful.

A number of co-ordinators expressed the view that if PSNI are not seeing a direct return from schemes such as the successful detection of crime or provision of information which can lead to the detection of crime then these schemes do not obtain the same levels of resources and support. They highlighted that residents stop going to meetings when the antisocial behaviour is reduced, and that PSNI interpret this as a lack of support for the scheme from the community. Others believed that PSNI do not fully recognise the time and resource that they put into Neighbourhood Watch and that they are an untapped resource which the police could use further.
One group debated the tripartite structure of Neighbourhood Watch and its impact on the three organisations taking responsibility for the development of the initiative.

1.2 Stakeholders - key findings
1.2.1 Involvement in Neighbourhood Watch scheme
Findings from the in-depth interviews with the three partners, Department of Justice Community Safety Unit (CSU), PSNI, and the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) showed that the partners viewed the operational structure of Neighbourhood Watch as one of its strengths, because it harnesses voluntary resources from communities, for the benefit of communities and with a minimum of bureaucracy. They viewed their role as providing support to assist communities to deliver a scheme which meets their needs.

Neighbourhood Watch stakeholders (ie. CSPs, DPPs and NPTs at the local District level) were also surveyed. When asked how supportive they were of Neighbourhood Watch, six in ten stakeholders (60%) said that they were very supportive of Neighbourhood Watch, with support more likely to come from CSPs (75% saying very supportive), than DPPs (71% saying very supportive) and NPTs (52% saying very supportive). (NB. Low number of responses 139 stakeholders, 20 CSPs, 21 DPPs and 90 NPTs).

Stakeholders were most likely to believe that Neighbourhood Watch was effective in increasing awareness and relations with NPTs (78%) and reducing the fear of crime (68%). Reducing crime (46%), improving relations with other agencies (46%) and antisocial behaviour (52%) were less likely to be rated as areas in which Neighbourhood Watch was effective.

1.2.2 Effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch scheme
The three lead partners highlighted that there have been reductions in levels of crime and antisocial behaviour but that attributing this to Neighbourhood Watch was not appropriate as it is difficult to measure causality. It was acknowledged that Neighbourhood Watch is very likely to reduce the fear of crime and provide community assurance/reassurance but questioned how this can be accurately measured. They saw reducing the fear of crime as one of the most achievable and beneficial strengths of the initiative going forward.

Over half of stakeholders (53%) believed that Neighbourhood Watch assisted local police in detecting crime and 60% thought it was effective in the reporting of crime. Through the depth interviews PSNI said that Neighbourhood Watch provides officers with a picture of what is happening at a local level and this contributes to the detecting of crime.

All partners commented that creating links between the police and the community is not only a positive result of the scheme now but an opportunity that could be developed and exploited as the initiative moves forward.

59% of stakeholders believe that Neighbourhood Watch effectively promotes community spirit and 63% said that it effectively increases awareness of needs within the community.
1.2.3 Areas for improvement and development
The three partners highlighted a number of areas for the improvement and development of the scheme. These included:

- Promoting inter-generational contact by providing opportunities for older and younger members of the community to come together;
- The opportunity to develop the use of technology to effectively communicate to and within schemes; however a balance needed to be achieved keeping older residents on-board;
- Integrating Neighbourhood Watch with other community based initiatives such as Church Watch and School Watch;
- Making effort to keep bureaucracy to a minimum;
- Improving communications to provide feedback on the impact of Neighbourhood Watch, promote the benefits of Neighbourhood Watch as well as promotion of the overall scheme to the wider population, to enhance communication between stakeholders;
- Keeping schemes smaller as they are easier for the co-ordinator to manage effectively;
- Incorporating Neighbourhood Watch within the new PCSPs structures.

1.3 Conclusions and recommendations
1.3.1 Reducing crime, the fear of crime and antisocial behaviour
While it is difficult to assess conclusively the impact that Neighbourhood Watch is having on reducing crime, the fear of crime and antisocial behaviour, there is the perception that it is contributing to each of these areas. It appears to be particularly successful in reducing the fear of crime and in deterring antisocial behaviour. While it was viewed as successful by most schemes other schemes have experienced resistance to the Neighbourhood Watch initiative, where its impact appears to have been less.

1.3.2 Enhancing the relationship between the police and the community and other partners/agencies
Many positive examples were given of how Neighbourhood Watch contributes to enhancing the relationship between the police, the community and other partners and stakeholders. The co-ordinator plays an important role in facilitating the relationships and the success of Neighbourhood Watch in an area depends on their level of commitment to the scheme. Looking forward there is an opportunity for PSNI to identify areas in which they would like to further enhance their relationship with the community and to consider Neighbourhood Watch as a way of building those links.

1.3.3 Promoting community spirit
In schemes where there is an active and enthusiastic co-ordinator it appears that Neighbourhood Watch has successfully contributed to generating greater levels of community spirit. Saying that there are a number of areas where Neighbourhood Watch has not been as successful in building community spirit due to the attitudes of some residents who are not supportive of the initiative.
1.3.4 Type of schemes
Through the research a number of types of schemes were encountered, each with its typical characteristics, and level of commitment to Neighbourhood Watch. They include new schemes, dormant schemes, urban residential schemes, urban village schemes, rural village schemes and rural networks.

1.3.5 Recommendations
Neighbourhood Watch is an initiative that has a set resource available to it, and yet the number of schemes has been growing year on year. Having described the various types of schemes it is clear that each type contributes to some extent in achieving the aims of Neighbourhood Watch and requires a different level of support to enable/empower it to do so.

1. It is recommended that as the new PCSPs are responsible for working to improve community safety, consideration is given to the future role of PSCPs in supporting, funding and developing NW schemes.

2. It is recommended that consideration, at the local level is given towards undertaking a review of each scheme to evaluate its ‘type’ and to decide on the appropriate level of resource/support required to most effectively meet the aims of Neighbourhood Watch.

Stakeholders and scheme members both recognise the potential Neighbourhood Watch has in terms of building relationships with the police and in doing so reducing the fear of crime. Also there are some areas within Northern Ireland where building relationships with PSNI is more challenging than others.

3. It is recommended that Neighbourhood Watch continues to be a strategic priority in enhancing and building relationships between police and the community.

4. It is recommended that consideration at the local level is given to promoting Neighbourhood Watch within difficult to reach areas that would particularly benefit from enhanced relationships with PSNI and other stakeholders.

Consistency/commitment over time has been highlighted as an issue for some schemes and some areas. Those schemes, which have been established more recently, appear to be receiving support and meeting Neighbourhood Watch objectives such as reducing the fear of crime more effectively than older schemes. Also there appears to be some inconsistencies across schemes as to the support and level of communication they receive on the ground.

5. It is recommended that consideration at the local level is given as to how co-ordinators and their assistants can be further empowered to deliver Neighbourhood Watch within their communities. Recognition, enhancement and empowerment of this important volunteer resource, will benefit the future effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch, and consideration should be given to:
   o their training/on-going support;
   o communicating the role of all stakeholders; and
- providing examples of good practice.

6. It is recommended that consideration at the local level should be given to managing expectations of co-ordinators as to the amount of support/communication/contact they will receive over time.

During the research we encountered many co-ordinators each with different skills, experience and levels of commitment and enthusiasm.

7. It is recommended that consideration is given to the production of a set of good practice guidelines for scheme co-ordinators. It is envisaged that these guidelines could be produced by facilitating a working group of co-ordinators from schemes viewed as being successful. Key elements of the guidelines will include identifying the roles and responsibilities of the post and relationships with all the stakeholders.
2. Introduction

Neighbourhood Watch is one of the largest and most well-known crime prevention initiatives. The scheme encourages being a good neighbour and helps to bring communities closer together. Neighbourhood Watch is a method of developing close liaison between households in a neighbourhood, the local police and other relevant agencies.

The aim of Neighbourhood Watch is to empower local areas so that they can protect themselves and their property and to reduce the fear of crime and antisocial behaviour in their community through:

- improved home security;
- greater vigilance;
- fostering community spirit; and
- improving their environment.

Neighbourhood Watch was launched in Northern Ireland in June 2004. The scheme is promoted, supported and endorsed at a strategic level by a partnership between the Department of Justice Community Safety Unit (CSU), the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB). At an operational level, this is done through Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), PSNI District Command Units and District Policing Partnerships (DPPs).

At 11 August 2011, there were over 635 accredited schemes, covering approximately 43,000 households in almost all District Council Areas (a number of new schemes were going through the accreditation process).

The Neighbourhood Watch Steering Group commissioned Perceptive Insight to conduct qualitative research with residents of Neighbourhood Watch schemes. This work was undertaken alongside quantitative surveys, conducted by the Policing Board’s statisticians who are on long-term loan from the Northern Ireland statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), to obtain the views of residents, co-ordinators and other stakeholders.

2.1 Aims and objectives of the research

The aim of the research was to assess the views and experiences of residents on the impact and effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch in relation to the following areas:

- Reducing crime, the fear of crime and antisocial behaviour;
- Assisting the local police in detecting crime;
- Enhancing the relationship between the police and the community and other partners/agencies;
- Promoting community spirit; and
- How Neighbourhood Watch in Northern Ireland should be developed.
3. Approach

In this section we have identified the key steps that were undertaken in the successful implementation of the project. The Policing Board’s statisticians’ quantitative survey research approach steps can be seen in the blue sections of the diagram.

- **Planning**
  - Agree overall approach to the project
  - Collect relevant background information
  - Agree timetable and deliverables

- **Design**
  - Design topic guide
  - Questionnaire design
    - Sample design

- **Implementation**
  - Arrange venues
  - Recruit participants
  - Undertake group discussions
  - Implement surveys of residents, coordinators and stakeholders
    - Monitor progress
    - Input data

- **Analysis and reporting**
  - Identify key themes
  - Identify supporting quotes
  - Combine qualitative research and quantitative survey findings and results
  - Draft report

- **Project outputs**
  - Final report with key findings and recommendations
3.1 Group discussions

Eight focus group discussions were conducted with residents and co-ordinators. The groups were conducted in each of the eight policing districts and in areas in which Neighbourhood Watch schemes operate. Each group contained a combination of schemes to draw together as wide a range of views as possible.

Figure 3.1.1: Policing Districts

3.1.1 Recruitment of participants to groups

Initially the aim of the research was to conduct the focus group discussions with residents of Neighbourhood Watch areas. The recruitment of participants to the group discussions was to be undertaken through scheme co-ordinators. However, this proved problematic, with many of the co-ordinators who were approached unable or unwilling to assist in the recruitment. Some of the issues with recruitment included:

- Conflict of timetables;
- Lack of interest from residents;
- Lack of commitment to attend from residents;
- Scepticism of the research; and
- Lack of enthusiasm from some co-ordinators.

This prompted a change in the group structure for the groups to then include residents, co-ordinators and in some cases stakeholders. A break down of the achieved group structure can be seen in Table 3.1.1.
Table 3.1.1: Group structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Number of schemes in attendance</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>Time in operation</th>
<th>Participants role in NWS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>Residents only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>Co-ordinator and residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 ½ years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Co-ordinators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Co-ordinators and residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2-3 years</td>
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<td>3-4 years</td>
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<td>4-5 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2-3 years</td>
<td>Co-ordinators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>Co-ordinators and residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Residents only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Co-ordinator and residents</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>Co-ordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>DPP and CSP members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.1.2 Topic guide design

Based on the terms of reference for the study a topic guide was designed for the group discussions with residents. The topic guide was structured to capture the following information:

- Overview of how the scheme operates;
- Level of participation;
- Frequency of meetings;
- Extent to which crime and antisocial behaviour is an issue in the area;
- Extent to which the fear of crime is an issue;
- Incidence of helping police detect crime;
- Exploration of the relationship between the community and stakeholders;
- Influence of Neighbourhood Watch on the promotion of community spirit; and
- Development of Neighbourhood Watch.
3.2 Stakeholders in-depth interviews
Three in-depth interviews were also conducted with Neighbourhood Watch stakeholders; DoJ, NIPB and PSNI.

