

DECEMBER 2025

OUR NEWS



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Police and crime commissioners to be scrapped

The Home Office have made an **announcement** that Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) will be abolished.

The PCC roles will be absorbed by regional mayors wherever possible, meaning measures to cut crime will be considered as part of wider public services such as education and healthcare.

In areas not covered by a mayor, the role will be taken on by elected council leaders.

The unique circumstances of devolved local government arrangements in Wales will be taken into consideration.

John Hayward-Cripps, Chief Executive of Neighbourhood Watch said:

"This change which will impact the funding and support structures currently in place for many Neighbourhood Watch Associations, and we want to offer our support to them wherever we can."

The transition to the new model will happen at the end of the next electoral cycle in 2028. Read the full story [online](#).



Volunteer recognition awards

P 2

It is so important to us to celebrate the great, often unique, work that our volunteers do.

These awards recognise individuals whose work goes above and beyond - making a real change in their communities.

We received over 350 nominations this year, so these winners really are the best of the best.

To all the wonderful volunteers who were nominated this year, thank you for the amazing work you do.

Innovation and reach - Graham Mallett

Crime prevention - Reg Banks

SimpliSafe

Community health and wellbeing - Sean Edmunds

Young volunteer award - Umar

Special recognition award - Jan Forbes



Safer Streets of Winter of action launched by the Home Office

Following the Safer Streets Summer Initiative, the Home Office has launched a Winter of Action throughout December and January. It is focusing on reducing town centre criminality, shop theft, street crime and anti-social behaviour, as well as issues in the night-time economy including steps to tackle violence and girls – eg alcohol related disorder and spiking.

The action is being led by Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and Deputy Mayors, supported by the Home Office in partnership with Chief Constables and other essential local partners such as councils, schools, health services, business, transport and community organisations. Find out [more](#).



Stay safe and warm this winter with these winter home tips

P 3

WINTER HOME

ROOF MAINTAINANCE

Regular roof maintenance offers numerous benefits that can help protect your home. Repairing any visible damage and clearing gutters & downpipes can stop water ingress and prevent heat loss from your home.

It is important to protect your home and its occupants from the harsh effects of the winter weather. By taking proactive measures, you can create a more comfortable, safe, and energy-efficient home.

PIPE INSULATION

Insulating your pipes is a simple and cost-effective way to protect your home and ensure your plumbing system functions smoothly throughout the winter.

LOOK AFTER THE VULNERABLE

Check on elderly or vulnerable relatives and neighbours to ensure they are warm and have everything they need during the cold winter months.

CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

Regular servicing of your central heating system and gas fires maintains efficiency & safety. Installing carbon monoxide detectors can protect you from this invisible, odourless gas.

BE PREPARED

Have a snow shovel and grit accessible to keep paths and driveways clear. Consider access for post and parcel deliveries. Keep an extra supply of food and medication in case you are unable to go out due to severe weather.

WINDOWS & DOORS

Ensure your home is well-insulated to keep the heat in and reduce energy costs. Check all your windows and doors, seal gaps, and use draft excluders to keep the cold air out.



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£42.50

Neighbourhood Watch Network and Neighbourhood Watch Scotland explore closer collaboration

P 4

Senior leadership from Neighbourhood Watch Network England and Wales and Neighbourhood Watch Scotland (NWS) met in Edinburgh to discuss opportunities for closer collaboration.



Neighbourhood
Watch SCOTLAND

The Association of Scottish Neighbourhood Watches was established in 2006 and became a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) in 2011, rebranding as Neighbourhood Watch Scotland. Today, NWS employs a central team supporting over 670 registered schemes across Scotland, covering more than 58,000 households. Although NWS has separate funding, structure and processes, both organisations share similar missions and visions: reducing crime and supporting community building.

Lesley Clark, Director of Neighbourhood Watch Scotland, said:

"Neighbourhood Watch Scotland is committed to building stronger and safer communities. We can do that best by building better relationships, sharing best practice and amplifying our membership voice. This was a positive and practical conversation, and I'm confident we'll be able to find ways to pool our talents, skills and resources more effectively."

John Hayward-Cripps, Chief Executive of Neighbourhood Watch Network England and Wales, said:

"We are finalising our new strategy and as we look to the future, we are committed to a Britain where neighbours look out for each other. Collaboration drives innovation, and the strength of Neighbourhood Watch as a movement is the impact we have at a local level, regardless of where we live. We share the same aim as our Scottish colleagues: to make our communities safer and better places to live. This conversation is about how we might achieve that more effectively."

