

# Neighbourhood Watch

Strategy 2009-2012



## Table of Contents

Foreword .....	3
Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) .....	3
Introduction .....	4
What did the consultation tell us? .....	5
What will happen next? .....	5
Key areas for development – a new way forward for Neighbourhood Watch .....	6
Image .....	6
A) Street signs and door stickers .....	6
B) Publications .....	6
C) Media .....	6
Establishing New Schemes .....	7
Structure .....	8
Role of the Co-ordinator .....	8
Role of the Member .....	9
Emergency Volunteers .....	9
Role of the Borough Association .....	9
Communications .....	10
A) E-mail messages .....	10
B) Newsletters .....	10
C) Communication with Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) .....	11
D) Communication with the Community Safety Division .....	11
Training .....	12
A) Training for Co-ordinators .....	12
B) Training for Safer Neighbourhood Teams .....	12
New Partners .....	12
Neighbourhood Watch Awards .....	13
Conclusions .....	14
Useful contacts .....	14



## Foreword

Neighbourhood Watch is a major contributor to community safety and community cohesion in Wandsworth. Though each Watch area is local to a street or group of streets, collectively Watch Coordinators, united under the umbrella of the borough Neighbourhood Watch Association, represent the largest group of volunteers in the borough.

I am very pleased to have been associated with this exciting development for Neighbourhood Watch in the Borough and look forward to working with many local people to turn the words and aspirations into reality, and so build on past success to keep our neighbourhoods safe.



James Cousins  
Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Community Safety



## Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP)

The council, working with Police and other partners in the CDRP, have positively supported the development of Neighbourhood Watch since 1994. In consultation with the association and key stakeholders, the council, working closely with the Police, has led the way in developing a new Strategy and Action Plan for Neighbourhood Watch in the borough.

The new Strategy and Action Plan will play a vital role in strengthening volunteering and helping to underpin community cohesion in what is already the safest borough in inner London. We look forward to Neighbourhood Watch continuing to play a vital role in the CDRP's work in tackling crime and disorder and reducing the fear of crime.



Chief Superintendent Stewart Low  
Borough Commander – Wandsworth  
Metropolitan Police Service  
Co-chairman of Wandsworth CDRP



Gerald Jones  
Chief Executive  
Wandsworth Council  
Co-chairman of Wandsworth CDRP



## Introduction

Volunteering is a key focus for both the government and Wandsworth Council and Neighbourhood Watch provides an excellent opportunity for local people to get together. Working in partnership with the local Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams and other key agencies, they can, and do, help to create a safer environment in which to live, work, learn and enjoy.

Neighbourhood Watch is not only about reducing crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour but also the fear of crime. This affects people of all ages but it is the elderly and young people who have the greatest fear. Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators can play their part in reducing this fear by acting as a contact point for the passing of information from the police to the local community on what initiatives they are undertaking.

### Scrutiny

At the September 2007 meeting of the council's Regeneration & Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Community Safety Division supported by the Wandsworth Borough Neighbourhood Watch Association, were asked to give a presentation on Neighbourhood Watch in Wandsworth. This was well received and as a result the committee decided to carry out a scrutiny of Neighbourhood Watch.

To start this process off a questionnaire was sent to all co-ordinators registered in the borough. A response rate of over 32% was achieved, an excellent return for this type of survey. Several key issues were raised and taking all of those into consideration a scrutiny paper was prepared for further in-depth consultation.

### New Way Forward

Following extensive consultation through surveys and workshops to a wide range of stakeholders enough information was collated to put together a new way forward for Neighbourhood Watch in Wandsworth for the next three years.

During the Scrutiny and associated consultation, other statutory agencies have been identified that are keen to work with Neighbourhood Watch groups to promote community safety. For example, in Wandsworth an excellent partnership has been established with the Fire Service, who are keen to enlist the help of Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators to assist them in introducing a smoke alarm into every home in the borough.



## What did the consultation tell us?

The responses to the consultation were wide ranging and highly positive overall. A number of issues emerged and these are summarised in the following paragraphs.

It was clear from reading the responses that there is some confusion about the different roles of the council's Community Safety Division and the Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams. In addition, one fifth of the respondents themselves were not clear about their role and that of their neighbours.