A topic guide was structured to capture the following information:

- Stakeholder role in Neighbourhood Watch;
- Overview of Neighbourhood Watch - is it achieving its objectives?;
- Extent to which it reduces crime and antisocial behaviour;
- Extent to which it reduces the fear of crime;
- Incidence of helping police detect crime;
- Enhancing relationships between the community and other stakeholders;
- Promoting community spirit; and
- The development of Neighbourhood Watch.

3.3 Quantitative surveys
The quantitative surveys, the results of which are included in this report, were undertaken by the Policing Board’s statisticians with the support of Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs).

Twenty-eight Neighbourhood Watch (NW) schemes were randomly selected from the 635 accredited schemes in existence throughout Northern Ireland at August 2011 (5 of these schemes had been included in the 2007 evaluation). These Neighbourhood Watch schemes were spread across 18 different policing areas throughout Northern Ireland, covering both urban and rural areas. The chosen schemes were stratified by size in relation to the number of households in each scheme (small 1 to 49, medium 50-200 and large 201 plus).

Overall 1,561 households were included in the sample of which 309 residents responded. This gave a response rate of 20%. Of those who responded over half (51%) were female and 40% were male (9% did not answer). Fifty six percent stated their religion as Protestant, 23% as Catholic and 16% did not answer. Forty three percent were aged 61 and over, while one third (33%) were aged 41-60.

NPTs delivered the questionnaires to the Neighbourhood Watch scheme co-ordinators, who in turn delivered the questionnaires to each household in their Neighbourhood Watch scheme (See appendix A for questionnaire). Householders could choose to complete the survey online, via a link contained within the paper questionnaire. Neighbourhood Watch scheme co-ordinators collected completed questionnaires and returned them to their NPTs, who forwarded them to PSNI’s Community Safety Branch.

In addition a second survey (See appendix B for questionnaire) was conducted with scheme co-ordinators, from which we received 289 responses, and stakeholders including NPT (90), DPP (21) and CSP managers (20) from which we received 139 responses in total. A total of 428 stakeholders and co-ordinators completed the survey (of which 8 did not provide their role). The results of the quantitative survey of stakeholders show that 65% were from NPTs,
15% were DPP and 14% CSP. 6% of respondents did not state what role they were involved in within Neighbourhood Watch.

**Figure 3.3.1: Roles within Neighbourhood Watch (stakeholders)**

The results from both the qualitative and quantitative stages of the research have been combined and are presented in this report.
4. Residents and co-ordinators - Key findings

In this section the key findings are presented from both the quantitative and qualitative research that was undertaken with residents and co-ordinators. Within each subsection the survey findings are detailed followed by a more detailed discussion of the issues as identified through the discussions. (See appendix C for sample questions for focus groups) The detail of the findings are structured under each of the following key headings:

4.1 The operation of Neighbourhood Watch
4.2 Views on the effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch
4.3 Links with stakeholders

4.1 The operation of Neighbourhood Watch

The qualitative focus group discussions were undertaken with a wide range of scheme types as described in Section 2. While some had been established for up to eight years, others had come on board more recently. Most schemes had been operational for three to five years. The location of schemes varied with some urban and others rural. There was also a mix of private and public housing within the range of schemes that participated. Given this diversity in the schemes it is perhaps not surprising that they were established for a range of reasons.

4.1.1 Why were the schemes developed?

The qualitative discussions revealed that the main reasons for setting up a Neighbourhood Watch scheme included:

- Antisocial behaviour or crime in the scheme area.
  
  “Our scheme was established after an incident of antisocial behaviour.”

- An already active member of the community developing their role to become a Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator with the aim of building community spirit.

  “…<Neighbourhood Watch was created>… just to improve neighbour relations.”

- Some had heard of other successful schemes; and

  “The reason why we set it up was to be proactive rather than reactive. My sister and brother in law in England, they had a Neighbourhood Watch in their particular area.”

- Some were approached by their local NPT.
“It was established primarily because I was asked by the neighbourhood policing officer. He took the opportunity to enquire whether we would be interested in it after an incident that I had reported to him and I was keen to do so because the previous two years I had seen a crazy amount of antisocial behaviour and drinking.”

4.1.2 Awareness of Neighbourhood Watch scheme

Around nine in ten respondents to the survey (89%) were aware their household was located in an area covered by a Neighbourhood Watch scheme. Of those who were aware of this:

- 3 out of 5 respondents (60%) stated their household had been asked to be included in their local Neighbourhood Watch scheme;
- 2 out of 3 respondents (68%) knew who their local Neighbourhood Watch scheme co-ordinator was; and
- 3 out of 5 respondents (62%) knew how to contact their local Neighbourhood Watch scheme co-ordinator.

Figure 4.1.1: Awareness of Neighbourhood Watch (residents)

As might be expected, given the methodological approach to the qualitative research, most participants in the focus groups were aware that their neighbourhood was part of a scheme; however there were a few participants who said that they were not aware that they lived in a Neighbourhood Watch area. Rather they believed that they were representing a community association.

It was acknowledged among some of the co-ordinators that there are ‘hard to reach’ parts of their communities and that this impacts on overall awareness of their scheme within the neighbourhood. The reasons given by both residents and co-ordinators for a lack of awareness were as follows:
Residents keeping to themselves or not interested in Neighbourhood Watch;
Lack of promotion from the co-ordinator;
Lack of support for the promotion of the scheme;
Unmanageable size of scheme; and
Part of another community safety group which runs alongside Neighbourhood Watch but unaware of Neighbourhood Watch itself.

Co-ordinators reported that, at an overall level, there was a lack of awareness and promotion of what a Neighbourhood Watch scheme is and this was a major issue for them to overcome in getting the community involved in their scheme.

“When we sent round a letter initially asking the neighbourhood would they be interested in setting up, a number of people wrote on their reply slips ‘I’m too old to be doing midnight patrols’ [laughs]. I think they thought we were looking for teams of people to walk around.”

“I’m unaware of the various services Neighbourhood Watch can provide for me or how I can get more involved.”

“I didn’t even know we were part of Neighbourhood Watch, I thought it was a Community Association meeting.”

4.1.3 Contact with and involvement in Neighbourhood Watch Schemes
Over one third of residents (36%) reported through the survey that they had contact with their local Neighbourhood Watch scheme. Of these 111 respondents, 97% found the contact helpful or very helpful, while only 3 residents did not find the contact helpful (Figure 4.1.2).
The results of the survey of residents also showed that one in eight respondents (13%) were involved in some way with their local Neighbourhood Watch scheme. The main ways in which these 40 respondents were engaged were ‘involvement in meetings with Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators’ (19), ‘promoting the scheme in the local community’ (17), ‘involvement in meetings with Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs)’ (17) and ‘working with other bodies: community / voluntary groups’ (11).
When we spoke to residents as part of the group discussions most of them reported that they were happy with their co-ordinator taking the lead in the operation of the scheme and having contact with them on a need-to-know basis. They said that they preferred not to get directly involved with the operation of the scheme, emphasising the importance of a proactive and enthusiastic co-ordinator.

“A lot of neighbours of mine don’t want to be the voice of it. They want to lead their wee lives but they’re happy that they’re part of it.” - (Resident)

“We don’t have any meetings but our co-ordinator is very good and she would just keep us informed by ringing us.” - (Resident)

“There are some people who just don’t want to get involved.” - (Co-ordinator)

“They don’t particularly want to get involved in the sense that they do know they can speak to me and can express to me and are very happy with the Neighbourhood Watch scheme in place and it is possible to flag up any difficulties with me” - (Co-ordinator)

“It’s more or less if you want to do it you can do it.” - (Co-ordinator)

Other schemes have more proactive members who are seen as a form of support for the co-ordinator, although these are fewer in number. It was recognised by some that this kind of support is needed to take further advantage of opportunities which Neighbourhood Watch can provide.
“I more or less help the co-ordinator out and go round the doors with leaflets and so on. We work as a team.”

“There could be more done. There are a lot of missed opportunities but we can’t leave it up to two people to do everything. We need more people involved.”

4.1.4 Attendance at meetings

The survey results show that three in ten residents (31%) were aware of Neighbourhood Watch scheme meetings organised in their local area. Of these 97 respondents, over half (52%) stated the meetings were organised by the Neighbourhood Watch scheme co-ordinator, almost one quarter (24%) said they were arranged by the NPT, 16% by the DPP and 13% by the CSP.

Figure 4.1.4: Awareness of meetings with Neighbourhood Watch scheme (residents)

From the 31% of residents who were aware of meetings, just over half had attended a meeting (51%). Of those who did not attend a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme meeting the main reasons given included it being at an unsuitable time (71%) and a lack of interest (10%).
Almost all (48 of the 49 who had attended a meeting) found the meeting helpful or very helpful, while only one respondent found it not at all helpful.

The qualitative research revealed that the frequency of meetings across schemes ranged dependant on the pro-activity of the co-ordinator and the willingness of residents to participate. Those who were part of more active schemes reported that they tended to hold meetings more frequently. Those in less active schemes held meetings less often or not at all. This often occurred as members became complacent about antisocial behaviour in the area and were happy to hear from the co-ordinator on a need to know basis. Others reported meeting as and when necessary to report on specific progress.

“I don’t meet with my neighbours every month, I have never met my neighbours every month. My communication happens when I feel there’s something important they need to know.”

“Then there’s meetings held every now and again to see what progress is being made, to talk over what is being done and what could be done.”

People don’t have as many problems now so that’s why they don’t attend meetings.”

Some of those who took part in the discussions said that their scheme held meetings as part of other resident association meetings. These tended to occur monthly or less often. Most of these residents and co-ordinators said they found these meetings to be useful, it was said to help address wider local issues of antisocial behaviour and crime. In these cases most co-ordinators are happy for other groups they are involved in to play a supportive role for Neighbourhood Watch especially in areas with high levels of antisocial behaviour.
“We run things as a combination of Neighbourhood Watch and the association.”

“I don’t think as far as Neighbourhood Watch we have any problems with Partners and Community Together (PACT). We have a number of MLAs, local council people who would attend the meetings on a fairly regular basis so there is all of that contact but not on the Neighbourhood Watch side. But I think that Neighbourhood Watch and the PACT are nearly for me, two arms of the one body, and they work together and intertwine. Between them all you get the job done and you have your direction from the politicians through the PACT.”

“Because it’s a rural area really, and so little happening, generally monthly the community meeting is more than adequate for anything that you hear.”

Some of the co-ordinators mentioned that there were wider meetings run by NPTs or DPPs. Both co-ordinators and members were said to be invited to these meetings however very few residents said they actually attended. It was reported that these occurred every quarter if not more often. One scheme co-ordinator thought these meetings should occur more often.

“We need communication from police to us co-ordinators. It needs to go back to how it was run, it was supposed to have weekly meetings.”

“There are other mechanisms, you have your DPP, you go to the public meetings if there are policing issues, but at the network we can raise policing issues because we always invite the PSNI to attend a network meeting.”

There was a mixed response as to whether or not these wider meetings were useful. Some said they found the meetings to be too bureaucratic and expressed the view that it was a tick box exercise. Some co-ordinators felt that they were often ignored or asked to speak privately after the meeting and expressed issues with having to submit written questions.

“Meetings are content free. They involve saying ‘look how well we are doing’ and if people try to criticise things then the police laugh them down.”

Others found the meetings helpful and saw them as a great opportunity to raise concerns for themselves and their residents.

“I find the meetings with the police a great way to raise any concerns within the local area.”

“It is an opportunity for residents to bring forward complaints.”

4.1.5 The promotion of Neighbourhood Watch

The survey of residents showed that half (50%) had received written information from their local Neighbourhood Watch scheme. Of these 155 respondents, 96% found it helpful or very helpful, while only six respondents (4%) found the information not very helpful.
Those who took part in the qualitative discussions viewed the promotion and awareness raising activities of Neighbourhood Watch as crucial to the success of the scheme. While the co-ordinators thought more could be done to promote Neighbourhood Watch at the overall level, they, along with stakeholders, were employing a range of means to communicate with residents. These included methods such as texts, emails and newsletters to promote and operate the scheme. However from the research we found that there were inconsistencies across schemes, with some having resources available to them, which others have not.

