



Street Watch West Midlands Guide

Thank you for your interest in street watch, a community patrol initiative that helps you make a difference where you live. Street watch gives you and your community an opportunity to keep your area safe, including just walking round your neighbourhood, which can really help. Local police keep in regular contact with street watch members to share information and work in partnership with you.

As a Street Watch member, you will patrol your local area for at least two hours every month, at times which suit you. You will patrol in a minimum of two members, talk to people you meet and encourage them to take an active interest in keeping your area safe. So your neighbours know what you are there for, you will wear a high visibility street watch jacket.

Your local street watch co-ordinator will give you day to day support, so you know what to look out for and you will also have support from your local police. This webpage contains some resources to help you decide if you would like to become part of the street watch scheme. It is a programme that has worked elsewhere in the country and is now established in the west midlands.

For further information, please contact your local neighbourhood policing team by searching the west midlands police website which has details of your local neighbourhood team.

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1. Commitment and consent

1.1 Street Watch is a scheme run by the community for the community in partnership with the police. Street watch is about walking your local area as a good citizen and to help take responsibility for your local areas and to help tackle the low level issues that impact most on your communities and quality of life.

1.2 Street watch is about walking around your community just like any other resident. However, street watch members will walk in pairs wearing high visibility jackets in order to provide visible levels of reassurance, to promote good citizenship, to increase the feelings of safety and to engage positively with those who try and undermine our communities and in an appropriate manner to educate and bring to their attention the impact that their behaviour has.

1.3 Street watch members commit to patrolling their streets for an average of 2 hours a month.

1.4 Street watch members must understand that at all times they are responsible and accountable for their own actions to be lawful, reasonable, appropriate and justified.

2. About street watch

2.1 Street watch can be considered a natural extension to schemes such as Neighbourhood watch. Street watch activity can operate alongside existing neighbourhood watch schemes or can be run independently.

2.2 Street watch members are ordinary citizens with no police powers. If they see anything suspicious, all they are asked to do is report it to the police. They can also give active support to the community by providing reassurance and a visible presence to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

2.3 Groups are managed by a co-ordinator who keeps a list of volunteers and provides advice, guidance and support in consultation with the local police.

2.4 Street watch groups are not run by the police but work in partnership with the support of police. The ethos of this partnership is central to the foundation and existence of the organisation.

2.5 The purpose of street watch is: –

a. To reduce undue fear of crime by providing accurate information about risks and by promoting a sense of security and community spirit, particularly amongst the more vulnerable members of the community.

b. To assist the police by promoting effective communication and the prompt reporting of activity that gives rise to concern.

c. To prevent crime by improving security, increasing vigilance, creating and maintaining a caring and cohesive community and reducing opportunities for crime by increasing crime prevention awareness.

3. Code of conduct

3.1 A code of conduct is a means of promoting a common understanding amongst members of street watch regarding the expectations of conduct when representing street watch and in their dealings with one another and the public.

3.2 Internal conduct members of Street Watch should work collaboratively to promote the principles of street watch by:

- a. Respecting the diverse nature of Street Watch and its members
- b. Representing the right of each member to speak and represent their views
- c. Respecting each other's' right to hold different views
- d. Refraining from comments that are defamatory, indecent, offensive, abusive, irrelevant, undermining, trivial or objectionable in language or nature. Always speaking well of each other and street watch in public
- f. Always being punctual to street watch meetings and functions when representing street watch.
- g. Respect the needs, limitations and wishes of patrol partners.
- h. To represent and support the police and community partnership aims and objectives of street watch and not personal or other agendas.
- i. No member of street watch shall release any statement to any national media on any matters concerning street watch unless the content of any statement has been agreed by the coordinator and a Police Media and Communications officer.
- j. No member may maintain or use their own data base of member's details. No member may share a password or allow access to the site with non-members unless it is part of recognised partnership activity.
- l. No member's spouse, partner, family or friend, who is not a member of street watch, may take part in any activities on behalf of a member.