Many long standing co-ordinators have not been kept up to date with the development of Neighbourhood Watch, from being focused on crime reduction to now dealing with the wider issues of community safety. However, encouragingly, a large number of the present co-ordinators have been organising meetings including social events, which help neighbours keep in touch with one another. This is the basic component of an effective watch.

Communication emerged as a major issue. Whilst there were many aspects of communication raised, many co-ordinators emphasised that they have no contact with their adjoining watches. A ward structure aimed at facilitating better communications between co-ordinators and Safer Neighbourhood Teams was recognised as being a way forward.

Those with no access to computers are currently not receiving any crime messages, which means they are missing out on useful and current crime information. Many co-ordinators would like the Community Safety Division to produce newsletters on seasonal crime prevention tips that they can distribute to their members.

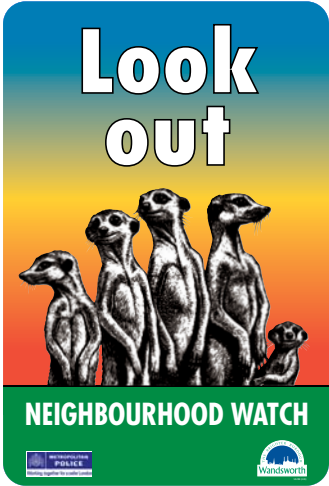
Whilst there seems little interest in training generally, there is continued enthusiasm for the specialist role of the emergency volunteer. The image of Neighbourhood Watch as it currently stands does not attract young people and this was something most people felt needed addressing. The majority of the respondents welcomed a fresh look for the Neighbourhood Watch schemes in Wandsworth as well as the opportunity of including new partners.

## What will happen next?

The Neighbourhood Watch Strategy 2009 –2012 with an accompanying action plan was presented to the February 2009 Regeneration and Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Following the approval of the Committee and Executive, the action plan has now been developed and the strategy has been printed and widely circulated. The action plan will be implemented within the timescales outlined within it.



## Key Areas for Development a new way forward for Neighbourhood Watch



### Image

#### A) Street signs and door stickers

The current street sign used by Wandsworth is the Home Office roundel with a policeman, two adults and a child. This image reflects neither the diversity of Wandsworth or the wider community safety issues Neighbourhood Watch can tackle. Increasingly new partners, like the London Fire Brigade and the Primary Care Trust, recognise the benefits of working with Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators to reach a wide audience across the borough. Wandsworth is now adopting the meerkat signage - already associated with Neighbourhood Watch elsewhere and a reflection of the meerkats' well-known traits of working together and looking out for one another. A programme of replacing all existing signs across the borough has started.

#### Action

Complete the programme of street sign replacement



Councillor Cousins with the street sign being put in place

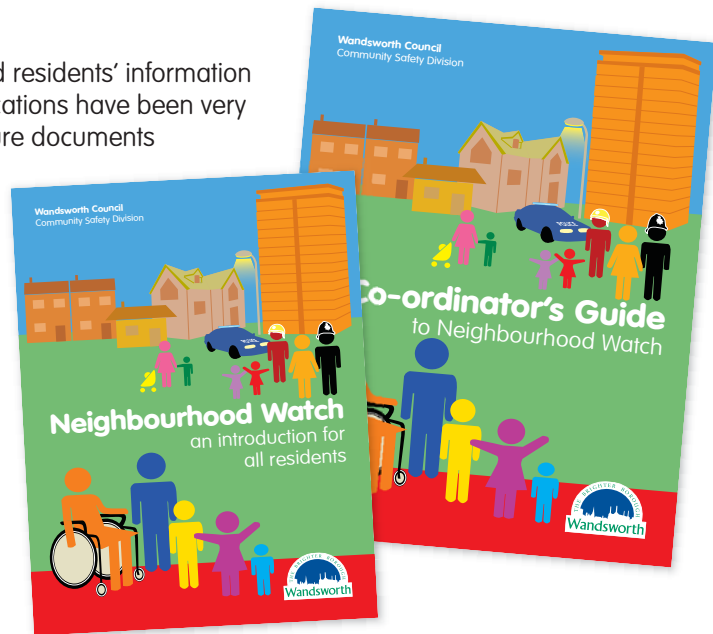


## B) Publications

During 2007/08 a co-ordinator's guide and residents' information leaflet were produced. Both of these publications have been very popular and they will be continued. All future documents will use a similar house style.