- **Newsletters**
  Local newsletters were viewed by some groups as an excellent resource for the promotion of Neighbourhood Watch. Co-ordinators have used these to arrange meeting times and to inform on ways in which the community can be vigilant.

  “A car came today with a box full of stuff, I was out half the afternoon delivering paperwork, letters and a whole lot to secure your home, look after your house.”

  “We circulate crime prevention and security information and at Christmas time with the newsletter.”

- **Texts and emails**
  All districts who have used the ‘text alert’ service stated it was a very useful service. Schemes considered this service to be invaluable to the community as it helped to increase confidence in policing and reduced the fear of crime. E District in particular reported that 3 criminals were caught as a result of the service.

  “It’s great having the text alerts because then you are aware of exactly what they’re looking for, so you would be more vigilant.”

  “Because you get an email or a text from the police you actually believe they are looking after you.”

  “The texts and emails we used to get I thought was a terribly good way of reminding people the police are about. There’s no intelligence secret. Everyone feels protected, for the police have actually taken the care to touch them. I cannot get the police to grasp the value of the scheme into getting into society.”

  “The co-ordinator gets text alerts from the neighbourhood police of any problems that there are in the greater area and it is immediately passed on.”

  Some co-ordinators said they never had or no longer receive the text service bringing to light inconsistencies across schemes. They attributed this to a lack of resources.

  “There was a flush of enthusiasm <at the start>, it’s all too difficult now. Who would send texts out? Nobody sends emails any longer and they were quite good.”

  “I would be interested in the text message service. I can let people know if something is going on. Why do some schemes have it and we don’t?”

- **Posters, signs and stickers**
All schemes had posters, signs and stickers made available to them. They said that these resources have helped to decrease antisocial behaviour and the fear of crime in their scheme area.

However some of those in urban schemes with high levels of crime and antisocial behaviour commented that the signs and stickers made little difference as they perceived little or no support on the ground from a section of their community.

“It does give an element of confidence to your community.”

“I also find that, especially in the Fold, Neighbourhood Watch deters unsociable people applying for housing which helps us a great deal. Because once they see signs up they know the police are going to be in round there so it deters people putting in for property there that we wouldn’t want.”

“With the signs up I definitely think it helps. Definitely deters people from coming about who shouldn’t be there.”

“We have little yellow stickers to say we are part of Neighbourhood Watch scheme but it doesn’t make any difference if there is no support on the ground.”

“One on the first night that the signs went up, they were taken down.”

- **Alarms (sensors)**

Other resources which were made available through a couple of the Neighbourhood Watch schemes that we spoke to were sensor alarms. However few schemes were aware that these resources were available to them. Those who did not have access to the alarms felt the fear of crime would be greatly reduced if they could avail of this type of resource.

“Neighbourhood Watch were going round giving home security devices to the elderly and they’re very thankful for it.”

“We got alarms to old people, screeching alarms, so if they heard that alarm, they knew exactly what it was.”

“I didn’t know these things were available to us through Neighbourhood Watch. I would definitely use the alarm, it sounds good.”

“I would feel better if I could get an alarm. I would love one but I don’t know where to get one.”

- **Social Networking media**

One or two schemes have begun to use social networking to promote and operate Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.

“There is a Facebook page as well for our Neighbourhood Watch.”

“I had a page on our site, that told you all about Neighbourhood Watch, about PACT and it told about all the meetings being held at PACT. It also gave the minutes of
PACT. It also has all police officers who run our area; it gives who to go to and everything else.”

However it was expressed by a co-ordinator that for predominantly elderly residents this may be wasted effort.

“That <website is> very impressive. I certainly wouldn’t have the capability to do that, I’m computer literate but I wouldn’t be able to make a website or would have no confidence. That’s part of the problem, social media, certainly in our experience most people in our area are the elderly who don’t have <the internet>…it’s trying to get the balance between the younger generation and the older.”
4.2 Effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch

4.2.1 Key purpose of Neighbourhood Watch

Through the survey residents were asked what they felt the key purpose of Neighbourhood Watch should be. Residents were most likely to say that the key purpose should be reducing crime (48%), reporting of crime (44%) and reducing antisocial behaviour (43%).

Figure 4.2.1: Key purpose of Neighbourhood Watch scheme (residents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of Neighbourhood Watch</th>
<th>1st most important</th>
<th>2nd most important</th>
<th>3rd most important</th>
<th>Not top priority</th>
<th>No reply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reporting of crime</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting local police in detecting crime</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing crime</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing fear of crime</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing anti-social behaviour</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing awareness of Neighbourhood Policing Teams</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing relations with Neighbourhood Policing Teams</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving relations with other agencies</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting community spirit</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing awareness of needs within the community</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

75 of the 151 residents who explained their answers said they had a lack of knowledge or involvement with their local scheme, which may explain the percentage of ‘don’t know’ responses. Some residents stated positive aspects of the scheme, such as ‘increased safety in the community’ (27) and a ‘reduction in crime / deterrent’ (21).
The survey of co-ordinators showed that they were more likely than residents to have knowledge of the effectiveness of the scheme, with a much smaller proportion saying they ‘don’t know’ how effective it is across each of the areas. Co-ordinators were most likely to say that Neighbourhood Watch was effective in relation to improving relations with NPTs (73%), increasing awareness of NPTs (72%) and reporting crime (70%).
Figure 4.2.3: Effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch scheme (co-ordinators)

How effective has Neighbourhood Watch been in the following areas?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Not effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reporting of crime</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting local police in detecting crime</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing crime</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing fear of crime</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing anti-social behaviour</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing awareness of Neighbourhood Policing Teams</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving relations with Neighbourhood Policing Teams</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving relations with other agencies</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting community spirit</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing awareness of needs within the community</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base 289: all coordinators

Co-ordinators were most likely to assess the effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch based on their contact with NPTs (74%), contact with other co-ordinators (65%) and contact with members of Neighbourhood Watch schemes (63%).

Figure 4.2.4: Assessing the effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch scheme (co-ordinators)

What information do you use to help assess the effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information</th>
<th>% saying yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contact with Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact with members of Neighbourhood Watch Scheme</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact with general public</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact with Neighbourhood Policing Teams</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact with District Policing Partnerships</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact with Community Safety Partnerships</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in anti-social behaviour</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in crime</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base 289: all coordinators
4.2.3 Reducing crime and antisocial behaviour

During the focus group discussions participants were asked about the effectiveness of the schemes in reducing crime and antisocial behaviour. The types of antisocial behaviour discussed included public alcohol consumption, noise pollution, trespassing on derelict sites and underage drinking in public. The main types of crime listed were car theft, burglaries, defacing of signs and property and violence.

Almost all schemes reported that crime and antisocial behaviour were major issues in their area when Neighbourhood Watch was established and that both appeared to have decreased since Neighbourhood Watch has been in operation. Indeed in some instances Neighbourhood Watch appears to have empowered residents to report antisocial behaviour in their area.

“We still have crime but it’s not as common …it’s mostly young kids, antisocial behaviour, underage drinking. They drink behind my house, they know we don’t tolerate it anymore. We go straight onto the cops and it’s not just me, all my neighbours will make phone calls. It’s more like chain reaction, you hear them smashing the bottles and the cops come up and move the problem.”

“We have very little antisocial behaviour in our area nowadays…Neighbourhood Watch has made a difference in the last 5 years or so.”

“Well ours has been a hundred per cent. It’s far more than we could have ever have wished for. We have had issues dealt with at the time, very severe issues and now it’s as quiet as a mouse. I mean I maybe ring the police a couple of times a year now, whereas I could have been ringing five times a night.”

However a number suggested that more could be done to increase the level of communication on how Neighbourhood Watch is contributing to reducing crime and antisocial behaviour.

“Antisocial behaviour has been curbed but there is no feedback from Neighbourhood Police.”

Although it was reported that Neighbourhood Watch had been successful in reducing crime in areas, a number of participants in urban schemes, particularly in A District, said crime and the fear of crime are still very much an issue despite the presence of a Neighbourhood Watch scheme.

“Every single sign, there wasn’t one left, they went round and took every sign down and kept on doing it and then we put up tin ones and now they’re bending the tin ones around.”
4.2.4 Reducing the fear of crime

The survey revealed that six out of seven residents (86%) said they feel very / fairly safe in their local community, while 14% feel a bit or very unsafe (Figure 4.2.5). This is similar to the findings from 2007 survey when 85% reported feeling safe and 15% unsafe.

Almost all those who took part in the qualitative discussions said that Neighbourhood Watch has an impact on reducing the fear of crime in their area. The presence of the co-ordinator and the Neighbourhood Watch signs were the two main contributing factors to the belief that the fear of crime has reduced.

“Knowing that the co-ordinator is there if there’s a problem, day or night give him a ring puts your mind at ease.”

“I feel safer now and it has reduced my the fear of crime because I have someone to go to <co-ordinator>.”

“Neighbourhood Watch was able to deal with the fear of crime and the perception of the fear of crime, particularly in rural areas and inter-urban areas which are particularly hard to penetrate socially.”

“The co-ordinator walked around, checking that everything was where it should be You feel very safe. I’m on my own and I feel very safe.”

“Without Neighbourhood Watch and the community association I wouldn’t get any sleep.”
What can be done to make residents feel safer?
During the discussions residents mentioned procedures and safety tools which they have in place already which have helped decrease the fear of crime. They also suggested things they would like to see in their area to make them feel safer. Below is a list of the suggestions that they considered could help decrease the fear of crime:

- More visible policing;
- Quicker police response time;
- Residents provided with community police information;
- Text alerts;
- Alarms;
- Signs;
- Personal alarms
- Increased community spirit; and
- Newsletters detailing crime/antisocial behaviour in the area.

4.2.5 Incidence of helping to detect crime
The survey of residents showed that over half (52%) said they would report a concern about crime or safety in their local area to their NPT (Figure 4.2.6). Over two fifths (44%) stated they would report it to their Neighbourhood Watch scheme co-ordinator, while 17% would alert their District Policing Partnership and 8% their Community Safety Partnership. Within the ‘Other (please specify)’ category, 43 respondents (14%) said they would report it to PSNI.
The qualitative discussions revealed that there were some differences in how various schemes reported crime and antisocial behaviour. Some, particularly those in urban schemes, said that they would telephone 999 directly. In more rural communities the Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator would be informed of any issues first and, depending on the severity of the issue, they would contact their local policing team via a direct line number.

“I suppose I should go to the Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator first but I always just phone 999.”

“I would try to phone directly through to the police.”

“If somebody sees somebody doing something they shouldn’t be doing, then they’ll tell the co-ordinator. The co-ordinator would be top and they’ll soon sort it out. The co-ordinator would come down and then the police would take over.”

“I’ve never presumed responsibility for reporting crime. So in other words if my neighbour gets broken into, I would expect my neighbour to phone the cops. It’s not my role, I have other things in my life, but what I will do is support anybody who comes to me” (Co-ordinator).

Most residents and co-ordinators believed the best way for them to help the police detect crime is to be vigilant as a community. Reporting suspicious activity to the co-ordinator to be checked with local police was the main way residents felt they could do this.

“I would report anything I see in conjunction with the police.”

“We have two or three quite elderly people living across the way and if I see vans or people knocking on doors I would probably check who are they or what are they...
about because I’m trying to look out for my vulnerable neighbours who could be knocked over if somebody decided to push the door and head on into the house.”

“I went to America for a week and I told <co-ordinator> that I’d be away and he was up at the house checking every night and every morning.”

“It’s great having the text alerts because then you are aware of exactly what they’re looking for, so you would be more vigilant when it comes to requesting texts but it just puts it in your mind about other suspicious behaviour in the area so it’s in the forefront of your mind after the updates and you do look out for the elderly neighbours who may not have the security around them with their back gardens being more open, whenever you do see people stopping or calling to the door or if somebody has called to your door you can go over or let them know, there’s people looking money for xyz you know, it’s that awareness.”

