



Wardens bring peace of mind to r



left: Neighbourhood wardens patrol on foot or with bicycles and vans.
below: Elderly people feel less vulnerable with wardens visiting them to see if they need help.



How neighbourhood wardens can help improve housing estates

Neighbourhood wardens have been a success in bringing peace of mind to many residents and saved money for housing estate managers.

Here we show how wardens have helped to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and for those housing associations wanting to start new schemes, how to raise funds and manage new warden services.

Neighbourhood wardens have been recognised as a key element of the Government's neighbourhood renewal programme. They improve the quality of life of residents and contribute to clean and safe improvements. Wardens encourage local people to respect one another and show respect for the area in which they live. An independent national evaluation of wardens found them to be a 'renewal intervention that works'. The success of wardens is further illustrated by 84 per cent of the first two phases of warden schemes being retained by their parent organisations after the government's contribution to their funding ended.

"The warden programme is a gem! Neighbourhood wardens provide a highly visible local presence that is reassuring and valuable to local communities. They can provide a vital early warning system about the overall health of a neighbourhood. This can enable housing providers such as housing associations to prepare and implement a specific range of interventions that will ensure the continued attractiveness of the neighbourhood, which ultimately benefits their own financial bottom line."

Angus Kennedy OBE, Chief Executive, Community Regeneration Partnership Ltd.

What wardens can do for you

- Helping to manage housing estates through identifying voids, providing new resident introduction packs about the neighbourhood and responding to vandalism and anti-social behaviour.
- Increasing community safety by patrolling an area and conducting security inspections in homes.
- Improving the environment, by removing litter and graffiti, reporting abandoned cars and dog fouling, reporting and disposing of drug paraphernalia.
- Linking local residents and key agencies such as the local authority and the police. They help develop and manage Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABC's) and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) in liaison with local landlords and the police.
- Engaging young people, running after school clubs, sports projects and developing junior warden schemes that promote good citizenship and respect for individuals and the community.
- Assisting the elderly and vulnerable people, helping with household maintenance, shopping, advice and bringing peace of mind.
- Bringing the community together, as they are recognised and trusted by local people as the 'eyes and ears of the community'. They can contribute to community cohesion by making agencies aware of tensions and problems at an early stage, helping to prevent their escalation. Wardens can help refugees and asylum seekers become part of their new community.



right: Neighbourhood Wardens on patrol in Hull report a vandalised garage.
below: Funded by Greets Green NDC, and managed by the Accord Housing Association, wardens teach 'kerb craft' skills to young residents.



"Working closely with RSLs has resulted in improved quality of life for residents in Walsall. RSLs have realised the benefit of the wardens and have galvanised their resources to take advantage of this new public service, in creating sustainable and cohesive communities where people want to live and thus contribute to their localities."
Bashir Ahmed, General Manager, Walsall Housing Regeneration Association

"The Wardens play a crucial role in continuing to make Castle Vale a safe place to live. They are part of the core service delivery team at CVCHA, providing support to the community and reducing the amount of money once spent on criminal damage and vandalism."
Pete Richmond, Chief Executive, Castle Vale Community Housing Association, East Midlands

Independent evaluation and evidence of success

Neighbourhood warden pilot schemes started in 2000 and 250 schemes were set up employing some 1500 wardens. These schemes were part-funded by central government for three years and thus subject to a rigorous independent evaluation.

The evaluation of the pilot schemes. (Evaluation of neighbourhood warden programme, SDD 2003) identified a number of significant changes that could be attributed to having warden schemes in the area:

- the overall crime rate in warden areas had declined by 28 per cent compared with a slight increase in comparator areas;
- wardens had reduced fear of crime particularly amongst older people, with a 6.5 per cent decline in worry about bogus callers in warden areas but a 4.9 per cent increase in comparator areas;
- 25 per cent of residents reported an increase in satisfaction with their neighbourhoods, particularly with the reduction in the level of graffiti, fly-tipping, litter, dog fouling and abandoned cars.

Warden schemes also represent real value for money. Even assuming that only ten percent of crime reduction can be attributed to wardens, that's still an overall cost saving. And there are uncoded benefits such as improved quality of life, reduced fear of crime and environmental improvements.

About 25 per cent of the 250 pilot warden schemes part-funded by ODPM were run by housing associations and so they too benefited from these improvements.

What's in it for housing associations?

