



**University of Brighton**

Second independent  
evaluation of the  
Ashington, and West  
Sussex  
Neighbourhood  
Wardens Scheme

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report contains an evaluation of the Ashington Neighbourhood Wardens Project. The scheme was established in the West Sussex village of Ashington during 2001. The scheme manager commissioned an evaluation – their second – during their final year of central funding. The evaluation took place between February and April 2004. The evaluation draws upon evidence drawn from a number of sources including:

- Interviews with stakeholders and those responsible for establishing the initiative and key partners
- A random sample postal survey of residents of the village
- Interviews and observation with the neighbourhood wardens
- Focus groups and participatory activities with 3 particular groups of village residents: young people/teenagers, young mothers and older people.

It was hoped to examine crime data during the evaluation, but this information was not made available by the Police within the timeframe of the study.

### **National evaluation findings**

The recently published final report of the national evaluation of wardens' schemes<sup>1</sup> finds that:

- Wardens schemes are effective
- There is no typical wardens scheme

Key impacts include:

- Quality of life in scheme areas has improved
- Wardens have reduced fear of crime, particularly for older people
- Wardens are helping to tackle environmental problems
- Youth anti-social behaviour is being impacted
- Crime rates in scheme areas have declined
- Police are generally positive about wardens
- Wardens are successful at linking residents and services

The following are identified as elements of a good scheme:

- Flexible and responsive schemes with good communication skills
- Wide involvement of stakeholders
- Resident participation from design to implementation to monitoring and evaluation

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<sup>1</sup> Research Report 8, Neighbourhood Wardens Scheme Evaluation, Office of the Prime Minister, April 2004

- Active steering groups
- Consistent scheme management with low staff turnover
- Strong scheme partnerships
- High visibility of wardens
- Targeted work with vulnerable residents
- Community-focused wardens, particularly in young people
- Ongoing training and support for wardens

The national research reported a fall of nearly 28% in the crime rate in scheme areas and a 6.5% decline in concern over bogus callers. Where wardens are working closely with young people, residents report a reduction in gang activities and feelings of intimidation.

### **Aims of this evaluation**

The evaluation aimed to build on the formative evaluation of 2002 and identified three main aims:

- To revisit participants and look in more detail at the scheme impact under its objectives – reducing crime and fear of crime; reducing anti-social behaviour; improving the environment, and community development and Inclusion
- To examine the relationships the scheme has with local agencies and services
- To review the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place and recommend improvements

Specifically, the evaluation would need to:

- Identify any changes in feelings of safety in the community
- Identify progress on clarifying the wardens' community development role and indicators for community development
- Examine the perceptions of the community on their work with young people
- Examine the community's perceptions of the way the wardens and police work together
- Measure improvements in community involvement and seek more involvement in the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