“The people who have dogs are actually out and about and one of our neighbours, a few doors down, walks his dog in the middle of the night so they’re the eyes and the ears.”

“Because of the good relationship with the police I feel a greater sense that if I am suspicious I can easily get in touch and find out and they check up a number or registration plate or something like that and put our minds at rest.”

“You’ve a direct line to Neighbourhood Watch police whereas if you phone the ordinary police you have to go through so many questions and whatnot.”

“It allows for the old fashioned curtain twitch, because you now know your neighbours, you’re actually looking out for them. Somebody who works in Belfast all day long and there’s a white van at the back of his house at midday you might just happen to realise and take a note of the registration number. It’s the least you could do, you do ring around. You actually know each other as you drive past. From that point of view it introduces people for the first time, it’s a way where old fashioned neighbours is reintroduced. I believe it is quite valuable.” (Co-ordinator)

Some schemes were given the opportunity to record incidences of crime and antisocial behaviour by being given a record book provided by the PSNI. This offered residents an opportunity to speak to co-ordinators confidentially and report things that they would maybe feel uncomfortable reporting to the police directly.

“It’s an in-between for some. Some people are afraid of the police, don’t feel comfortable. Co-ordinators are an outlet for people to use.” (Co-ordinator)

“People were afraid to talk…it took us something like three years to start and build up trust in the area.” (Co-ordinator)
4.2.6 Promoting community spirit

Promoting community spirit was viewed as one of the major benefits of Neighbourhood Watch; however some schemes appeared to be better at managing this than others. To a large extent the aspect of promoting community spirit was dependent on the ‘enthusiasm’ of the co-ordinators and their assistants, the level of buy-in that they had from the community for Neighbourhood Watch and the number of homes within the scheme. Some of the urban schemes appeared to have less success at developing a sense of community, while the more rural schemes seemed to have a greater level of success.

“Neighbours that didn’t know each other now know each other through the scheme.”

“In terms of it meeting its objective, it would be a very close neighbourhood; we do look after each other and go out of our way to help each other.”

“When my husband died in April the young people in the estate left in a beautiful card from them, that’s the kind of estate we have.”

“The fact of everybody knowing that they’re safe keeps their spirit up too, that they’re not scared to come out of their houses, you know. They know that if they go out the rest will keep an eye out because you know Neighbourhood Watch will have highlighted that you have to be aware.”

“It isn’t about twitching curtains, about being a tout and it’s not…it’s actually a demonstration of the community that is taking some positive action.”

Almost all schemes agreed that there are missed opportunities when it comes to building community spirit. Indeed hostility within communities in Northern Ireland was seen as a barrier to this.

“There is no community spirit. There should be something to bring people together.”

“<Some people> keep themselves in their houses and you can’t just get them out and involved in everything … our area has had a bad time for a long time and there’s been an awful lot of people in it who have caused an awful lot of problems in it and there’s people who are really and truly frightened you know? There still are.”

“He’s done it on his own because there hasn’t been an awful lot of support…we do our best but unfortunately certain people don’t like what we’re doing.”

Including younger generations

A few schemes have used Neighbourhood Watch to promote links between the generations and include the younger people in community safety. All spoke positively of the opportunity to include younger generations in Neighbourhood Watch, with those who do not avail of it recognising the need to include them.

“A good thing too for the youngsters, they can get in with the police, not just involved in your own community, you can do cross community things, they can take you on wee breaks for two or three days and you’re meeting other people and all, become sociable and interact. I think what’s they call social policing, it’s more the community looking after itself.”
“We are running a 12 week programme for kids to get them away from taking drugs. Our co-ordinator organises 4 trips a year for the kids, all of them were from different nationalities and religions.”

“In the school last week, we let the youngsters know what’s taking place community safety wise.”

“I don’t think the police bother at all because they know that the young ones are being watched and taken care of and they never have any trouble with them. It’s not that <co-ordinators> are sitting on them, it’s just that they know they really don’t want to disappoint you, isn’t that it? Because so much is being done for them.”

“May I say that last Christmas the co-ordinator sent their daughters and sons around the pensioner’s houses with a tin of biscuits each out of his own pocket.”

“There is a lack of attendance of youths to organised events, we could try to organise more mixed events.”

“What about having a day when the police come to the Neighbourhood Watch area with their bikes and Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators and members can be there to speak to residents and the younger generations about security awareness and community safety. That will help the kids build a relationship with the police and keep them out of trouble in the future.”

During the discussion the residents of one scheme highlighted a number of ways in which their scheme was proactive in using Neighbourhood Watch to build community spirit within their mixed community. Below is a case study outlining some of the activities that have taken place.
Case study: Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in G District

Example 1 - Including younger generations
This scheme has utilised Neighbourhood Watch to integrate different age groups within the community, by involving young people in activities such as:
- Helping the elderly plant flowers;
- Youth clubs;
- Litter collection;
- Church painting;
- Go-karting run by the co-ordinator; and
- Various other sporting activities.

The co-ordinator believes that involving young people in activities as well as getting them to interact with the elderly in the area will help keep them out of trouble and improve community safety. Elderly members of the scheme who participated in the research spoke highly of the interaction between the generations. They said that they felt safer in the area as they now recognised some of the young people and knew their families.

Example 2 - Running activities for the elderly
Senior citizens are given the opportunity to take part in various activities run by the co-ordinator. They have the opportunity to take part in dinner dances and are made to feel safe by the co-ordinator who frequently call in for informal chats.

Example 3 - Respect and support within the community
This scheme is a mixed community and practises respect across the communities. For example there was a death of a Catholic resident in the area in the time leading up to the 12th July and the community volunteered to take down the bunting at the time of the funeral as a mark of respect.
4.3 Relationships with stakeholders

4.3.1 Awareness of stakeholders
The survey of residents shows that less than half of residents were aware of District Policing Partnerships (DPPs, 46%) and NPT (NPTs, 45%), while almost one quarter (24%) were aware of Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs).

Figure 4.3.1: Awareness of partnerships/organisations (residents)

One in nine respondents (11%) were aware that DPPs and CSPs will be replaced by Policing and Community Safety Partnerships in 2012, while 1 in 8 respondents (13%) were interested in becoming a PCSP member.
4.3.2 Communication with the police
The qualitative research highlighted that all schemes have links with the police, with most reporting an excellent relationship. Most co-ordinators have either a direct line or mobile number for their community officer. This relationship and link has helped to reduce the fear of crime and contributed to increasing confidence in policing.

“This was an opportunity to set up a Neighbourhood Watch scheme to build up working relationships between the residents and the police and get some accountability and I have to say that it has worked reasonably well.”

“We have confidence now in the police…the community knows that and my neighbours know that, so I think it’s fantastic and you know it also gives the community interaction with the police and they’re part of us and we’re part of them and we all pull together so in terms of that, it’s fantastic.”

Co-ordinators reported that they, and in some cases residents, have received informal visits from the police. This again has helped to increase confidence in policing and reduce the fear of crime within the area, as residents are aware that co-ordinators are in direct contact with the police.

“I’ve seen the police up at <co-ordinator name> house a few times; it is good to see them in the area.”

“When my husband died the Neighbourhood Police called in to me a few times for a cup of tea to see if I was alright. That really made me feel safer.”
“My relationship with the police is the same, I had police officers ringing me up and contacting me all the time, I still do. They call and ask is everything all right and yes there has been a few issues, nothing like what it was like two years ago.”

However some co-ordinators in other areas said that they don’t receive as many visits or telephone calls from the police as they were led to believe they would.

“I was told that we would receive one phone call per month from a Neighbourhood Watch officer, that’s what we were told and that came from an Inspector, that’s what would happen. That’s what should be happening.”

“I think in theory they’re supposed to call once a month with you and see if you’re still there but with the pressure they’re under it’s maybe a couple of months before you see them that way, and if there’s nothing really of importance or significance in the village they have no obligation to call or be called.”

Some schemes have praised the way in which Neighbourhood Watch has strengthened relationships with the police compared to 10-20 years ago when there would have been less contact and more hostility between the community and the police.

“<In the past> you would never have seen a policeman, wouldn’t have been friendly with them… they ran a barbeque for the people <recently> the police came down to that.”

“In our area there is no longer a negative reaction to PSNI presence now.”

However, most schemes requested more visible policing in their area to help reduce the fear of crime further and to deter crime taking place.

“Neighbourhood Watch needs support from their local community policing team- more visible policing.”

“I never see a policeman about here ever, we need more patrols.”

“There is only so much the co-ordinator can do. It is the police teams’ job to <deal with antisocial behaviour>. Neighbourhood Watch has little authority to do anything about people drinking whereas the police can take it off them.”

“More walking Policemen would be nice.”

Some schemes felt that their relationship with the police and their scheme initially created hostility in the community towards the members and in particular the co-ordinators. This draws from the stereotype whereby some people might consider Neighbourhood Watch members to be ‘snitches’ or ‘touts’. This is also seen as a barrier to growth for some schemes especially those in areas where there are members of the community who may not want their activities monitored.
“Now they didn’t all agree, when I went round initially I got told to **** off, because you were working with the PSNI.”

“There were people who had come along to talk to me and they would openly say to me, I don’t want to talk to you because I don’t want to be seen.”

Feedback
As mentioned previously the text alerts and emails detailing crime in the local area were seen as a good way for the police to give feedback to the schemes. However some schemes have requested a higher level of feedback from PSNI. Some co-ordinators felt it would help reduce the fear of crime further if they are able to feedback the outcome of a call to their residents which in turn will increase confidence in the police and Neighbourhood Watch.

“I think people would like to know more about crime happening in other schemes close to this one.”

“If they (PSNI) want us to be co-ordinators they have to let us filter the information as the residents need the information.”

“This road has HGV’s going up and down it and the police won’t do anything about it, they just say that they will look into it, nothing is done we receive no feedback.”

Another problem one co-ordinator mentioned was the indifference police officers show towards the information they supply about their local area, although previously they had appeared interested.

“When they <the police> were listening to you things were a lot better but <more recently> whenever you started to tell them, they were looking at you as if “we know different” you know what I mean? And you say to yourself what’s the point in me telling them anything because they don’t want to know about it anyway.”

Contacting PSNI and NPTs
Some co-ordinators, particularly in urban areas found that although they had a direct line to the police they sometimes did not answer the phone and this led to them, as co-ordinators, feeling ignored. Co-ordinators in C, D and F Districts in particular had problems contacting the police. They also expressed the opinion that, as their NPT covers such a large area, when an issue does arise their response time is too long. Some reported that their community police officers are part-time and therefore are not contactable when needed.

“I have the contact details for the Neighbourhood Police but they don’t answer their phone.”

“I got put through to a call centre in Antrim and then asked what area I was in to be transferred then no one answers.”

“Our biggest problem is getting in touch with the Police. You get put through to Belfast and everywhere but the local station.”
“My problem... we had to ring this number ... and the guy was in Newtownards. They said it would take a while to get in contact with Newcastle ... That was my concern, the distance from Newtownards to get hold of a car...it was like a call centre.”

“The Neighbourhood Policing Team are very good but when you ring them up they aren't anywhere near where the problem is. We have mobile numbers for four Community Police Officers but they don't work some days so the co-ordinator has to try and sort it himself.”

Some districts noted the shift in communication with the police from when their scheme started and the present day, showing dissatisfaction with their current level of communication.

“It appears to be that PSNI set this up, or were involved in setting it up and were very enthusiastic and then once it was set up they backed away and let us get on with it. They have to be involved, the same as we’re involved - it has to be communication between them and us and it’s not happening.”

“I think our first two years were successful, fantastic. In the middle of 2010 it started to go downhill.”

4.3.3 Consistency of support
The quantitative research found that lack of consistency through time was a problem for a number of co-ordinators. Support was given initially to Neighbourhood Watch but has lapsed as time has gone on. They felt that more could be done to manage their expectations about the level of support they would receive over time.

“A police officer will come along to your night, the initial meeting and set you up, but once you got your badge and certificate, you’re on your own.”