Housing associations have a number of responsibilities including day-to-day and long term property management functions as well as contracts with their residents, the local authority and statutory responsibilities. Wardens can support housing associations and registered social landlords in the discharge of their duties in a number of ways.

Like Government, housing associations have to comply with Gershon efficiency savings – requiring efficiency savings year on year without reducing services - through reductions in damage, removal of graffiti etc. Wardens can certainly help achieve those savings.

Wardens also help housing associations discharge their duty of care to their tenants of all ages and their housing stock, including responding to and helping to prevent anti-social behaviour.

All housing associations are required to have a strategy for tackling anti-social behaviour. Recent research independently carried out by MORI for the Housing Corporation found that 72 per cent of housing association tenants felt wardens were best placed to reduce and prevent anti-social behaviour.

The current round of Audit Commission inspections of housing associations will be looking for links to local renewal strategies and checking if they are meeting tenants' needs – dealing with anti-social behaviour is always a significant concern of tenants.

Wardens are most successful when they work in their own neighbourhood. Housing association wardens model good citizenship and respect to their neighbours as well as providing local job opportunities for housing association tenants. This helps build vital local social capital and bridges the gap between 'officialdom' and residents.



left: Wardens working with young residents on a 'litter pick up' making them aware of environmental responsibility. below: Greets Green NDC warden shows residents how to set personal alarms.



Where does the money come from?

There are many funding streams that can be used to fund warden schemes as demonstrated by the large number of warden schemes set up that have never received any central government ring-fenced funding and the 84 per cent of warden schemes that were sustained when government pump priming ended.

Areas that already have neighbourhood management find that wardens provide them with both the quick wins on crime and grime as well as longer term solutions to some of the neighbourhood's problems. Wardens can therefore be funded through a neighbourhood management approach.

Some housing associations like Wyre Forest have provided wardens by allocating a percentage of their service charges towards funding a warden scheme.

Stock transfers and the development of new housing provides a real opportunity to factor wardens into service charges from the beginning. For example, Castle Vale set up neighbourhood management at the end of their Housing Action Trust and as part of their forward plans they costed wardens in for the next 10 years.

There are a number of other sources of funding available that can be used to set up and run warden schemes. These include mainstream local authority budgets, Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) through the Local Strategic Partnership, and the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund (SSCF) neighbourhood element.

For further information on these see the ODPM website www.odpm.gov.uk

More specifically for housing associations there is also the Housing Corporation Innovation and Good Practice Grants. More information about this scheme can be found at <http://www.housingcorp.gov.uk/resources/IGP/igp.htm>

Possible sources of funding:

- Neighbourhood Renewal Fund
- Safer Stronger Communities Fund (SSCF) neighbourhood element
- Local Area Agreements
- Local authority and housing association mainstream budgets
- A Neighbourhood Management partnership
- New Deal for Communities
- Service charges
- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
- Business sponsorship

Warden resource centres - How they can help

ODPM funds regional warden resource centres across England to support existing warden schemes and help develop new services. They deliver comprehensive training and guidance to wardens and managers much of which is heavily subsidised or free.

Warden Resource Centres

- Eastern (Thurrock)
Tel: 01375 413768
- East Midlands (Nottingham)
Tel: 0115 915 1922
- London (Camden)
Tel: 0207 974 5194
- London (Merton)
Tel: 0208 545 4028
- London (Southwark)
Tel: 0207 928 5897
- North East (Middlesbrough)
Tel: 01642 877 450
- North West (Knowsley)
Tel: 0151 443 4509
- North West (Stockport)
Tel: 0161 474 2501
- South East (Portsmouth)
Tel: 0239 275 2002
- South West (Swindon)
Tel: 01793 464 001
- West Midlands (Walsall)
Tel: 0121 526 8080
- Yorkshire & Humber (Hull)
Tel: 01482 387482

Resource centres are well placed to help housing associations set up a warden service as they are experts in designing, supporting and evaluating new schemes. They have links to other regeneration initiatives and they could organise awareness raising events for staff and residents working with the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS).

For housing associations that have stock spread across wide geographic areas, the resource centre may be able to broker the creation of a shared warden operation between several housing associations, including design and management services.

The resource centres can offer advice and support including:

- how to demonstrate the need for a warden service and make a case for funding;
- professional qualifications assessment of NVQ level 2 in community wardening;
- achieving the NRU Quality Standard (an ODPM quality mark for wardening);
- facilitating good practice study tours;
- signposts to particular services regionally or nationally;
- free membership of regional warden practitioner networks;
- subsidised training for wardens and managers;
- funding advice;
- how to set up volunteer wardens;
- creating warden modern apprenticeships;
- free good practice materials including a comprehensive managers' guide;
- how to set up a junior warden scheme;
- recruitment advice for warden project staff; and
- how to involve residents in evaluating wardens and other renewal activities.