### Action

Any future publications will be produced in a similar style



## C) Media

Now the new signs are ready to be erected it will be important to achieve maximum press coverage as they start to be replaced across the borough. This will help to remind those seeking to commit crime that there are many residents in the borough signed up to Neighbourhood Watch who could assist the statutory agencies in making life very difficult for them.

A Neighbourhood Watch conference in June 2009 will launch the new strategy and provide another opportunity for some positive press coverage.

### Action

Continue to seek opportunities to promote Neighbourhood Watch through Brightside, local press and other council and police publications



## Establishing New Schemes

The current system for establishing new schemes is initiated by one of the following circumstances:

1. Members of the public, often moving into the borough, phone the Community Safety Division to check whether they are in a Neighbourhood Watch, usually because their insurance company has asked them. If they are not in one they are encouraged to think about getting one set up and an information leaflet is sent out to them;
2. The Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams identify new people in their wards and ask the Community Safety Division to send out the information leaflet; or
3. The Community Safety Division is made aware of a particular crime problem and Neighbourhood Watch is identified as part of the solution. An interested resident is sought to get a Watch started.

In all these cases, if there is interest in getting a watch started a canvass of the road or block of flats is carried out by the Community Safety Division with assistance from the Police Safer Neighbourhood Team. A resident is identified who will act as the co-ordinator and is asked to complete the necessary vetting paperwork. Providing this is cleared the co-ordinator is appointed and remains in place until such time as they resign or become unable to continue in the post.

The Community Safety Division, in consultation with local Police, organises a public meeting for all the neighbours. The Neighbourhood Watch scheme is explained, basic crime prevention advice is given and the role of the member and co-ordinator is also discussed.

If the majority of those present support the formation of the scheme the Watch is launched and arrangements are made for street signs to be erected and the door stickers to be distributed.

### Action

- A members' guide to be produced. Both co-ordinators' guide and members' guide are to be distributed at the first meeting
- Realistic timescale to be introduced for the setting up of a new Watch which will be reported in the action plan
- Vetting of co-ordinators to take place automatically using the established system now in place
- Issue ID card once co-ordinator has been cleared through vetting process
- An agreement to be put in place on what can be expected from the Community Safety Division's Neighbourhood Watch Team and the minimum that can be expected from a co-ordinator
- A three-yearly re-registration to take place



## Structure

### Ward structure

As a result of the consultation many of the co-ordinators said they would like to meet co-ordinators from adjoining streets to themselves. An ideal way for everyone to get to know one another and set up their own communication network would be for all co-ordinators to meet at ward level. Each ward could then nominate a representative who could have a seat on the Borough Association. All agencies that wish to work with Neighbourhood Watches in the borough would then be able to communicate in an effective way through the ward structure.

### Action

Establish structure on every ward by nominating a Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator to represent their ward on the Borough Association

## Role of the co-ordinator

### The Co-ordinators' Guide

There was some confusion about the role of a Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator and the Co-ordinators Guide was produced to clarify what is expected of the position of co-ordinator. This is now distributed to all new co-ordinators and has been well received. All existing co-ordinators were also sent one in the post.

The Guide states that co-ordinators should

- Link between individual members, the council and local Safer Neighbourhood Team
- Make themselves known to their Watch members.
- Attend the ward meetings
- Send out the crime messages to their members who want to receive it in whatever way suits them
- Deliver a small number of leaflets or newsletters each year to all members
- Know where the vulnerable people are in the Watch in the event of an emergency
- Let their members know about any specific crime problems

### Action

Periodic reviews of the co-ordinators' guide



## Role of the Member

### Members' Guide

Members of Neighbourhood Watches also have responsibilities which have not been emphasised enough, for example improving their household security (if needed) and property marking are two issues that should be attended to as a matter of course.

A members' guide would help to clarify their role in reducing crime and in embracing the wider community safety issues in their area. Copies of this guide could be left with the co-ordinator for use when new members move into the area.