“It would be nice maybe if somebody you know had talked through a new co-ordinator what the expectations should be. Not to put them off but tell this is reality, this is what it’s going to be like and I think then on an ongoing basis there should be annual communication from a central source saying how are you doing? Are you enjoying being a co-ordinator? What’s wrong? None of that happens.”

“I heard recently about a guy, it was in our district, three months after trying to start a scheme, he was still waiting. That’s unacceptable, I would have thought within a week somebody should have been on the ball.”

A number of co-ordinators said they had reported broken and vandalised Neighbourhood Watch signs to the PSNI and requested replacements which they did not receive. They felt that this reflects lack of confidence in Neighbourhood Watch and a lack of support for the initiative. Some schemes had not received signs to begin with and this has diminished confidence in the scheme from the word go.

“I phoned for replacement signs and the policeman said it was a co-ordinated wrecking of the signs and council were to fix them but they have never been fixed.”
"There is no confidence in Neighbourhood Watch when they won’t replace the signs. How can you sell Neighbourhood Watch to the public when you have no support?"

“They were supposed to put Neighbourhood Watch signs up in our avenue but they have never done anything.”

One co-ordinator expressed the view that, due to lack of a lead organisation with responsibility, the result is no support for schemes.

“It’s not up to me or…to support Neighbourhood Watch because it is a three way partnerships of councils, the Policing Board and DoJ. Without the network I would say to myself ‘what happens, what is given, what support will we receive centrally for Neighbourhood Watch’ and the result is we don’t receive any support.”

4.4.3 Funding
A number of schemes felt that funding was an issue within their scheme. Some expressed the need for funding within stakeholder operations where as others simply required funding support to operate day to day.

“I don’t think anybody within their own schemes organise any events because there’s no support, there’s no financial support and there’s no sort of moral support behind the scenes.”

“Maybe funding should come down centrally to these new Policing Community Safety Partnerships but be ring-fenced for Neighbourhood Watch activity.”

“We have residents from 5 different nationalities so if we could have more information to give them in different languages that would help alleviate the problems but we need more funding!”

4.4.4 Feedback and monitoring impact
Statistics on the impact of Neighbourhood Watch were viewed as an issue for a number of co-ordinators. As mentioned previously the PSNI and DPP usually communicate these statistics at public meetings. The lack of measurability of the impact of Neighbourhood Watch is an issue which has been raised by both stakeholders and the schemes. The view was expressed that this has added doubt as to whether Neighbourhood Watch has made a difference in crime, the fear of crime and antisocial behaviour. This also shows the schemes’ need for meaningful feedback from stakeholders.

“They should be able to produce statistics that show crime levels prior to Neighbourhood Watch schemes, with the setup of the scheme, and what the current crime levels are. My thinking is that because they have never produced statistics that in reality the setting up of Neighbourhood Watch scheme doesn’t reduce levels of crime because you can be sure who ever was producing the <statistics on> levels of crime, they’d be promoting it. I don’t think anybody wants to take a leading role, everybody wants to support it but they don’t want to be the leading agency.”
“You can’t believe what is said as it is not a robust system for measuring the crime rate.”

4.4.5 Return on investment (PSNI)

Some co-ordinators felt that, if PSNI were not seeing a direct return from schemes, these schemes do not obtain the same level of resources and support. Some believed that this is because when antisocial behaviour is reduced the residents stop going to meetings and the police view this as a lack of support, which co-ordinators have stated then prompts the police to take away community support which they would have had previously. Again this is viewed as a lack of support and confidence in Neighbourhood Watch schemes and the contributions they make.

“I’ve got the impression that the PSNI are saying we need to get something out of these people for us to support them and that is not what the thinking of Neighbourhood Watch was, Neighbourhood Watch…read the manual, it tells you what the role is, it’s not to create touts within the community, none of us put our names forward to be a tout so therefore you’re hit with what are you giving us back?”

“Antisocial behaviour stopped, so people stopped going to the meetings and the police saw this as a lack of support from the community. So they reduce the amount of policing support we get.”

Some co-ordinators felt that the time and resource that they put into Neighbourhood Watch and helping the police is unnoticed and not utilised fully by the PSNI. Their view was that there should be a two way support system and communication to make the most of Neighbourhood Watch. The schemes see themselves as an untapped resource which the police could be using to compensate for losses in manpower.

“It’s a core fundamental part of neighbourhood policing, this is what I can’t understand, why aren’t their actions you know, changing to accommodate Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators when we are volunteers. We’re willing help but we need the support.”

“We understand that the PSNI are under pressure but Neighbourhood Watch is useful as people are giving up their own time and the police should use this resource.”

“It’s going to be even more difficult, such a huge district, there’ll be more closed stations in the next two or three areas in this area. The police should be investing in this thing but they’re not, and they can’t, and they won’t.”

“Half the stations are being shut down, PSNI need to support Neighbourhood Watch because they have the manpower.”
4.4.6 The organisational structure of Neighbourhood Watch

One group of co-ordinators expressed the view that currently no one organisation has responsibility for the Neighbourhood Watch Initiative and that is why, in their opinion, support towards the scheme is lacking.

“It’s everybody and nobody…it’s run by a community, the local council and police…nobody is actually in charge, nobody leads it, nobody takes the credit for it, nobody takes the falls when they come, so nobody is actually responsible.”

“It needs to be a change at managerial level to recognise how beneficial this is, the PSNI particularly, what a wonderful opportunity to engage at local level, to create confidence in policing, to keep the community involved.”

One co-ordinator believed the PSNI should be running Neighbourhood Watch whereas others felt the PSNI lacked the support, funding and resources to manage the scheme.

“The new PSNI for about five years I thought were extremely good at getting into neighbourhood policing which was the new wave, and there’s been a regression or stepping back financially and leadership wise in the past two years.”

“There is no spinal structure, dedicated police, or police funded, there is no person from the PSNI deeply interested in the organisation management, encouragement, the maturing of this particular process.”

One other scheme, which has particular issues with getting the community on-board, expressed the view that in their area the council had been more supportive before Neighbourhood Watch was taken over by the police.

“Now when the police took it over, that was it. Neighbourhood Watch, I feel, fell on its ***. Purely and simply because the police thought that they could do a better job than the council could have done whereas the council were doing a better job than the police actually were.”

Another thought it should be the DoJ who takes the lead and with the PSNI as a mechanism to operate it.

“The support has to come from DoJ, not the Policing Board who fund the police. It has to be the Department of Justice who take responsibility. Their mechanism has to be the PSNI. The new policing and community safety partnerships aren’t going to do it, their objectives and key aims are different areas.”
5. Stakeholders - key findings

The Neighbourhood Watch scheme is promoted, supported and endorsed at a strategic level by a partnership between the Department of Justice Community Safety Unit (CSU), the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB). At an operational level, this is done through Community Safety Partnerships (CSP), PSNI District Command Units and District Policing Partnerships (DPP).

In this section the key findings are presented from the stakeholder research involving the agencies at the strategic and operational level as outlined above. In-depth interviews were conducted with the strategic partners and questionnaires were completed by the CSP and DPP managers and local NPTs. The findings are detailed under each of the following key headings:

5.1 Involvement in Neighbourhood Watch Scheme;
5.2 Effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch Scheme; and
5.3 Areas for improvement and development.

5.1 Involvement in Neighbourhood Watch Scheme

It was clear from the in-depth interviews that the key partners viewed the operational structure of Neighbourhood Watch as one of the strengths. This is because it is run by volunteers from within communities, with a minimum of bureaucracy surrounding it. To a large extent they viewed themselves in a supportive role to assist communities build and deliver a scheme that meets their individual needs.

“I mean Neighbourhood Watch can and should be so informal that it doesn’t actually require the police and the Policing Board and the DoJ to get together and accredit a scheme. It can almost be something that communities build and deliver themselves but they need to have the confidence to do that.” - DoJ

“Because it is a volunteer scheme as such, I suppose because it’s shared, it’s not really owned or there’s not that sense of ownership” - NIPB

“We’ve tried to chat with both our colleagues at local level and the agencies, to say the community is pivotal in this, the agencies are there only as a supporting role so you make sure all of the agencies encourage the community and knows who have invested interest in it, that they know what they’re getting involved in, they know there is work involved, they’re there to support them but they’re not there to drive it.” - PSNI

As of 1 April 2012 DPPs and CSP’s have been replaced by Policing and Community Safety Partnerships.
The stakeholders believe that Neighbourhood Watch should be community driven, however have noted that commitment from all of the partners is also important.

“Our roles in Neighbourhood Watch are as one of the 3 partners with the Policing Board and the police… I sponsor and have overseen responsibility for each of the 26 Community Safety Partnerships across N.I.” - DoJ

“<there are> basically three different areas of activity; one of them prevention, one of them intelligence and one of them enforcement. Now, the intelligence and enforcement are primarily down to police obviously but the prevention side was very important in a lot of those areas and that’s where Neighbourhood Watch would have fitted in very neatly.”

- PSNI

5.1.1 Support for Neighbourhood Watch

When asked in the stakeholders’ quantitative survey how supportive they were of Neighbourhood Watch, 60% said they were very supportive and 35% supportive, with only 4% being not supportive at all. When analysed by type of stakeholder, CSPs were most likely to say they are very supportive and NPTs were less likely to be as supportive.

Figure 5.1.1: Support for Neighbourhood Watch (stakeholders)
5.2 Effectiveness of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme

According to the results of the quantitative research stakeholders were most likely to say that Neighbourhood Watch was effective in increasing awareness of (78%) and relations with (78%) NPTs followed by reducing the fear of crime (68%) and increasing awareness of needs within the community (63%). The areas which stakeholders were most likely to rate as not effective were assisting local police in detecting crime (22%) and reducing antisocial behaviour (24%). In addition 71% of stakeholders believed that Neighbourhood Watch was inadequately resourced.

Figure 5.2.1: Effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch (stakeholders)

Stakeholders were asked what information they use to assess the effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch. Contacts with Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators (79%) and with the NPTs (74%) were the main sources of information.
5.2.1 Reducing crime, the fear of crime and antisocial behaviour

Sixty eight percent of stakeholders interviewed in the quantitative survey thought Neighbourhood Watch was effective in reducing the fear of crime. Reducing crime (46%) and antisocial behaviour (52%) were less likely to be rated as an area in which Neighbourhood Watch has been effective compared to other aspects of the scheme.

The in-depth interviews with the three key partners highlighted that there have been reductions in levels of crime and antisocial behaviour however they were sceptical of the impact Neighbourhood Watch has had on these as it is hard to measure in terms of causality. It was acknowledged that Neighbourhood Watch is very likely to help reduce the fear of crime and provide community assurance/reassurance but it was questioned how this impact can be measured. To a large extent the views expressed were based on a judgement of the scheme rather than substantiated data.

“I think my own view is that it probably has more impact on the fear of crime than reducing crime… particularly amongst older people, the older generation who saw it as a reassurance, more reassurance in terms of the fear of crime than a deterrent against crime. We saw some examples where it was a deterrent for domestic burglary and things but the key message coming out I think was addressing the fear of crime and isolation.” - DoJ

“How do you measure the impact of Neighbourhood Watch? It’s difficult to do that; I can’t say exactly how it’s addressing it. It’s more of a confidence issue.” - DoJ
“…if there’s a feeling and a perception of the Neighbourhood Watch scheme in your area then I think it has to be a contributing factor in terms of making people feel safer but I don’t know what the feedback will be from the co-ordinators in terms of whether they’ve had any successes in terms of evidence that they’ve said ‘well because we’ve had a scheme, we haven’t had x number of burglaries in our street’.” - NIPB

The PSNI, who are more likely to be closer to Neighbourhood Watch at an operational level, were more confident that Neighbourhood Watch helps to reduce the fear of crime.

“It does <reduce the fear of crime> because Neighbourhood Watch is a two-way scheme; it’s also a channel for us to put information out to the community as well, crime prevention.” - PSNI

Stakeholders saw reducing the fear of crime as one of the most achievable and beneficial strengths going forward in Neighbourhood Watch and made suggestions as to how to continue reducing the fear of crime. One of the suggestions was to have targeted messages to those who need the information rather than blanket broadcasts, which could raise concerns across a wider area than is necessary.

