

What are Neighbourhood Wardens?

Wardens are the eyes and ears of a community, they identify problems and are able to suggest, and often implement, solutions (for example cleaning up litter and graffiti, better surveillance and promoting a stronger community spirit). The idea of Wardens originally came from Holland, but Wardens are found across the world. The USA has Wardens in their Business District areas and they are funded directly by business rather than through the state. Town Centre Wardens have been in this country since the early 90's (for example Cambridge, Ipswich, Bury and Gt. Yarmouth have had town centre Wardens or rangers for many years)

- A Neighbourhood Warden provides a uniformed, semi-official presence in a residential area with the aim of improving quality of life.
- Wardens can promote community safety, assist with environmental improvements and housing management, and also contribute to community development.
- Wardens should be supervised by a scheme manager and have the support of local residents and key agencies like the police.
- Wardens may patrol, provide concierge duties or act as 'super caretakers'.

What are Street Wardens?

- Street Wardens programme began on 1 August 2001. They provide highly visible uniformed patrols in town and village centres, public areas and neighbourhoods.
- They will build on the Neighbourhood Wardens Programme, currently funding 85 schemes which are showing promising early results.
- Street Wardens are similar to Neighbourhood Wardens, but their emphasis is on caring for the physical appearance of the area. They tackle environmental problems such as litter, graffiti and dog fouling and have the power to produce on the spot fines in relation to this.
- They also help to deter anti-social behaviour; reduce the fear of crime; and foster social inclusion.

Why have Wardens?

Over the years, communities have lost many semi-official people from their areas such as Park Wardens, Milkmen, rent collectors etc. These people often provided a reassuring presence on the streets. In many areas of the Country, the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour has stopped many people being able to live full lives, in particular the elderly and BME groups. Wardens are able to reduce not only the fear of crime, but actual crime by providing a physical presence on the streets.

Schemes are tailored to meet the needs of each area with the community being involved right from the start of the project. Schemes need to develop robust implementation plans detailing their objectives. Government Office provides support and guidance (along with technical consultants) to all schemes and assesses implementation plans.

Is this just policing on the cheap?

No. Wardens have no powers above any other citizen (except those relating to on the spot fines). However, working in close relationships with the Police, Wardens can have a significant effect on reducing crime, the fear of crime and deterring anti social behaviour. Although Wardens have a highly distinctive uniform, schemes have gone to great lengths to ensure that it does not resemble Police uniform.

How are Wardens funded?

- Most schemes are run by the local authority who fund up to 50% of costs. The remaining funding is from ODPM. Schemes will be funded from ODPM until March 2004 when schemes are then expected to be mainstreamed within Council budgets.

How many schemes are there?

- Nationally, there are now around 200 schemes employing approximately 800 Wardens.
- Within this region, there are 3 Neighbourhood Wardens schemes and 13 Street Warden Schemes (with Government funding) at the following locations:

Dacorum (NW)
Huntingdon (NW)
Norwich (NW)

Basildon (SW)
Bedford (SW)
Bury & Lowestoft (SW)
Cambridge (SW)
Colchester (SW)
Huntingdonshire (SW)
Ipswich (SW)
Luton (SW)
Norwich (SW)
Peterborough (SW)
Thurrock (SW)
Welwyn Hatfield (SW)