Above: Telford Community Warden, Rupert Weeden, arranges regular 'street soccer' tournaments

Jim Fitzpatrick MP, Minister in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister:

"In ODPM our job is to help to create sustainable communities, places where people want to live, bring up their children, work and invest. Neighbourhood wardens are a proven success and uniquely placed to prevent anti-social behaviour and provide the necessary support and guidance so that people act with consideration and respect for their neighbours, creating real lasting change."

10 steps to setting up a warden scheme

1. Develop an outline project plan – these key points should help.
2. Collect information. Contact the regional warden resource centre. Visit other schemes in the region to find out how they operate and identify best practice. Collect baseline data, statistical information such as crime figures and identify the challenges for your area.
3. Identify potential funding sources and key stakeholders, eg. police, fire service, local authorities, voluntary and community groups.
4. Set up a stakeholder group. Decide on key scheme objectives and project management team.
5. Develop a detailed business plan focussing on your organisation's and the communities needs. Include: objectives, costings, resources and staffing needs, income and outgoings, communication needs, success criteria, timescales and consider sustainability.
6. Identify accommodation for wardens HQ, assess health and safety requirements.
7. Implement recruitment campaign and process including Criminal Records Bureau checks.
8. Implement communication plan so that residents and wider community know of wardens service and develop appropriate corporate identity, including clothing for wardens so that they are easily recognisable.
9. Develop standard procedures and train your wardens. Set up monitoring, evaluation and feedback systems. Begin patrolling.
10. Don't forget to market your services and publicise achievements. Continue planning for the future.

Buying into an existing warden service

The Moat Housing Group invests £20,000 annually into the London Borough of Merton Safer Merton Warden Scheme to employ a warden in Pollards Hill. As a result there has been a discernable reduction in crime which is down nearly 24 per cent. Specifically, residential burglary has reduced nearly 36 per cent, street crime by 37 per cent and vehicle crime is down over 6 per cent.

A survey of residents in June 2005 found that 91 per cent of the residents in Pollards Hill believe it is important to have a neighbourhood warden scheme in their area, showing a real depth of support for the warden service.

The role of the warden scheme extends beyond reducing crime, anti-social behaviour and improving the local environment. Warden Enyi Njoku developed a football league for 5-13 year-olds.

Such has been the success that further funding has been received from the Safer Merton Youth Champions Group. There are now over 100 young people aged 5-13 years in the league, and additional funding has been used to purchase more kits and equipment and to start working with young people of 14 years and over.

Enyi Njoku commented:
"It is important for the players and young people to develop a culture of friendship, team spirit and competition. If this is done on the field and in the streets, it will create community cohesion and help to make Pollards Hill a safer place to live and work."

Residents at the heart of renewal and working in partnership

In 2003 the Ocean New Deal for Communities (NDC) warden scheme in east London extended its service to two housing associations, Bethnal Green & Victoria Housing and Circle Anglia Housing. More housing associations have approached the NDC warden scheme with a view to contracting with the service owing to its success.

MORI poll data shows that in the area that the wardens operate fear of crime has fallen 37 per cent, crime has fallen and perception of environmental problems has also gone down.

This resident led warden scheme is staffed by residents who live on the Ocean estate

providing a real link between the community and the warden team. There is a warden specifically for older and vulnerable people.

In response to huge demand from local young people the scheme is setting up a junior warden programme. The wardens have also undertaken youth leadership training to support their interaction with younger residents.

Wardens also work to combat the problems of drug abuse having been trained by Ocean Parents Against Drugs to develop communication skills for speaking to drug users, young people and parents about substance abuse.

The wardens have assisted and been trained by the London Fire Brigade to reduce the number of household fires in Tower Hamlets by educating

residents about fire safety. Wardens now conduct risk assessments and fit smoke alarms in homes.

This all round service has brought numerous benefits including linking the community, helping to reduce vandalism, graffiti and anti-social behaviour and being a constructive influence on young people.

Wardens can be particularly effective for housing associations because they can reach out to the community, building trust and respect. They are on the frontline serving the community they know. They have the credibility to make new relationships and new partnerships successful, really improving all residents' quality of life."