“…now I think the focus going forward will be very much more in trying to reduce the fear of crime and trying to improve community confidence in the Justice agencies rather than specific reductions.” - DoJ

“What we’re intending to do now rather than just a crime prevention, is trying to target particular areas where that crime is a problem. The elderly are a good example; maybe put that information out to those particular areas which are at higher risk of attacks on the elderly rather than putting it generally out forcibly which could actually raise the fear of crime more than it is actually necessary to do so it could be useful.” - PSNI

PSNI confirmed that feedback had been received regarding a prolific offender who had stated that they would not consider going into a Neighbourhood Watch area to commit crime and therefore Neighbourhood Watch had a direct positive impact in relation to the prevention of crime. However it was argued this could be viewed as a displacement of crime rather than a reduction.

**Helping the police detect crime**

According to the quantitative survey results, 53% of stakeholders believed that Neighbourhood Watch was effective in assisting local police in detecting crime and 60% believed it was effective in the reporting of crime.

Through the in-depth interviews it was found that the PSNI believe that Neighbourhood Watch has been a help in detecting crime in certain areas however other stakeholders were unsure of its impact.

“It does <help detect crime> because the information coming in from Neighbourhood Watch you know, can lead to actual detections. They would have a lot more
knowledge of what’s going on in the local area than the police will have because they live there.” - PSNI

“The police would probably know better, they get calls from Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators to tell them there’s something suspicious… certainly I’ve never heard any police saying ‘as a result of this we were able to go out and‘…” - NIPB

5.2.3 Creating links between the police and community

All strategic stakeholders said creating links between the police and the community is not only a positive result of the scheme now, but an opportunity which could be developed and exploited further as the scheme moves forward. The willingness of individuals from the public to work with the police is seen as encouraging.

“I think it can or should have a role in supporting neighbourhood policing because it seems to be a way in, an obvious link between the police and the community. I’m not so sure how well that link is exploited at the moment by the police but I would say it seems to be an obvious way in, to support the community.” - DoJ

“The success for us is that there are all these people out there who are willing to put up their hands and say ‘we will do this and we will support this and we will work with the police’. For the Board I think that’s the evidence of it working and the success of it, you’ve communities who are saying we will work with the police to help you here, to reduce crime in your area as opposed to just saying ‘no it’s not for us’.‘ - NIPB

“The neighbourhood officers are working with Neighbourhood Watch and that’s where our focus is on, the neighbourhood officers actually getting to know what they want, what the problems are, then trying to deal with it so this is a key part of that for us, it is a very important way of getting into the community. The neighbourhood officers go out and they give their name, their mobile to the Neighbourhood Watch, to other people in the community too and that immediate link to the local officer gives them the reassurance that there’s somebody there on the phone for them.” - PSNI

Feedback and communication between the community and the police was noted as being an important element for success. However it was acknowledged that the impact Neighbourhood Watch has in helping police detect crime requires two-way communication between the public and police and measurement of such feedback can be fraught with difficulties.

“…people report crime that may or may not be dealt with but unless there’s that call back to the victim of crime then people don’t know what has happened so that erodes the confidence. I’d guess the same in terms of Neighbourhood Watch, people are reporting issues to the police…they have to have that feedback to find out what happened with it. Was the information used?” - DoJ

Some were aware that Neighbourhood Watch’s relationship with the police and intimidation due to this can act as a deterrent to the growth and success of the initiative while others
acknowledged that despite these set-backs communities in Northern Ireland have come a long way.

“We’ve had a few occasions where we’ve gone out to specific areas to try and promote Neighbourhood Watch and on more than one occasion the question has been ‘do we have to work with local police?’ and so I think it depends on the geography of the area but it also depends on how proactive and how objective the co-ordinator will be because unless you have someone who’s prepared to make those links and build those relations then the scheme will fall.”- DoJ

“There could be intimidation in some of these areas, against people who are working with the police, community leaders, so that’s all taking time to change, to move along so we can’t underestimate the difficulties in some of these areas. Things have progressed a lot.”- PSNI

5.2.4 Creating community spirit
Fifty nine percent of stakeholders surveyed believe Neighbourhood Watch effectively promotes community spirit and 63% believe it effectively increases awareness of needs within the community.

The qualitative interviews revealed that there are obvious opportunities for Neighbourhood Watch to create community spirit. Stakeholders recognise the value of this in terms of strengthening community safety and reducing the fear of crime.

“Neighbourhood Watch schemes seem to be a good way of bonding and gelling and providing that sort of community spirit.”- DoJ

“I think their success is that they bring together people who are willing to give up their time to make their community safer and that is something that you can’t buy, community-type willingness to get involved and be involved, to actually give up your time to do something good for your community.”- NIPB
5.3 Areas for improvement and development

5.3.1 Intergenerational connections

One area which has been noted through the in-depth interviews as an area for development is the relationship between generations within communities. Neighbourhood Watch has the potential to create links between generations and reduce the fear of crime especially for the elderly.

“I think it improves relations with the older members of the communities, so it builds confidence and reduces fear. There’s more of a community spirit there, but where it can also be helpful is inter-generational…it does potentially link to older people with younger people.” - DoJ

“Fear from a group of youths you don’t know, they won’t have the same fear if they know them.” - PSNI

Involving younger generations

Encouraging involvement of the younger generation is an objective for the future of the initiative as the majority of current members and co-ordinators tend to be elderly.

“I think younger people as well are probably a target group that we need to start thinking about Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators tend to be old, retired people, let’s be honest, people with a bit more time on their hands. It would be I think nice to break that stereotype, break that cycle, try and involve younger people.” - DoJ

“All of that needs looked at, could it be in another ten years that where there’s 650 schemes now, you’ve got this age group and nobody is developing underneath it and you know…it’s certainly something that needs to be looked at.” - NIPB

5.3.2 Technology

Another reason recognised for involving the younger generations are the technological developments which can help develop the schemes and make them more efficient. However it has been noted that the effective use of social media networks such as Twitter and Facebook may depend on the age profile of individual schemes.

“We have older groups still working with the hard copy and the telephone, whereas the internet and Twitter isn’t maybe the communication for everybody. We know it reaches the younger generation.” - PSNI

“You do get a sense that the Twitter and the Facebook is probably a step too far.” - NIPB

However text alerts and email distribution received positive feedback and are seen as an area for development and growth for the future. This level of communication is a low cost way of managing and developing the Neighbourhood Watch Initiative.
“Yeah we have discussed around the internet and some of the local districts have their own texting systems and their own email distribution list…we found not all of those who are either co-ordinators or members of the scheme have access to computers so yes it is something to put on the external website, we also have to consider the resources to maintain that as well, so I think that’s a bit down the line to be honest.” - PSNI

“…they had to just text something and it went out and that’s maybe where the value of it is in terms of if you have 650 plus schemes that for PSNI it’s easier to manage through technology.” - NIPB

5.3.3 Integration with other initiatives
In terms of missed opportunities, integration with other initiatives, programmes and community groups is one that stakeholders believed could be exploited and developed. Other initiatives can support and encourage the current schemes such as Church Watch, School Watch, and the Housing Executive.

“I think the issue that I mentioned earlier around potentially exploring how to better integrate Neighbourhood Watch so it’s not just a stand-alone initiative that’s sitting out there; how does it work? How could it work better? With the community safety wardens, with crime alert, text alert schemes…as part of a wider crime reduction, the fear of crime, package it could be even more of an impact than it is now.” - DoJ

“In ways School Watch needed to be part of the Neighbourhood Watch you know…schools sit within communities and the idea is good but it’s just not working I don’t think at the minute.” - NIPB

“We also are trying to…bring on board other agencies and others in health education et cetera who obviously have a massive role to play in that area and Neighbourhood Watch will be focused towards…if those areas don’t have Neighbourhood Watch we’ll try and take action to encourage that. I’m thinking along the lines of generations, there are community groups…the Atlantic philanthropists amongst others…the Best Foundation…they have through Neighbourhood Watch schemes, linked the older generations with the younger ones and attempted to remove prejudices and perceptions of the Chinese.” - PSNI

5.3.4 Bureaucratic structure of individual schemes
All stakeholders believed that Neighbourhood Watch becoming more bureaucratic to be a negative thing and that it does not require a formal structure. Level of bureaucracy also depends on the size of the scheme and the level of involvement of outside parties such as the Housing Executive.

“I guess one of the areas is that I think that there’s a danger of Neighbourhood Watch becoming too structured, too bureaucratic.” - DoJ

“What made it work was the lack of formality about it. We didn’t put structures in place, we didn’t bog it down with bureaucracy. It was that sense looking in thinking, this doesn’t sit within a structure in a council or a structure in a board.” - NIPB
“Some of the schemes will be…housing executive areas, some of them have a community association house and some of them would have a monthly meeting, then they would have Neighbourhood Watch as the agenda item so they’re a constituted group in any case so they do have the chairperson, secretary, everything taken at that, and that’s fine and that’s what works with them but there’s others who just meet in one of the homes of schemes as informal as that and they’ll not have any representation from any of the statutory groups.” - PSNI

5.3.5 Effective communication
Communication was noted as an area for improvement in the future by all stakeholders. Each recognised gaps in the scheme which could be improved through effective communication, gaps such as:

- Feedback to the Neighbourhood Watch schemes on its impact;
- Promotion of the benefits of a Neighbourhood Watch scheme;
- Communication between the stakeholders;
- Promotion of Neighbourhood Watch overall; and
- Share examples of good practice.

“I think probably our communication of Neighbourhood Watch and the impact is something we don’t do as well as the three partners - that’s something we’re guilty of in other communities with initiatives where we take all the time and the money at delivering the project and then we don’t tell local communities.” - DoJ

“I suppose where there are missed opportunities, it’s for us probably to pick up is, if there are areas of good practice or best practice, what we’re not very good at is sharing that with other areas.” - DoJ

“The application process and the accreditation of the schemes… takes all of those agencies working together and knowing where each of their roles are so whenever that’s clearly communicated and agreed that process should take a month.” - PSNI
5.3.6 Manageable scheme sizes
The view was expressed that there should be smaller, easier to manage schemes rather than having large areas dedicated to one co-ordinator, as schemes are heavily dependant on the pro-activity and capability of the co-ordinator.

In terms of overall numbers some believed Neighbourhood Watch to be a victim of its own success since the number of schemes has grown so vastly since it was developed and that it is at risk of becoming too large to run effectively.

“I also think the schemes need to be a manageable size, people have to be realistic you know, so in an urban area it might be that the scheme only covers one street, or two streets but I think you know, if you try to get a scheme that covers too many areas then it just becomes too burdensome.” - DoJ

“The things that struck me about Neighbourhood Watch was the numbers, it mushroomed and in a sense it was nearly a victim of its own success, we nearly couldn’t cope with it.” - NIPB

5.3.7 The management structure
A number of issues were raised about the effectiveness of the tripartite management structure. While it was recognised that each of the partners brought various strengths to the relationship it was also acknowledged that Neighbourhood Watch could perhaps benefit from a lead that takes overall strategic responsibility in driving the initiative forward.

All partners were confident about their long term commitment to Neighbourhood Watch. Although the Policing Board sees itself having certain roles in Neighbourhood Watch, it believes that establishment of the PSCPs provides an opportunity to embed Neighbourhood Watch in communities and give focus to the future development and maintenance of new schemes.

The PSNI gave no definite answer as to where ownership and responsibility should lie yet seemed confident that they should be part of Neighbourhood Watch on a long term basis and that the introduction of PCSPs will aid this. They also highlighted the need for clarification of roles within the tripartite structure.

The DoJ believe they could take the lead on Neighbourhood Watch as they are more flexible, have more resources, have more chance of long term investment and have a broader focus than the other bodies, as well as having more leverage over both of the other bodies. However they believe commitment from all three partners is important for the success of the scheme.

All organisations were of the view that going forward Neighbourhood Watch would be ideally positioned with the new PCSPs. Both the Policing Board and the PSNI reiterated the point that Neighbourhood Watch needs to be integrated into the community safety strategies run at a local level and they believe the PCSPs are the best body to do so.
The development of PCSPs has also influenced what roles each of the stakeholders sees themselves as having in the future of Neighbourhood Watch.

