

renewal.net Case Study

Safe and Secure Homes



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Summary

Safe and Secure Homes is a comprehensive free home security service to residents in five of the most deprived neighbourhoods in Mansfield. Alarms are fitted, together with energy efficiency measures and safety audits are undertaken. In the first six months almost half of the 5460 properties have been alarmed. Domestic burglary rates have fallen dramatically, with one neighbourhood recording an 80% reduction on the level during the same six months a year ago. Overall domestic burglary rates have fallen by 40% and the neighbourhoods are now well under the average for the Mansfield and Ashfield Police area as a whole.

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<p><i>Safe and Secure Homes was established in an attempt to meet the Government's "floor target" for the reduction of domestic burglary</i></p>	<h3>Aims/Objectives</h3> <p>Safe and Secure Homes was established in Mansfield as a response to the need to address the Government's target of reducing domestic burglary by 25% in the period between 1999/2000 and 2005.</p> <p>To achieve this aim the project set itself the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To encourage multi-agency partnerships that would reduce both domestic burglary and the fear of burglary in the five most deprived neighbourhoods in Mansfield. • To combine a programme of reducing domestic burglary with links with other domestic programmes such as energy efficiency and protection against fire to achieve a comprehensive service to residents. • To target the employment and training opportunities in the programme as far as possible on unemployed residents within the five most deprived neighbourhoods, or on those in insecure short term employment. <p>The Mansfield and Ashfield police played a key role in promoting the need for the initiative and in building support from a range of partner organisations.</p>
<p><i>Mansfield, East Midlands</i></p>	<h3>Where</h3> <p>Safe and Secure Homes operates in the five most deprived neighbourhoods in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire.</p>
<p><i>Safe and Secure Homes is a project developed under the Neighbourhood Management theme of the Mansfield Strategic Partnership</i></p>	<h3>How did it do it?</h3> <p><i>The management structure of Safe and Secure Homes</i></p> <p>Safe and Secure Homes has been established under the Neighbourhood Management thematic programme of the Mansfield Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). It has its own Steering Group that involves the main partners involved in the project. The project enjoys a substantial degree of autonomy with effective delegated powers from the LSP. The Mansfield D.C. Housing and Regeneration Manager undertakes formal line management responsibilities, as the Council is the employing body. But in practice two key members of the Steering Group (Anne Chisholm – Principal Neighbourhood</p>

<p><i>Project funding of £1m has been allocated from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund for the fifteen months from April 2003 – June 2004</i></p>	<p>Renewal Development Officer and Tim Menzies – Partnership Officer, Mansfield & Ashfield Police Division, Nottinghamshire Police) provide the day to day programme leadership and support for the Safe and Secure Homes workers.</p> <p><i>The funding of Safe and Secure Homes</i></p> <p>Mansfield DC has an allocation of £5.2m from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund for the three years to March 2004. Mansfield has adopted an inclusive and consultative approach to the distribution of this funding. £2.6m is allocated strategically and £2.6m locally. Residents in each of the five neighbourhoods are invited to indicate which programmes they consider a priority for their areas. Should three or more neighbourhoods indicate a priority for a particular programme it can be included in the strategic programme. Otherwise, projects that have a particular local priority can be funded through the local element of the Fund. Safe and Secure Homes was rated a priority by all five neighbourhoods and is a flagship strategic project.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund allocation to from April 2003 to March 2004 was £800k. A further £200k has been allocated to roll the project forward to June 2004 whilst decisions about funding for Years 4 and 5 are made. The aim of this supplementary funding is to achieve more stability in the project workforce who otherwise might reluctantly start to look for other jobs.</p>
<p><i>The project costs only £175 per property in total. Home Office figures indicate that each burglary that is prevented saves the taxpayer £2,300.</i></p>	<p>The success of the project in its first six months of operation offers every encouragement for the continuation of the project to March 2006.</p> <p>Whilst the initial costs may seem substantial, they represent an investment of just £175 per house throughout the five priority neighbourhoods. This one off capital programme will contribute to the security of the property over many years. The Home Office calculation of the costs of every domestic burglary to the agencies involved is £2,300.</p>
<p><i>The project operates in teams of two workers, each with a liveried van.</i></p>	<p><i>Operating methods</i></p> <p>The Safe and Secure Homes programme operates with a team of eight project workers and two supervisory staff who are also able to undertake the practical work involved as cover for holidays or sickness. The workers operate in teams of two, each with a liveried van. The teams wear distinctive uniforms that help residents identify them and give them confidence that the programme is efficient and professionally run.</p> <p>The programme is promoted widely by leaflet drops, publicity in the media and through contacts with a wide range of local agencies and</p>