3.3 External conduct

- a. Street watch members must at all times act in a non-confrontational manner.
- b. Members must act within the law and are accountable for their own behaviour, actions and conduct.
- c. Under no circumstances are street watch members to display racism, sexism or any other form of discrimination towards any other member and any other person. To do so may be unlawful.
- d. No member shall carry anything that can be perceived to be dangerous and that could inflict bodily harm to a person or damage to property.
- e. Members of street watch shall not divulge any confidential or privileged information that they may have acquired as a result of their membership of street watch.
- f. No member of street watch may exploit his or her membership for personal advantage or benefit.
- g. Members of street watch must at all times act in a manner that will uphold and promote the aims and objectives of street watch. (See the Constitution). Street watch members will not engage in local political issues whilst representing street watch. Street watch is not a lobbying group and not affiliated to any political party.
- i. Street watch members will at all times act with courtesy and politeness providing public reassurance.

- j. Street watch members must wear street watch high visibility jackets and walk in pairs when on patrol.
- k. Street watch members must not drive vehicles whilst on patrol or to or from patrols.
- l. Street watch pairs must carry at least one mobile phone whilst on patrol
- m. Street watch pairs should register their patrol on the Street watch area website 24 hours prior to any patrol.
- n. Street Watch members must at all times remember that they are wearing the crest of their local police force and must act in a manner that is not going to undermine the essential nature of the partnership relationship.

4. Health and safety risk assessment

- a. A flexible and dynamic risk assessment should exist for each street watch area and be regularly updated. This document should be consulted by all members.
- b. Health and Safety Issues should form a standard agenda item at all meetings.
- c. Street watch members should comply with all control measures around identifiable risks to minimise the potential for risk.
- d. Where an unexpected event occurs, street watch members should conduct a dynamic risk assessment before engaging in the activity.

5. Child / Vulnerable adult policy

- a. Street watch members must not accept any parental, guardian or carer responsibilities for children or vulnerable adults.
- b. Unless in life saving or emergency situations, there must be no unnecessary or inappropriate physical contact with children or vulnerable adults.
- c. Street watch members will always patrol in a minimum of two.
- d. If a child makes a disclosure regarding a crime or criminal offence, the police must be informed at the earliest opportunity.
- e. If a child or vulnerable person is intoxicated or in need of assistance, then the appropriate emergency service should be contacted immediately.
- f. If a child is found in possession of unlawful substances then the police must be called.
- g. All street watch members are police vetted prior to joining to volunteer level.
- h. If there is a concern regarding a child's or vulnerable adult's physical or mental welfare, then the police must be called.
- i. Street watch members must at all times present themselves as role models and to engage in behaviour that sets the appropriate example.
- j. Street watch members must be socially inclusive of the youth community and seek to establish their community needs.
- k. Street watch members may take photo or video recordings within public spaces of matters occurring within public spaces to capture or preserve evidence of a criminal offence or anti-social behaviour.
- l. Street watch members have no powers in law and must not move children or vulnerable children away from locations. The police should be called if such an intervention is required.
- m. Street Watch members can observe and monitor the behaviour of children through a physical presence.

6. Practical patrol guidance

6.1 Street watch is about residents supporting their own communities. This guide is produced and supported by street watch members themselves as a general good advice guide regarding their walks. This guidance remains flexible and any street watch group can suggest amendments or additions. This guide should be reviewed frequently by members. *'Look, listen and report, but don't have a go'*