### Action

Produce a Members' Guide with a security and safety checklist for residents to complete

## Emergency Volunteers

The idea of Emergency Volunteers has been well received by those who opted to become involved. There are currently 84 co-ordinators on the database and many of those have had presentations from the Counter Terrorist Branch, the NHS on flu pandemics and the Fire Service on flooding. There is more potential with this group and the Fire Service is keen to run another session on smoke alarms and home fire safety checks. Many volunteers also took advantage of having a training session with the Metropolitan Police Problem Solving Adviser who is keen to do some more sessions.

### Action

- Organise at least two sessions of training a year for the existing Emergency Volunteers with the new partners
- Recruit more co-ordinators as Emergency Volunteers

## Role of the Borough Association

The Wandsworth Borough Neighbourhood Watch Association is a registered charity that is consulted on all Neighbourhood Watch related matters. Currently, the membership is not fully representative of all wards across the borough and hopefully this will be put right with the introduction of a ward structure for Neighbourhood Watch in Wandsworth.

Each ward should send a Neighbourhood Watch representative to all association meetings, which will enhance the membership and make it a more fully representative group.

Many people that responded to the consultation document did not know anything about the Association so a leaflet in hard copy and on the Community Safety website will help to explain the roles and responsibilities of the association.

### Action

- Ward representatives to join the membership of the association
- Produce a leaflet on roles and responsibilities of the association



# Communications

## A) E-mail messages

The crime messages, distributed electronically by the Community Safety Division, are an excellent way of keeping co-ordinators informed of problems in their local areas. Those who have access to a computer get weekly crime messages. At present the messages cover burglary and distraction burglary as these are the crimes that Neighbourhood Watch members can do something about, particularly by improving home security and undertaking property marking. For those co-ordinators who don't have access hard copies can be sent in the post.

The changes that are being considered include sending out good news with the crime messages. An example of this could be: '76 out of 85 roads in Latchmere ward had no crime at all this week'. Several people during the consultation period requested getting information on car crime as well and this will be discussed with the Police Borough Intelligence Unit. The final improvement will be to investigate the various crime maps that are being used throughout the country and to see whether these can be adapted to provide local information in a more meaningful way (subject to any nationally introduced format that may be introduced by the Home Office).

### Action

- Explore ways of putting out some good news on the e-mail system
- Investigate crime-mapping systems and investigate implementing a local scheme for Wandsworth
- Investigate the possibility of including car crime information as well
- Send out a hard copy of crime messages for those with no access to computers

## B) Newsletters

Newsletters still remain popular and for many co-ordinators they see this as a good way to issue basic crime prevention information to all their members. Frequency was discussed during the consultation and most people favoured distribution on a quarterly basis. They also suggested that the information that goes in the newsletter should be included on the Community Safety Division's section of the council's website.

Comments had been made about the weight of the paper used in the first edition in the new format of Wandswatch. This has now been reduced to make it easier to distribute. A newsletter for co-ordinators only will also be explored. This will have more in-depth information in it.

### Action

- A quarterly edition of Wandswatch to go out to all members with seasonal tips included. This information will also go on the Community Safety Division's website
- An edition for 'co-ordinators only' to be established



### **C) Communication with Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs)**

The consultation with Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators highlighted the fact that contact with the local SNT teams was patchy. Many had not met their local officers and there was also some confusion between the roles of the council's Community Safety Division and the Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

Creating a Neighbourhood Watch structure will help communications mentioned above is put in place. This will also give the Community Safety Division an ideal opportunity to make clear the difference between its functions and responsibilities and that of the SNT. This will be achieved through the production of a new leaflet detailing the roles of both organisations.

Community Safety do produce a regular newsletter for all SNT Officers about any special projects that are being planned, any new leaflets or booklets in stock and an update on the number of Neighbourhood Watches in their areas. These appear to be well received and will continue.

All Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators have received newsletters with enough copies for all their members. The latest newsletter included contact details for their ward Safer Neighbourhood Team. This means that 27,000 households should now all know how to contact their local Safer Neighbourhood Team.

#### **Action**

- Newsletter to Safer Neighbourhood Teams to continue
- Leaflet to be produced in hard copy as well as on the website explaining the difference between Safer Neighbourhood Teams and the Community Safety Division.

### **D) Communication with the Community Safety Division**

The Community Safety Division has responsibility for establishing new schemes, vetting co-ordinators, maintaining the Neighbourhood Watch database and carrying out periodic re-registrations, sending out crime messages and newsletters, supporting the ward structure when in place and providing speakers for meetings if requested.

