

Merton Neighbourhood Watch

Members Guide



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Foreword

Merton Council is proud to be supporting and promoting Neighbourhood Watch across our borough. Neighbourhood Watch is well established in the borough but we want to do more to increase coverage and reduce further the crime and anti-social behaviour which is affecting you, our residents.

Neighbourhood Watch members form part of a great network of committed individuals and together, you help deter criminality.

The booklet is designed to highlight the key benefits of Neighbourhood Watches as well as highlighting how Merton can support you and how you can contact key partners. We hope you find this useful and many thanks again for you continued support.

Safer Merton Manager



Introduction

Neighbourhood Watch has been around since 1982 and is proven to reduce crime and the fear of crime in local neighbourhoods. Initially set up to tackle burglary, it now covers the whole range of crime and anti-social behaviour as well as helping to build that all-important sense of neighbourhood.

The co-ordinator who looks after your Watch will have close links with households in a neighbourhood and the local police team who have responsibility for the safety and security of the ward. They will link with the Neighbourhood Watch Manager and Merton Neighbourhood Watch Association who support the scheme.

Living in a Neighbourhood Watch area can reduce crime and the fear of crime by improved home security, greater vigilance and accurate reporting of suspicious incidents to the police.

Neighbourhood watch is free to join.

Now that you are a member of a Neighbourhood Watch what are your responsibilities?

Getting to know your neighbours

Simply knowing who your neighbours are can play a major part in reducing crime, since people are more likely to recognise, and therefore report strangers who should not be there. It might be as simple as saying hello to each other in the street so you can recognise someone out of place.

You may also know, for example, that a neighbour is going on holiday so you will be more vigilant.



Home security

Being part of Neighbourhood Watch means taking some responsibility for your own security. Simple steps will help avoid falling victim to a burglar. You can accomplish this with some very simple and cheap steps.

- Ensuring you have a good five lever mortise lock fitted to your door and that all your windows - especially on the ground floor - can be locked.
- Using timer switches when you are away from home for an extended period.
- Keeping your keys away from the front door. There have been a number of burglaries when keys were reached through the letterbox using a 'fishing rod' device. You could also consider storing any keyless car fobs in a signal-blocking pouch.
- If you live in a house with a side entrance, having a lockable side gate and sensor lights in the back garden.
- Marking the property in your home with your postcode and property number using a permanent marker pen, and photographing unique and precious items.
- Register your property with the free Immobilise service ([immobilise.com](https://www.immobilise.com)), which the police will check against any property they recover.
- You could also ask your local police team carry out a crime prevention survey of your home. Contact details can be found on page 8.



Home fire safety

Neighbourhood Watch has traditionally been linked with the police, but in Merton, Neighbourhood Watch also work very closely with the London Fire Brigade who increasingly focus on preventing fires happening in the first place.

Smoke alarms don't prevent fires but they give you time to get out of your home safely and raise the alarm by calling the fire brigade. If you have a smoke alarm make sure you check the battery once a week.

London Fire Brigade staff can visit your home, offer personal fire safety advice and will also fit free smoke alarms where needed. If you or someone you know would like a visit you can call 08000 28 44 28 or email smokealarms@londonfire.gov.uk. There is also a Text/SMS service for those who are deaf or hard of hearing. You can text the London Fire Brigade 44786 002 1319.

We have included a simple self-assessment form on page 12 in this guide but why not call in the experts?



Keeping an eye on vulnerable neighbours

There are two particularly nasty types of criminal that target our most vulnerable neighbours:

Distraction burglars

Distraction burglary is exactly what it sounds like: suspects will often work together and whilst one 'distracts' the owner the other looks for money and valuables. Many older and vulnerable people do not report this crime, thinking they may have mislaid the stolen property or just because they feel ashamed for falling victim. If you or any of your neighbours do become a victim it is important to report it.

By reporting the incident to the police they will:

- have a greater understanding of how big a problem distraction burglary is in Merton;
- be able to put more resources in the areas where the burglars tend to go.

By telling other people like your neighbours, families and friends you may help to prevent other people from becoming victims.

Rogue traders

These people again will knock on the door and say they are working in the area and will point out something like a loose tile on the person's roof or that their drive needs resurfacing. They grossly overcharge the person and then come back again and again taking more money each time. They may even charge without doing any work.

