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Citizen Focus Business Area

Neighbourhood Watch ACPO Lead

Frank Whiteley

Chief Constable

Hertfordshire Constabulary

15th July 2009

To: All Chief Constables & Commissioners

Dear Colleague

Research Document - Measuring the Effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch on Crime Reduction

I write as the ACPO lead for Neighbourhood Watch and other Watch Schemes, to bring to your attention a research document attached.

I have had this research prepared around the perennial question of "does Neighbourhood Watch impact positively on Crime Reduction?" The findings, in bullet point form are:

- The objective of this project was to look at the available literature providing evidence of the impact of Neighbourhood Watch on crime reduction.
- In assessing the evidence the Author created a database of 443 documents from around the World, of which 280 were research papers. Documents were searched for references to effectiveness and for related views and experiences. The results were categorised and ranked in terms of quality and depth.
- The most reliable results showed that in the UK, Neighbourhood Watch schemes were effective in reducing crime in 79% of cases when compared with similar areas where no schemes existed.

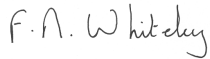
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- The studies also showed that Watch schemes are generally highly valued by the general public, who appreciate them not just for their impact on crime but also for the reassurance that they provide and for the ways in which they encourage greater community spirit and cohesion.
- This research draws a line under the debate about whether Neighbourhood Watch Schemes are effective in reducing crime. They do.
- With encouraging results on the effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch in reducing crime, this paper now proposes that future research into effectiveness should focus on the other aspects of Neighbourhood Watch that the public value and on learning from the successes to promote Best Practice within the Watch movement.

I would be grateful if you would bring this research to the attention of your Neighbourhood Policing Teams and Neighbourhood Watch Leads.

Yours sincerely



F N Whiteley
Chief Constable, Hertfordshire Constabulary
ACPO Lead on Neighbourhood Watch