New initiatives being considered include the setting up of password protection on the Community Safety website to enable co-ordinators to retrieve higher-level information than that which is accessible to ordinary members of the public. In addition, it is intended to pilot quarterly meetings between the Community Safety team and the new ward representatives mentioned in section 3 above. These would be combined with the Borough Association meetings.

#### **Action**

- Provide password protected section on the Community Safety website for Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators to access a higher level of information
- Quarterly meetings with Neighbourhood Watch Ward representatives to be piloted



## Training

### A) Training for Co-ordinators

Many co-ordinators have gained a great deal of useful information through the training sessions provided up to now. Whilst it is recognised that there are some who are not interested in any further training, there are those that welcome the opportunity. A variety of training courses will continue to be provided and they will be scheduled to meet the needs of those who work.

#### Action

Provide training sessions twice a year on a variety of topics

### B) Training for Safer Neighbourhood Teams

There will be many members of Safer Neighbourhood Teams who have joined the Metropolitan Police in the last few years and will not have extensive knowledge of what Neighbourhood Watch is about and how it can help them gather local intelligence. To assist in the dissemination of information and the improvement of the understanding of all aspects of Neighbourhood Watch a booklet is to be produced for all officers.

The turnover of SNT staff is also quite high and therefore it will be important to repeat comprehensive training on a regular basis and at a minimum, once a year.

#### Action

- Produce a booklet on Neighbourhood Watch and what it can offer Safer Neighbourhood Teams, which can be given to all Officers
- Provide training once a year for Safer Neighbourhood Teams on a variety of topics including Neighbourhood Watch

## New Partners

Whilst the main focus of the Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators will be their members and their local Safer Neighbourhood Teams, there is scope for further work with other parts of the Police, for example Police CID Officers around the prevention of burglary and distraction burglary. It would therefore make sense to pursue the idea of a closer working relationship with the CID Officers.

The change in emphasis for Neighbourhood Watches from merely thinking about crime prevention towards wider issues relating to community safety led to the training of the Emergency Volunteers. This has clearly illustrated that there are several key agencies and organisations that recognise the potential for Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators to enhance and improve their service to the residents of the borough.

The Fire Service has already carried out training with the Emergency Volunteers on flooding and it has now identified more training they would like to offer, not only with the Emergency Volunteers, but also with co-ordinators in general.

Sheltered Housing Managers work closely with the Community Safety Division to establish as many watches as possible within the sheltered housing schemes. However, there is more scope for working with Housing Estate Managers to get schemes up and running on estates to encourage more community cohesion. In areas where potential co-ordinators and members may fear reprisals it may be necessary to establish covert watches.



Wandsworth's Parks Police service are keen to get involved with Neighbourhood Watches, particularly those that overlook the parks and other open spaces in the borough and could contribute by explaining their role, powers and how Neighbourhood Watch members could help.

These are just examples of opportunities for an active Neighbourhood Watch, all of which can help to keep watch members interested and motivated, particularly in areas where crime is not a big problem..

**Action**

Identify all partners keen to work with Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators and members and include them in the training sessions

## Neighbourhood Watch Awards

Neighbourhood Watch Awards have been in place for a number of years. The idea behind the original Awards was to celebrate the achievements of the groups. However, latterly it did not attract any new ideas or groups and the same two groups won every year.

Last year, as part of Not In My Neighbourhood Week, a Home Office initiative, a new idea was piloted in which co-ordinators were encouraged to work with their local Safer Neighbourhood Team on a small project, for example, holding a property-marking event, and a small amount of money was made available to deliver the project.

Comments made during the consultation period highlighted the need for further change that wasn't too time-consuming. It was suggested that in order to celebrate the achievements of Neighbourhood Watch a category could be included in the Volunteer of the Year Awards, which would be exclusively for Neighbourhood Watch. Within the category similar criteria could be used to those used in the past. Examples could be: a celebration of a project that the watch had organised; intelligence the watch had given the police that led to an arrest; or the fact that a co-ordinator had been in post for 20 or more years.

This would mean that good work could still be celebrated but that it would be recognised as being part of the bigger picture of volunteering in general.

By incorporating the successful work into the broader image of volunteering across the borough it should receive much more publicity and therefore raise the profile of Neighbourhood Watch generally in a generally in a positive way.