It is advisable not to let anyone into your home who has not made a previous appointment. Just keeping a watchful eye on those that may be vulnerable and letting the police or trading standards know if you see anything suspicious could be all that is needed to prevent this type of crime.



Ward names and contacts

Abbey

Tel: 020 8649 3584

E-mail: MertonAbbey.SNT@met.police.uk

Cannon Hill

Tel: 020 8721 2455

E-mail: Cannonhill.snt@met.police.uk

Colliers Wood

Tel: 07768 178 370

E-mail: ColliersWood.snt@met.police.uk

Cricket Green

Tel: 020 8649 3576

E-mail: CricketGreen.snt@met.police.uk

Dundonald

Tel: 020 8721 2450

E-mail: Dundonald.snt@met.police.uk

Figges Marsh

Tel: 020 8649 3603

E-mail: FiggesMarsh.snt@met.police.uk

Graveney

Tel: 020 8721 2724

E-mail: MertonGraveney.snt@met.police.uk

Hillside

Tel: 020 8721 2458

E-mail: Hillside.snt@met.police.uk

Lavender Fields

Tel: 020 8721 2744

E-mail: LavenderFields.snt@met.police.uk

Longthornton

Tel: 020 8721 2742

E-mail: Longthornton.snt@met.police.uk

Lower Morden

Tel: 020 8721 2456

E-mail: LowerMorden.snt@met.police.uk

Merton Park

Tel: 020 8721 2451

E-mail: MertonPark.snt@met.police.uk

Pollards Hill

Tel: 020 8649 3604

E-mail: Pollards.snt@met.police.uk

Ravensbury

Tel: 020 8721 2725

E-mail: Ravensbury.snt@met.police.uk

Raynes Park

Tel: 020 8721 2459

E-mail: RaynesPark.snt@met.police.uk

St. Helier

Tel: 020 8649 3575

E-mail: MertonStHelier.snt@met.police.uk

Trinity

Tel: 020 8721 2453

E-mail: Trinity.snt@met.police.uk

West Barnes

Tel: 020 8721 2454

E-mail: WestBarnes.snt@met.police.uk

Wimbledon Park

Tel: 020 8721 2452

E-mail: WimbledonPark.snt@met.police.uk

Wimbledon Village

Tel: 020 8721 2457

E-mail: VW.Village.snt@met.police.uk



What should you report and how?

- If you believe a crime is taking place then you should call 999 – don't hesitate, the emergency services would rather get a well-intentioned call that isn't an emergency than no call at all.
- If you need to report something that has happened but you are not witnessing it at the time then you should call the Police non-emergency number - 101.
- You can report non-urgent crime at www.met.police.uk

There is also a lot of information that your local police team would like to know about, for example any anti-social behaviour like noisy neighbours, abusive and threatening behaviour by both young people or adults and dangerous dogs.

Your police team can also help with other issues, for example if you are concerned about a particular neighbour the police can check to make sure everything is okay.

The council can also help in some circumstances by dealing with noise nuisance or graffiti, the contacts at the end of this guide contain useful numbers to report these.

What should you do if you or your neighbour becomes a victim of crime?

If you return home and you think someone is in your home who shouldn't be there you should phone 999 immediately. Tell the police that there are suspects in your home and wait outside for them to come.

If you return home and it is clear that someone has broken into your home but they have already gone then phone the police non-emergency number to report you have been burgled. Try not to touch anything until the investigating officers have been – there may be important evidence that could be disturbed, such as fingerprints.



What are the benefits of being a member of a Watch?

Being part of an active community who are looking out for one another provides reassurance and peace of mind, whether to those who live on their own and feel isolated or those concerned about leaving their home unoccupied while on holiday.

Advertising your Neighbourhood Watch is vital to its success. As a member you will get a sticker for your window. Street signs can also be put up - these act as a deterrent, highlighting that there is an active scheme in the road or the block of flats.

Your co-ordinator will provide you with crime figures for your local area, crime prevention advice, updates from the police, a newsletter and any other relevant information that will make you and your area safer.

Finally, many insurance companies know that being part of the scheme does help to reduce crime, particularly burglary. Often this will be recognised with a discount on your home contents policies.

All these things and more are brought to a community with Neighbourhood Watch.