- a) Street Watch members must always patrol in a minimum of two. There is no maximum to the number of people who may patrol together but a common sense approach must be adopted.
- b) You don't have to patrol a pre-planned route but be aware and familiar of your location at all times.
- c) You must have access to a mobile phone.
- d) Follow Street Watch written advice and guidelines and that given by local police.
- e) Engage but avoid confrontational behaviour and conflict. Street watch members can engage appropriately with people and where necessary point out the behaviour that may undermine a community. Street watch members should not confront or enter into any confrontational situation. By 'engaging', this means to speak positively with those who try and undermine our communities and in an appropriate manner to educate and bring to their attention the impact that their behaviour has. It is also about being inclusive of others and building relationships with others. Members of street watch are not required or expected to engage with any persons who is suspected of being about to commit a crime or having committed a crime. Under these circumstances, the duty of members on patrol is to report any suspicious person or vehicle in the neighbourhood to the police. Street watch members shall withdraw from any scene or incident forthwith upon any hostility or threat being used and shall not confront the individuals. On withdrawing to a safe location, members are to call the police on '999' NOTHING herein contained shall restrict the rights of any member as an individual to defend him or herself using reasonable force as stated by law if faced with a situation where the member or any other person is subjected to actual or reasonably anticipated violence.
- f) If in doubt call the police.
- g) Always stay within the law.
- h) Remember you are providing a visible sense of reassurance, an opportunity to observe what is happening in your communities and acting as a community point of contact. You are not directly tackling or confronting crime.
- i) Develop community links.
- j) Encourage people to be observant
- k) Street watch members must wear a high visibility jacket during patrols. This will help identify themselves as street watch members and also be a health and safety precaution if patrolling in the evenings when light is reduced. It will also assist police patrols to identify members if called to an area. Street watch members are Police vetted for suitability.
- m) Street watch should be concerned about local crime and disorder issues. However, Street watch is not a political lobbying group around issues such as housing development.
- n) Under no circumstances should street watch members drive or use motorised vehicles whilst on street watch Patrols. This includes driving to and from locations. To do so may have insurance implications and secondly, ordinary driving may become compromised if observing for any community issues.

o) Pet dogs may accompany members on patrol under the following conditions. Dogs must be covered by independent 3rd party insurance, kept on a lead at all times and must not be a breed of 'dangerous' dog or Section 1 dog as defined under the 'Dangerous Dog Act'

6.2 Street watch is not about policing, it is about good citizenship, walking around saying hello and being friendly. It is also not about directing attention specifically at youth groups, it is about looking at all aspects of supporting a better community. The presence of community observers will have a significant and positive impact on reassurance and quality of life issues.

6.3 By joining street watch, members accept that the group is run by themselves as members of the community. Individual members have the responsibility for their own safety, actions and conduct. Street watch is not a police run scheme and members are not classed as police volunteers. However, street watch is supported by the local police. Members accept the above as guidance that must be followed.

7. Induction programme and development

- a. At the start of a new scheme, street watch applicants receive a presentation by police, followed by a question and answer session, in total lasting about 1 hour. The presentation covers the concept of street watch, history, principles and expectations. The central theme is about good citizenship.
- b. All new members receive a copy of the 'street watch Guide'
- c. Street watch members have access to all information and guidance in the member's area of the website. On their first patrol, it is recommended that a Street Watch member or pair is accompanied by a uniformed police officer or PCSO. Alternatively a new street watch member can be accompanied by an experienced street watch member.
- d. During street watch meetings, there is a standing agenda of 'Patrol Issues and feedback' here members de-brief their experiences for group learning.
- e. A police officer or PCSO may attend meetings to offer continued advice and guidance.

8. Personal responsibility, liability and accountability

- 8.1 a. The guidance is consulted with and agreed by members. Updates can be made after consultation with, and agreement by the street watch committee.
- b. Members understand that street watch is a voluntary association.
- c. A copy of all documents are available to members via their area websites
- d. Street watch is not a legal person and as such does not have powers of whatever nature which might be in law to act or be acted upon.
- e. Insurance details can be found on the website of the Street Watch insurance broker's [www.accessinsurance.co.uk/street watch](http://www.accessinsurance.co.uk/street%20watch)
- f. There is Public Liability and Personal Accident Insurance in force for all street watch schemes who are advised to Access Insurance, have paid the premium and which have received confirmation of cover. Personal Accident Insurance is provided to all members under the age of 80. It is a matter for individual street watch members if they wish to take out additional personal accident / injury cover or public liability insurance.
- g. All individual members are to familiarise themselves with the Insurance cover for personal accident and public liability and know that in any other circumstances they act in their own capacity as individuals and liability will be in that capacity

h. The brochure for the insurance cover setting out the terms and conditions will be sent to each scheme and a copy will be on the Access Insurance website

8.2 Street watch members are members of the public walking their streets just like any other member of the public. Like any person, as a street watch member you are responsible for your own actions to be lawful, reasonable, proportionate and justified. There is no organisation liability accepted for the individual actions of street watch members or any injury to members resulting from patrols or the actions of others.