£376.6 million worth of parcels stolen last year



Research by Quadient based on Freedom of Information (Fol) requests to UK police forces, has found the value of parcel thefts from doorways (also known as 'porch piracy') has nearly doubled in the last year. The total value of parcels stolen across the UK rose to £376.6 million in the last year, rising from £204 million in 2023.

The report also found that the average value of stolen parcels also went up by 52%, from £66.50 to £102 this year. John Hayward-Cripps, chief executive of Neighbourhood Watch spoke to Times Radio about the issue. He pointed out that online retailers also play an important role in addressing the problem. But building connections with our neighbours can also make a difference. Read the full story [on our website](#).



Keep your home
safe this winter with

Keeping your home safe shouldn't take the sparkle out of the festive season.

As many of us travel to see friends and family, homes may be left empty for days at a time - something opportunistic thieves know well. But we also want to feel safe and secure when spending time at home, too. That's where simple, modern security can make all the difference. Here are some simple winter and festive ways to help keep your home protected:

1. **Put your radio on a winter playlist** – A softly playing talk radio station can make it sound like someone's pottering around indoors. *Not that we stole this idea from a popular film.*
2. **Guard your home with "Operation Snowy Footprints"** – If we are lucky enough to get snow, create a few fresh footprints near your property to make it look recently visited.
3. **Let your curtains multitask** – Thermal curtains keep the warmth in and nosy eyes out, turning your home into a snug little winter grotto - a cosy double win.
4. **Set up a "festive light decoy"** - Use timers or smart plugs to switch fairy lights or lamps on and off at different times throughout the evening. It creates that warm, lived-in glow, and from the outside, it looks like someone's home enjoying a mug of hot chocolate (even if you're miles away).
5. **Give your house a winter check-up** – Creaky gates, loose latches, or dodgy outdoor bulbs can send the wrong signals; a quick once-over keeps things secure and quieter in the wind.
6. **Do a "digital winter tidy"** – Update passwords, disable old smart-home devices, and check which apps still have access to your cameras or security tools.
7. **Give Your Wi-Fi a secret-agent alias** - Rename your network something like "Surveillance Central" or "Definitely Not an Empty House". It won't stop crime, but it might make your neighbours smile, and confusion is a surprisingly good deterrent.
8. **Create a "thief-unfriendly garden"** - Plant prickly winter shrubs near fences and rear windows for a touch of seasonal charm and security. Holly isn't just Christmassy — its festive sprigs make your garden both merry and mildly unwelcoming to unwanted visitors.
9. **Create your own "Neighbourhood Ninja Network"** - Agree with trusted neighbours to keep an eye on each other's homes over the winter - and all year round - and optionally give the Whatsapp group an unnecessarily dramatic name. Something like Winter Watch or Silent Night Security Crew.
10. **Use smart security to protect your home from those on the Naughty List.** Systems like SimpliSafe help deter intruders and send instant alerts, so you know what's happening at home from anywhere.

Plus, SimpliSafe's [Cyber Sale](#) is currently live where you can get a security system for better than half price and a free siren. From all of us at SimpliSafe, we hope you have a safe and Merry Christmas.

SimpliSafe

Connected Together

How to support friends and family with the digital landline switchover

P 6

Landlines are changing and the UK's telephone network is going digital. These changes will affect everyone who has a landline they'd like to keep using.

What's happening?

The analogue network that most home phones work on today is no longer fit for purpose and can't keep up with the demands of modern life. The outdated network will be switched off for all landline providers in January 2027.

BT's new home phone service is called Digital Voice. The landline is not going away, and for most, the switch is simple. No one will be left disconnected.

To make things easier, BT has put together a Conversation Starter Pack – a straightforward, practical guide designed to help you talk with a friend or family member about what the switch means and how you can support them.

What you can do

- Download the Conversation Starter Pack on BT's Connected Together website for helpful advice on how to talk about the switch
- If you, or someone you know has additional needs and needs extra support making the switch, contact the landline provider. BT customers they can register via webform on the Connected Together website or by calling the Customer Care team.
- Talk to a friend, neighbour or family member who might benefit from early support

Start the conversation today.

Find out more at: www.bt.com/about/all-ip/connected-together or call 0330 1234 150.

Protect What Matters: Bringing Neighbourhood Watch Values Home

P 7

As a Neighbourhood Watch member, you already believe in protecting people and property. Wills and Lasting Powers of Attorney (LPAs) do the same for your own household, making sure your wishes are followed and trusted people can step in if something unexpected happens.