“Because the Board and the Department will be setting the objectives around the priorities of making the community safer, those strategic priorities; Neighbourhood Watch should feel a part of that, that’s where the strategy comes in, but then the actual delivery is at that local council level. That’s where I suppose I see Neighbourhood Watch sitting in the future, obviously the PSNI have a role and they will feed into the strategy so they have that sort of delivery.” - NIPB

“It’s the community working with the police, the new PCSPs would seem to be the ideal home for that because the police would quite naturally drive ahead with those issues they can take the lead on, but Neighbourhood Watch is very much the preventative side and community working themselves towards tackling some of these issues, antisocial behaviour is an ideal example, it’s going to be in the community safety strategy, as one of the objectives that’s something we’re able to watch…even if it’s providing information to people…that itself is a massive part of the strategy.” – PSNI

“The other reason why I think DoJ probably ought to lead is that we’re amalgamating currently with Community Safety Partnerships and District Policing Partnerships. They should have a key role I think at a local level with Neighbourhood Watch and any other local initiatives and again because the DoJ is the lead partner in supporting PCSPs then there should be a lead role for them in Neighbourhood Watch.” - DoJ
6. Conclusions

The aim of the research was to assess the views and experiences of residents on the impact and effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch in relation to the following areas:

- Reducing crime, the fear of crime and antisocial behaviour;
- Assisting the local police in detecting crime;
- Enhancing the relationship between the police and the community and other partners/agencies;
- Promoting community spirit; and
- How Neighbourhood Watch in Northern Ireland should be developed.

While there is no robust ongoing measurement specifically recorded on the impact of Neighbourhood Watch, the residents that we spoke to were able to provide examples of how Neighbourhood Watch is contributing in relation to each of its aims.

6.1 Reducing crime, the fear of crime and antisocial behaviour

It is difficult to determine the impact that Neighbourhood Watch is having on reducing crime and antisocial behaviour as there is little feedback to residents on the outcome of any information they provide. However, PSNI were positive about the contribution that those in Neighbourhood Watch make, saying that it contributes to building up a picture of what is happening on the ground.

In addition there is evidence to suggest that Neighbourhood Watch helps to reduce instances of antisocial behaviour. Many of the schemes that we spoke with said their existence had helped to highlight the issue to PSNI and to address the issues within their area. Indeed some of the schemes were less active now because the antisocial behaviour they were set up to address had reduced dramatically. It may be that antisocial behaviour is being displaced elsewhere; however there are examples of good practice within some schemes, of engaging with young people through activities. This means that the young people have more ownership of their area and less time to engage in activities that would be regarded as antisocial. Also some co-ordinators in rural areas described having a network of contacts, so that, if suspicious behaviour is witnessed, neighbours can be quickly warned of what to look out for.

While there were many examples of how Neighbourhood Watch is potentially contributing to reducing crime and antisocial behaviour, there are some schemes which have found it much more difficult to address these issues. To a large extent this is because of a lack of ‘buy-in’ from some people in their communities towards Neighbourhood Watch. It was reported that there are residents who are against Neighbourhood Watch as they do not want anyone to
draw attention to the unlawful activities that they undertake. Others suggested that working with PSNI through Neighbourhood Watch was still a sensitive issue in some places.

Residents and stakeholders were very positive about the role that Neighbourhood Watch plays in reducing the fear of crime. Having a direct link to the PSNI, seeing PSNI physically engage with the community through the co-ordinator, the issuing of text messages and emails, engaging young people in community activities contributed to the feeling that there is someone on the ground looking out for the wider community. It was often mentioned that older people, in particular, were benefiting from feeling safer in their homes.

6.2 Enhancing the relationship between the police and the community and other partners/agencies

Through the discussions lots of positive examples were given of how Neighbourhood Watch contributes to enhancing the relationship between the police, the community and other partners and stakeholders. One of the most positive aspects of Neighbourhood Watch is that it can be used by PSNI to gain entry to communities that do not have a history of engaging with the police. It could be argued that Neighbourhood Watch is helping to ‘normalise’ policing in Northern Ireland post ‘the troubles’.

The co-ordinator appears to be the fulcrum in the relationship between the police and the community. They are able to balance managing the expectations of their residents with regard to the type of community policing they receive against providing opportunities for PSNI to engage informally with the residents of the area.

It was clear that the success of Neighbourhood Watch schemes is dependant to a large extent upon the co-ordinator/s and the time, energy, enthusiasm and foresight that they have for the initiative. It is the goal of the three strategic and operational partners that Neighbourhood Watch is driven by communities themselves. The local district operational partners recognise that they have a supporting role in providing co-ordinators with support/training/examples of good practice that will empower them to obtain the best for their scheme.

Looking forward there is an opportunity for PSNI to identify areas in which relationships with the community could be enhanced and how Neighbourhood Watch can be used as a way of building those links.

6.3 Promoting community spirit

In schemes where there is an active and enthusiastic co-ordinator it appears that Neighbourhood Watch has successfully contributed to generating greater levels of community spirit. There were reports of activities being undertaken for the good of the community, eg flower planting, example of respect being shown by both sides of the community and of interactions between younger and older residents. Even in the less active schemes, Neighbourhood Watch has helped to introduce neighbours and encouraged them to be vigilant of each other. Saying that there are some areas were Neighbourhood Watch
has not been as successful in building community spirit due to the attitudes of some residents who are not supportive of the scheme.

6.4 Type of schemes

Through the research a number of types of schemes were encountered, each with its typical characteristics, and level of commitment to Neighbourhood Watch. Below we have outlined each of the scheme types. As this research is limited in its scope, those working with Neighbourhood Watch on the ground may be able to segment further the various types of schemes.

**New schemes**

Firstly there are the new schemes. They tend to join Neighbourhood Watch with a specific objective in mind, usually in relation to reducing some aspect of antisocial behaviour. While some co-ordinators are more experienced because of their role in other community settings, most are taking on the role without much experience but with a lot of enthusiasm. These co-ordinators require guidance not only to help them to establish the scheme but also to manage their expectations about time inputs and what the scheme can deliver, as well as to provide examples of good practice from elsewhere.

**Dormant schemes**

This type of scheme is likely to have been active in the past, and has been somewhat successful in achieving the aim for which it was set up. As a result the scheme has become less active within the community. This type of scheme is one which is heavily reliant on the co-ordinator. Residents usually have a non-existent role within Neighbourhood Watch and are happy with the co-ordinator taking the lead and reporting to them on a 'need to know' basis, assuming that they are aware that they are part of a Neighbourhood Watch scheme in the first place.

**Urban residential schemes**

To some extent these are quite similar to dormant schemes, but slightly more active. They have been set up for a reason, have tackled that issue and are monitoring the situation. The co-ordinator is active in disseminating information and in tapping into other resources, such as alarms, to help prevent and deter crime. The scheme is ready to mobilise if the issue returns, but for now are enjoying the increased levels of community spirit within their area.

**Urban village schemes**

These schemes tend to be set in pre-existing communities within a city or large town. They are more likely to be in areas of deprivation, with antisocial behaviour a key issue. The challenge for the co-ordinator is trying to get community buy-in to Neighbourhood Watch, with some aspects of the community who are particularly negative towards the initiative. Success does not come easy for this type of scheme, as there is ongoing antisocial behaviour and the scheme is struggling to reduce the fear of crime. If these schemes are to be more successful then the co-ordinator requires more targeted/specific support to tackle the issues which are affecting the community. Also another issue for this type of scheme
can be the large number of households within the Neighbourhood Watch area, making it difficult for the co-ordinator to effectively manage.

**Rural villages**
Similar to urban villages, rural village schemes are set within natural pre-existing communities, but within a more rural setting. Residents within the scheme are already largely familiar with each other making it easier to promote community spirit. These types of scheme are likely to have specific issues that they are trying to address on an on-going basis, whether it is keeping young people occupied to reduce antisocial behaviour or to provide an avenue to report crime and antisocial behaviour through the co-ordinator to the PSNI, where residents are reluctant to make the approach directly.

**Rural network**
This type of scheme is based in very rural areas and has been set up to tackle specific types of crime, such as theft of agricultural machinery. The network of residents recognise that because of their location, response rates from PSNI can be an issue. Therefore having direct contact with PSNI is important. Also important is having each others contact details so that they can quickly inform each other of suspicious behaviour.

### 6.5 Recommendations
Neighbourhood Watch is an initiative that has a set resource available to it, and yet the number of schemes has been growing year on year. Having described the various types of schemes it is clear that each type contributes to some extent in achieving the aims of Neighbourhood Watch and requires a different level of support to enable/empower it to do so.

The initiative is very dependant upon voluntary commitment and community support. Where there is a low level of volunteer commitment it is likely that the aims of Neighbourhood Watch are being achieved to a lesser degree within those schemes. Those schemes with higher levels of voluntary commitment appear to be achieving more in terms of reducing the fear of crime, enhancing relationships with stakeholders and building community spirit. The choice for Neighbourhood Watch is whether to treat all schemes in a similar way in terms of resource/support, or to segment the schemes so that resource/support can be targeted where it is needed most and/or can make most impact.

1. It is recommended that as the new PCSPs are responsible for working to improve community safety, consideration is given to the future role of PSCP in supporting, funding and developing NW Schemes.
2. It is recommended that consideration at the local level is given towards undertaking a review of each scheme to evaluate its ‘type’ and to decide on the appropriate level of resource/support required to most effectively meet the aims of Neighbourhood Watch.
Stakeholders and scheme members both recognise the potential Neighbourhood Watch has in terms of building relationships with the police and in doing so reducing the fear of crime. Also there are some areas within Northern Ireland where building relationships with PSNI is more challenging than others.

3. It is recommended that Neighbourhood Watch continues to be a strategic priority in enhancing and building relationships between police and the community.

4. It is recommended that consideration at the local level is given to promoting Neighbourhood Watch within difficult to reach areas that would particularly benefit from enhanced relationships with PSNI and other stakeholders.

Consistency/commitment over time has been highlighted as an issue for some schemes and some areas. Those schemes, which have been established more recently, seem to be receiving support and meeting objectives more effectively than older schemes. Also there appears to be some inconsistencies across schemes as to the support they receive on the ground.

5. It is recommended that consideration at the local level is given as to how co-ordinators and their assistants can be further empowered to deliver Neighbourhood Watch within their communities. Recognition, enhancement and empowerment of this important volunteer resource, will benefit the future effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch, and consideration should be given to:
   o their training/on-going support;
   o communicating the role of all stakeholders; and
   o providing examples of good practice.

6. It is recommended that consideration at the local level should be given to managing expectations of co-ordinators as to the amount of support/communication/contact they will receive over time.

During the research we encountered many co-ordinators each with different skills, experience and levels of commitment and enthusiasm.

7. It is recommended that consideration is given to the production of a set of good practice guidelines for scheme co-ordinators. It is envisaged that these guidelines could be produced by facilitating a working group of co-ordinators from schemes viewed as being successful. Key elements of the guidelines will include identifying the roles and responsibilities of the post and relationships with all the stakeholders.
Appendix A- Residents survey

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH RESIDENTS’ SURVEY

This survey can be completed online at: http://www.smart-survey.co.uk/v.asp?i=38748hgpez

Everything you tell us is treated in confidence. The results will not be used in any way in which they can be associated with you or your address.

Awareness of Neighbourhood Watch Scheme

1. Are you aware that your household is located in an area covered by a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme?
   
   Yes □ 1 (Go to question 2)  No □ 2 (Go to question 5)

2. Was your household asked to be included in your local Neighbourhood Watch Scheme?
   
   Yes □ 1  No □ 2  Don’t know □ 3

3. Do you know who your local Neighbourhood Watch Scheme Co-ordinator is?
   
   Yes □ 1  No □ 2

4. Do you know how to contact your local Neighbourhood Watch Scheme Co-ordinator?
   
   Yes □ 1  No □ 2

Contact with Neighbourhood Watch Scheme

5. Have you had any contact with your local Neighbourhood Watch Scheme?
   
   Yes □ 1 (Go to question 6)  No □ 2 (Go to question 7)
6. How helpful did you find this contact?