8.3 Street watch is run by the community for the community. Street watch members have no powers other than what is stated in law for any citizen. Street watch is about promoting the concept of good citizenship. There is no training requirement, beyond the induction and development, or expectation for individuals to take risks or engage in any exceptional activity. Street watch members make their own judgements in acting as good citizens. Like any member of the public, street watch members have the personal accountability to observe, report or challenge in a manner that is lawful and appropriate.

8.4 Although extremely rare and unlikely, anyone could find themselves in a position where they are faced with witnessing a challenging situation. Street watch provides you with no additional equipment or training to manage such events because it is about what you would do as a good citizen. The principle of street watch is that a good citizen should 'do something and not nothing'. Street Watch guidance advises that the safest option if a confrontational situation is likely is not to engage and to dial 999.

9. Starting a street watch Scheme

9.1 To commence a scheme the local community needs to have 10 people who are willing to commit 2 hours a month to patrolling their communities.

9.2 If there are over 10 interested individuals at the start of the scheme, then these members are placed on a waiting list until a space becomes available.

9.3 A website page is set up for each scheme. There is a facility for people to book patrols via the website which is compulsory. Messages can also be left and received via the website.

9.4 Members on their first patrols should be either supported by experienced members, a Police Officer or PCSO.

9.5 All members must read the street watch guide before their first patrol.

11.6 To request a Street Watch scheme for your area residents should contact their local neighbourhood police team or email: streetwatch@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk

10. Public liability and accident /Injury insurance

10.1 Street Watch schemes are covered by Public Liability and Accident Injury Insurance.

10.2 There is an age limit of 18-80 under public liability but members must meet all the police vetting checks.

10.3 Under Personal accident, the upper age limit is 80 but the permanent total disablement cover is only provided for those under 65. As a general rule it is linked to not being able to attend to any business or occupations as a result of injuries. Individual members wanting to extend this cover to over 65 may take out additional individual insurance at their own cost. The lower age limit for membership is 18 years.

10.4 Street watch schemes are capped to a maximum number of members. Only members listed on the area website 'member's area' are covered.

10.5 Insurance covers total numbers and not named individuals. Hence the membership can be changed without updating the insurance.

10.6 Access Underwriting Ltd are the appointed brokers for Street Watch schemes.

10.8 Details of the insurance cover is contained within the insurance scheme brochure which is available on the area website or on the access Insurance website Street Watch page www.accessinsurance.co.uk/streetwatch.

11. Body Worn Video

*The ethos of Street Watch is 'look, see, report but don't have a go' and it is very much about citizenship and not policing. With the advances of modern technology the availability and use of Body Worn Video (BWV) is becoming more and more common. There is absolutely **NO** expectation that Street Watch members have to deal with confrontation and the current view of West Midlands Police (WMP) is that BWV will not be provided. Although there are many advantages of BWV there are occasions when its use may promote confrontation, especially amongst individuals who do not wish to be recorded. Some Street Watch Coordinators have expressed a desire to use BWV as part of their patrols. If groups do decide to wear BWV then the below guidance must be followed.*

11.1 Street Watch Volunteers who choose to wear their own Body Worn Video Cameras do so at their own risk and financial cost.

11.2 Body Worn Videos will only be used for the recording of evidential material and will not be recording continuously when on patrol. **Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights: Right to a Private and Family Life.** Cameras must not be left recording constantly whilst on general patrol. Street Watch Volunteers are also covered by this right and so volunteers should not record unless there is an evidential reason to do so.

11.3 Any evidential footage needs to be made available to WMP at all times.

11.4 Unless it has been seized as evidence by West Midlands Police the data retrieved and stored from a volunteers personal Body Worn Video Camera remains the responsibility of the volunteer and the publication of any footage or images obtained should not be circulated routinely.

11.5 Volunteers should not to publicise or share via any means any footage or images obtained via Body Worn Video whilst on Street Watch Patrols without the prior permission of the Street Watch lead for West Midlands Police.

11.6 Members using BWV are responsible for their own training which needs to cover use and secure storage of data.

11.7 Unless submitted to the police as evidence all body worn footage is to be destroyed after 30 days.