Estate planning is simply planning ahead, so those you care about are never left guessing or struggling. It is about clarity, kindness, and control - making sure the right people are in charge, your wishes are known, and your hard-earned assets go where you want them to.

Putting a framework around your wishes helps to:

- Reduce the risk of family disagreements and confusion
- Keep costs and delays to a minimum
- Give the people you trust a clear mandate to act on your behalf
- Ensure loved ones are left to grieve, rather than deal with complicated legalities

Practical protection for everyday families

A few straightforward documents can make all the difference, whatever your age or circumstances:

- A Will clearly states who should inherit your property, savings, and belongings, and who you would want to look after any dependent children.
- LPAs allow you to choose who can manage your finances, property, health, and care decisions if you become unable to decide for yourself.

These steps are not just for later life or large estates. They can be especially important for blended families, unmarried partners, or anyone with children, a mortgage, or savings they want to protect.

Dedicated support for our members

Neighbourhood Watch has partnered with Future-Proof Estate Planning (FPEP), a specialist firm that focuses on treating no two families the same. As a member, you can access an exclusive 20% discount on all their packages, including their most popular:

- x2 Lasting Powers of Attorney with a complimentary single Will - £479 (normally £599)
- x4 Lasting Powers of Attorney with a complimentary mirror Will - £957 (normally £1,199)

You can arrange everything from home - by phone or online - with an adviser on hand to answer questions and guide you through each stage, so you're supported throughout.

To learn more or to get started, call 0800 847 7150 and quote "Neighbourhood Watch", or visit www.ourwatch.org.uk/estate-planning.

You already help protect your community from the unexpected. Now is the time to put the same protection around the people who matter most to you.



Violence against women and girls - “a national emergency”

P 8

It is a horrible truth to acknowledge but the dangers that women and girls face are getting worse. The National Police Chiefs' Council says that nearly all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG) are expected to continue to rise in the coming year.

Neighbourhood Watch is backing the United Nations' Orange the World campaign, which runs from 25 November to 10 December.

To support the campaign, Neighbourhood Watch has created '16 Days of Actions' featuring simple steps people can take to help reduce violence and digital violence against women and girls.



The actions are all intended to be accessible, so people can do as many as they are able to.

They range from wearing something orange to raise awareness about the growing problem of violence against women and girls, to attending a free webinar on how communities can help keep women safe.

Other initiatives include free bystander training to help people safely intervene when they witness harassment, raising awareness of Clare's Law, which gives people the right to know if a partner has a history of violence. Or fundraising for local women's charities.

The campaign of actions kicked off on Tuesday, 25 November, with White Ribbon Day. Asking men to use their voices and speak up to create a world where everyone is safe, equal and respected.

Sign up for our free webinar

How to support women in your community - working together to tackle violence against women and girls.

Our speaker will be Naomi Smith the Chief Executive Officer of the Her Centre, an advocacy organisation providing training and one-to-one support to women.

The event will be hosted online via Zoom and it's free to attend. it is online on Friday 5 December, 1-2pm, click the button on the right to register today.



“

A YouGov survey found that 73% of the public think that more should be done to tackle VAWG.

This public concern shows there is a real appetite to address this problem. That's why we need allies, caring neighbours, friends, family who can and will act.

”

Sandra Bauer, Deputy Chief Executive and Head of Policy, Partnerships and Projects, Neighbourhood Watch



New training videos

P 9

We've developed two new training videos to help share information about the bystander effect and micro-aggressions. Early interventions can help de-escalate crimes before they happen. These videos, hosted on our Youtube channel help people know what to look for and how to intervene safely.



AlarmID - The Gift of Peace of Mind



Looking for a Christmas gift for someone who's always out and about? Or that one person who already has everything? AlarmID is a unique and practical gift – perfect for anyone who doesn't need more stuff, but wants to protect the things they care about.

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Horsted Keynes remembers the fallen

Horsted Keynes is a small village in West Sussex. Every year their Neighbourhood Watch Area Co-ordinator, Tricia Raney, makes a bespoke wreath on behalf of the very active local Neighbourhood Watch and the Sussex Police Rural Crime Team at no charge, and then members can donate to the Poppy Appeal.

These are fresh wreaths, no floral foam or plastic is used, and everything will be recycled or composted at home. Horsted Keynes is very green!



Book clubs

How lovely to see not one, but two book clubs/swaps being shared by Neighbourhood Watch groups this month.

In New Haw Neighbourhood Watch they gave away a free box of books for anyone who wanted some reading material.

The book club in Bilbrook & Codsall meets monthly in a local pub to discuss the books they've read. November was a murder mystery. Sounds really cosy, fun and literary!