Home Fire Safety Self-Assessment

Go through this checklist and see how many you can tick off:

Subject / Question	Answer	Action
1. Smoking -does anyone ever smoke in the property?		
Are there a sufficient number of deep suitable ashtrays provided?		
Is there evidence of careless use of smoking materials eg burns to carpets or furniture?		
2. Hot fat and Kitchen Safety		
Do you cook with hot oil?		
Do you ever leave cooking unattended?		
3. Candle Safety		
Do you use candles for any reason?		
4. Portable Heating Safety		
Do you use portable heating?		
6. Electrical Safety		
Is there any evidence of overloaded electrical sockets or adaptors?		
Do any electrical flexes appear to be in a dangerous condition?		
7. Detection and Warning		
Is there at least one smoke alarm in the home?		
Are all existing smoke alarms working and sited correctly?		
Is the smoke alarm tested every week?		



Subject / Question	Answer	Action
7. Detection and Warning		
Does the occupier change the battery every year or when required?		
Is the alarm suitable for the person living in the premises? eg a deaf person will require a special alarm.		
Was a smoke alarm provided by LFB?		
8. Escape		
Does the occupier have an escape plan?		
Has the occupier practised the plan in the last 6 months?		
Does everyone know what to do if a fire breaks out?		
9. Before Bed Routine		
Does the occupier have a night time routine?		
Do any of the occupants have mobility difficulties?		
Is the escape route clear and can it be used by all occupiers?		
General		
Does the room contain any unexpected risks to firefighters eg cylinders or dialysis machines?		
Having spoken about fire risks with the Brigade, do you know of anyone who may be at risk from fire?		



Fraud and scams

One of the biggest complaints we get from Neighbourhood Watch members and co-ordinators is in relation to scams and fraud.

With fraud on the increase, it is vital you are vigilant and safeguard your personal and financial information. You should be extremely wary of any calls, texts or emails out of the blue asking for your details.

As banks introduce new security systems to protect customers, criminals are targeting customers directly, using scams to obtain passwords, PINs and passcodes, and in some cases, duping people into transferring money directly to the fraudsters.

Remember your bank or the police will never:

- Phone you to ask for your 4-digit card PIN or your online banking password, even by tapping them into the telephone keypad
- Ask you to update your personal details by following a link in a text message
- Ask you to transfer money to a new account for fraud reasons, even if they say it's in your name

If you're asked to call the number given in the text message and the number is unknown to you or suspicious, call your bank on a number that you trust – such as the one on the back of your card – to check the number and message is authentic.

If you receive an unexpected phone call from an organisation, even if it is one you trust, end the call before providing any information or carrying out any action, and take five minutes to think about what is being asked of you. Call the organisation back on a number which you know to be correct, not one that you have been given. Your bank will never mind you verifying they are who they say they are.

Be suspicious of any text message that asks you to provide sensitive personal information, passwords or to make transactions.

Be very wary of clicking on any link in a text message to 'update' or 'verify' account details



Be suspicious of unsolicited emails which are supposedly from a reputable organisation, such as your bank or the tax office, and do not click on any links in the email.

BE SAFE

Suspect anything or anyone you don't know – no matter what or who they claim to be.

Ask questions. Whatever a fraudster tries, you have the power to stay in control.

Find out for certain who you're dealing with. Challenge anything that seems suspect.

End situations that make you uncomfortable. If you feel threatened, contact the police

If you think you have been a victim of fraud you should contact your bank immediately.

You can also contact Action Fraud whose number can be found in the useful contacts section.



Useful contacts

Safer Merton	(020) 8545 4146
Merton Neighbourhood Watch	(020) 8545 3622
Police non-emergency	101
London Fire Brigade (For FREE smoke alarm fitting and fire safety checks)	0800 028 4428
Merton Council	(020) 8274 4901
Abandoned Vehicles	(020) 8274 4902
Anti-social Behaviour Team	(020) 8274 4901
Fly tipping	(020) 8274 4902
Graffiti helpline	(020) 8274 4902
Trading Standards	0808 223 1133
Victim Support	0808 168 9111
CRIMESTOPPERS	0800 555 111
Action Fraud	0300 123 2040

REMEMBER - ALWAYS CALL 999 IN AN EMERGENCY

For further information or to receive this booklet in a different format please contact Neighbourhood Watch

Email: nhw@merton.gov.uk

Twitter: @WatchMerton