**Action**

Community Safety Division to explore whether it will be possible to include a Neighbourhood Watch category in the council's Volunteer of the Year Awards



Neighbourhood Watch meeting



## Conclusion

Neighbourhood Watch is strong in Wandsworth, we have over 400 active Watches each helping to make their neighbourhood safer. Along with the police and the council they have played their role in making Wandsworth the safest borough in inner London.

But this is not the time to rest on our laurels. Keeping crime low will be a real challenge, especially when times are hard. And Neighbourhood Watch has a big role in meeting other challenges we face. Volunteers from the Neighbourhood Watch family have already received training on what they can do to help tackle terrorism and support agencies in the event of flooding or a flu pandemic. More training will be available as the council and partners identify further needs.

The aim of this strategy is to make Wandsworth's strong Neighbourhood Watch even stronger. It is not the end but the start of a process. By tackling some fundamental issues, like communication, while also developing ambitious initiatives, like the emergency volunteers, it aims to lay the foundations that will make Neighbourhood Watch a key member of the community safety partnership, and ensure that individually and collectively Neighbourhood Watch in Wandsworth goes from strength to strength.

## Useful contacts

Technical Services Department  
Community Safety Division Neighbourhood Watch Team (020) 8871 8919

Request to receive crime messages (020) 8871 8919

Wandsworth Borough Neighbourhood Watch Association 07889 618228

Police Safer Neighbourhood Team Inspectors  
Battersea 020 8247 8601  
Putney 020 8785 8877  
Tooting 020 8247 8310

Crimestoppers (to report a crime anonymously) 0800 555 111

London Neighbourhood Watch Association 07956 366160

Find out more about the work of the Community Safety Division by logging on to [www.wandsworth.gov.uk/communitysafety](http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/communitysafety)



If you have difficulty understanding this in English, please contact:  
Wandsworth Interpreting Service: (020) 8672 1043/3649 English

إذا واجهت صعوبة في فهمه باللغة الإنجليزية، فيرجى الاتصال بـ:  
Wandsworth Interpreting Service: (020) 8672 1043/3649 Arabic

যদি আপনার এটি ইংরেজিতে বুঝতে অসুবিধা হয় তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে এখানে যোগাযোগ করুন:  
Wandsworth Interpreting Service: (020) 8672 1043/3649 Bengali

如果你看不懂英文版，請聯繫：  
Wandsworth Interpreting Service: (020) 8672 1043/3649 Chinese

Si vous avez des difficultés à comprendre ce texte en anglais, veuillez contacter:  
Wandsworth Interpreting Service: (020) 8672 1043/3649 French

અગર તે અંગ્રેજીમાં સમજવી મુશ્કેલ લાગે તો મહેરબાની કરીને  
Wandsworth Interpreting Service: (020) 8672 1043/3649 પર સંપર્ક કરો. Gujarati

W razie problemów ze zrozumieniem tekstu w języku angielskim prosimy o kontakt z:  
Wandsworth Interpreting Service: (020) 8672 1043/3649 Polish

Se tem dificuldades em compreender isto em Inglês, por favor, contacte:  
Wandsworth Interpreting Service: (020) 8672 1043/3649 Portuguese

Hadday kugu adag tahay inaad ku fahamto Ingriis fadlan la xiriir:  
Wandsworth Interpreting Service: (020) 8672 1043/3649 Somali

Si tiene dificultad para entenderlo en inglés favor contactar a:  
Wandsworth Interpreting Service: (020) 8672 1043/3649 Spanish

இதை ஆங்கிலத்தில் புரிந்துகொள்வதில் சிரமம் இருந்தால் நீங்கள் தொடர்புகொள்ள வேண்டியது:  
Wandsworth Interpreting Service: (020) 8672 1043/3649 Tamil

اگر آپ کو انگریزی میں اسے سمجھنے میں دشواری کا سامنا ہو تو براہ کرم رابطہ کریں:  
Wandsworth Interpreting Service: (020) 8672 1043/3649 Urdu

For further information or to receive this booklet in a different format please contact the Community Safety Division, Technical Services Department on (020) 8871 7696 or email [dtscommunitysafety@wandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:dtscommunitysafety@wandsworth.gov.uk).