- Very helpful □ 1
- Helpful □ 2
- Not very helpful □ 3
- Not at all helpful □ 4

7. Have you received any written information from your local Neighbourhood Watch Scheme?

- Yes □ 1 (Go to question 8)
- No □ 2 (Go to question 9)

8. How helpful did you find this written information?

- Very helpful □ 1
- Helpful □ 2
- Not very helpful □ 3
- Not at all helpful □ 4

9. Are you aware of any meetings that have been organised about Neighbourhood Watch in your local area?

- Yes □ 1 (Go to question 10)
- No □ 2 (Go to question 14)

10. Who organised the meeting(s)? (Tick all that apply.)

- A. Neighbourhood Watch Scheme Co-ordinator □ 1
- B. Neighbourhood Policing Team □ 2
- C. Community Safety Partnership □ 3
- D. District Policing Partnership □ 4
- E. Don’t Know □ 5
- F. Other (please specify below): □ 6

11. Did you attend any of these meeting(s)?

- Yes □ 1 (Go to question 13)
- No □ 2 (Go to question 12)

12. Why did you not attend any of these meeting(s)?

- I am not interested □ 1
- The venue(s) was not suitable □ 2
- The venue(s) was not accessible □ 3
- The time did not suit me □ 4
- Another reason (please specify below) □ 5
13. How helpful did you find these meetings?

Very helpful 1  
Helpful 2  
Not very helpful 3  
Not at all helpful 4  

Involvement with Neighbourhood Watch Scheme

14. Are you involved in any way with your local Neighbourhood Watch Scheme?

Yes 1 (Go to question 15)  
No 2 (Go to question 16)

15. In what ways are you involved with your local Neighbourhood Watch Scheme? (Tick all that apply.)

A. Promoting the scheme in the local community (distributing leaflets/newsletters etc.) 1  
B. Involvement in meetings with Neighbourhood Policing Team 2  
C. Involvement in meetings with Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator 3  
D. Working with other bodies (community / voluntary groups etc.) 4  
E. Other (please specify below): 5  

If you would like to become more involved in your local Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, please speak to your Scheme Co-ordinator.

Effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch Scheme

16. How effective has Neighbourhood Watch been in the following areas?

Issue

A. Reporting of crime  
B. Assisting local police in detecting crime  
C. Reducing crime  
D. Reducing the fear of crime  
E. Reducing anti-social behaviour  
F. Increasing awareness of Neighbourhood Policing Teams  
G. Improving relations with Neighbourhood Policing Teams  
H. Improving relations with other agencies  
I. Promoting community spirit  
J. Increasing awareness of needs within the community  

Effective 1  
Not effective 2  
Don't know 3  

perceptiveinsight®
17. Please explain your answers to the above question:

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

18. Overall how supportive are you of your Neighbourhood Watch Scheme?

- Very Supportive
- Supportive
- Not very supportive
- Not at all supportive

19. Please explain your answer to the above question:

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

Priorities of Neighbourhood Watch Scheme

20. What do you feel should be the key purpose of Neighbourhood Watch?
   Please place in order of importance the biggest three issues where you live from the following list, where 1 is the most important – please number three boxes only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Reporting of crime</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Assisting local police in detecting crime</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Reducing crime</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. Reducing the fear of crime</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>E. Reducing anti-social behaviour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Improving relations with Neighbourhood Policing Teams</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Increasing awareness of Neighbourhood Policing Teams in the local area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Improving relations within the community with other agencies (voluntary etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Promoting community spirit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Increasing awareness of needs within the community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Other (please specify below):</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

21. What is the single thing that would improve your Neighbourhood Watch Scheme?

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________
22. How should Neighbourhood Watch develop in the next 1-3 years?

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Awareness of Other Partnerships / Organisations

23. Are you aware of the following Partnerships / Organisations in your area?

- Neighbourhood Policing Team
- District Policing Partnership (DPP)
- Community Safety Partnership (CSP)

Yes ☐ 1  No ☐ 2
☐ 1 ☐ 2
☐ 1 ☐ 2

24. Are you aware that DPPs and CSPs will be merging to form new Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) in 2012?

Yes ☐ 1  No ☐ 2

25. Would you be interested in becoming a PCSP Member?

Yes ☐ 1  No ☐ 2

26. Do you have any other comments regarding Neighbourhood Watch?

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

General Views on Crime and Safety

27. How safe do you feel in your local community?

- Very safe ☐ 1
- Fairly Safe ☐ 2
- A bit unsafe ☐ 3
- Very unsafe ☐ 4
28. If you had a concern about crime or safety in your local area, who would you contact / report the crime to? (Tick all that apply.)

A. Neighbourhood Policing Team
B. Neighbourhood Watch Scheme Co-ordinator
C. Community Safety Partnership
D. District Policing Partnership
E. No one
F. Don’t Know
G. Other (please specify below):

29. In the last year, have you been a victim of crime in your local community?

Yes □ 1 (Go to question 30) No □ 2 (Go to question 31)

30. Who did you report the crime to? (Tick all that apply.)

A. Neighbourhood Policing Team
B. Neighbourhood Watch Scheme Co-ordinator
C. Community Safety Partnership
D. District Policing Partnership
E. No one
F. Other (please specify below):

31. How long have you lived in this area?

Up to 1 year □ 1 Between 1 and 3 years □ 2 Between 3 and 5 years □ 3 More than 5 years □ 4

32. In the last year, has crime where you live:

Risen □ 1 Stayed the same □ 2 Fallen □ 3 Don’t know □ 4
Questions about You

The following are optional questions and you do not need to complete these if you do not want to. The responses will help us to compare differences in opinion among different groups of people.

33. Gender: Male □ 1 Female □ 2

34. Age group: 16-24 □ 1 25-40 □ 2 41-60 □ 3 61+ □ 4

35. Religion: Protestant □ 1 Roman Catholic □ 2 None □ 3 Other □ 4

If ‘Other’, please specify: __________________________________________

36. Which of the following ethnic groups do you belong to? (Please tick one box only.)

White □ 1 Bangladeshi □ 6 Mixed (please describe): □ 11

Chinese □ 2 Other Asian □ 7

Irish Traveller □ 3 Black Caribbean □ 8

Indian □ 4 Black African □ 9 Other (please describe): □ 12

Pakistani □ 5 Other Black □ 10

37. If you are willing to be contacted as a follow-up to this survey, please list your contact details below:

Name: __________________________________________

Contact Telephone Number: ____________________________

Email address: ________________________________________

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey.

Please put your completed survey in the envelope provided. The envelope will be collected by someone from your local Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.
Appendix B - Stakeholders’ survey

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH STAKEHOLDERS’ SURVEY

This survey can be completed online at http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/v.asp?i=40299ovstx.

Everything you tell us is treated in confidence. The results will not be used in any way in which they can be associated with you or your address.

Neighbourhood Watch involvement

1. In which role(s) are you involved in Neighbourhood Watch?
   A. Neighbourhood Watch Scheme Co-ordinator
   B. Other (please specify below):

2. Has your involvement in Neighbourhood Watch been worthwhile?
   Yes  □ 1
   No   □ 2

3. Please explain your answer to the above question:

4. How would you rate the level of priority attributed to Neighbourhood Watch by:

   You               High □ 1          Medium □ 2          Low □ 3         Don’t know □ 4
   Your organisation □ 1               □ 2               □ 3              □ 4
   Partner organisations □ 1           □ 2               □ 3              □ 4
   Local community    □ 1               □ 2               □ 3              □ 4
5. Overall how supportive are you of Neighbourhood Watch?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Supportive</th>
<th>Supportive</th>
<th>Not very supportive</th>
<th>Not at all supportive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Please explain your answer to the above question:

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch

7. How effective has Neighbourhood Watch been in the following areas?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Not effective</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Reporting of crime</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Assisting local police in detecting crime</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Reducing crime</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>D. Reducing the fear of crime</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>E. Reducing anti-social behaviour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>F. Increasing awareness of Neighbourhood Policing Teams</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Improving relations with Neighbourhood Policing Teams</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Improving relations with other agencies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Promoting community spirit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Increasing awareness of needs within the community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Please explain your answers to the above question:

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
9. What information do you use to help assess the effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch? (Tick all that apply.)

A. Contact with Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators
B. Contact with members of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme
C. Contact with the general public
D. Contact with Neighbourhood Policing Teams
E. Contact with District Policing Partnerships
F. Contact with Community Safety Partnerships
G. Reduction in anti-social behaviour
H. Reduction in crime
I. Other (please specify below):

______________________________
______________________________
______________________________

10. Please explain briefly what impact Neighbourhood Watch has had on policy or ways of working within your organisation / community:

______________________________
______________________________
______________________________

11. Is Neighbourhood Watch in Northern Ireland adequately resourced?

Yes ☐ 1
No ☐ 2

12. Please explain your answer to the above question:

______________________________
______________________________
______________________________

Neighbourhood Watch in the future

13. What is the single thing that would improve Neighbourhood Watch?

______________________________
______________________________
______________________________
14. How should Neighbourhood Watch develop in the next 1-3 years?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

15. Do you have any other comments regarding Neighbourhood Watch?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

16. If you are willing to be contacted as a follow-up to this survey, please list your contact details below:

   Name: ________________________________________________________________

   Organisation: __________________________________________________________

   Contact Telephone Number: _____________________________________________

   Email address: __________________________________________________________

   ________________________________

   Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey.

   During the next week, someone from your local Neighbourhood Policing Team will call and collect the completed survey.
Appendix C - Topic guide

Topic guide - Interviews

Introduction (3 mins)
- Introduce research and self
- Explain how interviews work – no right or wrong answers etc
- Explain use of audio recorder
- Explain confidentiality and reporting procedures
- Participant introductions – name, job role and area of responsibility

Scheme area introduction (2 mins)
- Number of schemes? How long have they been in operation?
- Number of personnel involved and in which roles?
- Key areas of responsibility?

Overview of the schemes (5 mins)
- Overall to what extent do you think the Neighbourhood Watch scheme is achieving its objectives?
- Which parts work well?
- Which parts could be improved?
- What are the key elements that make a scheme successful?
  - Personnel involved
  - Commitment of the NW co-ordinators
  - Incidence of crime in the area
  - Seeing results
  - Interaction of the stakeholders and the community

Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour (10 mins)
- To what extent is crime and anti-social behaviour an issue in Northern Ireland?
- PROBE why do you say that? What types of crime and anti-social behaviour in particular?
- To what extent is fear of crime an issue?
- What types of crime and anti-social behaviour prompt residents to establish NW schemes?
- Have Neighbourhood Watch schemes contributed to reducing the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour – in what ways?
- What differences do you see in the various areas compared to before the NW schemes were established?
Incidence of helping the police detect crime (10 mins)

- What actions do the schemes take to help the police detect crime?
- To what extent does your organisation provide support to the Neighbourhood Watch scheme in this area?
- Do you feel there is a good level of communication between the various stakeholders within Neighbourhood Watch?
  - Any issues currently?
  - What level of communication is preferred?
  - What channels of communication are preferred?

Enhancing the relationships between the community and other stakeholders (10 mins)

- What impact does Neighbourhood Watch have on the relationship between the community, your organisation and other stakeholders?
- Are there any areas in which further work needs to be undertaken to strengthen relationships? Probe…
  - How do you see this happening?
  - Who needs to take the lead on this?
  - Who else needs to be involved?

Promoting community spirit (5 mins)

- Are there any missed opportunities for promoting community spirit? What are they?

Development of Neighbourhood Watch (10 mins)

- How do you see the development of the Neighbourhood Watch scheme over the next five years?
- What are the 3 to 5 key strategic actions to be considered to make this happen?
- Who needs to take the lead on each of these strategic actions to make them happen?
- Who else needs to be involved to ensure the successful delivery of the strategic actions?
- What are the resource implications of these actions?

Conclusion (5 mins)