<p><i>Each resident gets an alarm and two infra red detectors.</i></p> <p><i>Energy efficiency issues can be dealt with at the same time, with the project acting as installers for the energy efficiency project funders.</i></p> <p><i>A synthetic DNA is used as a “state of the art” property marking system.</i></p> <p><i>Initial suspicions of “something for nothing” have been overcome and almost half of the properties within the five target neighbourhoods have now been alarmed in the first six months of the project.</i></p>	<p>residents groups.</p> <p>Residents are offered free burglar alarm with two passive infra red detectors. In addition, through the links achieved with the Fire Service and energy efficiency programmes, smoke alarms, hot water cylinder jackets, wall and roof insulation and free energy efficient light bulbs can be made available free to residents and can be fitted where appropriate by the Safe and Secure Homes team. The team also conducts a safety audit with residents to ensure that they are fully aware of the necessary security precautions that will assist in avoiding being burgled. Residents can extend the alarm cover to other rooms at their own expense but the cost of fitting any extra infra red detectors is carried out free.</p> <p>A popular feature of the programme is the use of a synthetic liquid DNA manufactured by SmartWater Technologies. This product appears like a mascara tube with a similar small brush that allows property to be invisibly marked. The liquid contains a suspension of tiny metal flakes that gives a unique identification code that, once logged on to a national database, makes instant and permanent identification of the item available to the police.</p> <p>Positive publicity through word of mouth is the most effective method of spreading information about the scheme. Initially, the project tried to contact every resident in a particular street to achieve 100% coverage but found this a time consuming approach. Pro-active publicity throughout the neighbourhood and responding to requests from residents to install the burglar alarms has proved to be a more efficient use of the project teams time.</p> <p>For a short period at the beginning of the programme, residents were wary of what appeared to be a major investment in their property at no cost to themselves. But “where’s the catch” quickly became “count me in”. The project offers this free service to all residents, whether they are owner occupiers or tenants of the Council or private landlords.</p>
	<p>Who was involved?</p> <p>Safe and Secure Homes is a partnership that includes the following organisations:</p> <p>Mansfield District Council</p> <p>The Mansfield Local Strategic Partnership.</p> <p>The Mansfield & Ashfield Police Division</p>

<p><i>The impact of a feeling of safety is profound. Elderly residents have reported feeling that they have "got their lives back".</i></p>	<p>resident reported:</p> <p><i>"I've been burgled three times in recent years. I have felt like a prisoner in my own home. I have had five years of sleepless nights, worrying about every sound or creak inside or outside the house. Having my house made safe and secure has given me my life back".</i></p>
	<h3>Check list</h3> <p>Safe and Secure Homes has had an immediate impact. This is because the project is straightforward in its operation, it's free, the alarms and additional energy efficiency work are available to all, irrespective of income or tenure.</p> <p>If you are thinking of establishing a similar project there are some lessons from Safe and Secure Homes that you may find of help.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The attempt to recruit local residents who were unemployed or in insecure jobs didn't really work. Four of the workers have some connection with the neighbourhood, but the experience from Safe and Secure Homes is that the posts need to be advertised quite widely to ensure the right people are appointed. • In appointing workers, you will need to recognise that the posts will appeal to people who can accept a modest wage but who also find job satisfaction in helping more vulnerable residents and contributing to the community. • The Safe and Secure Homes Project may seem expensive at first glance. But the financial input to each home averages only £175 in total, with benefits spreading over many years. You will find it useful, in seeking continuing funding from other sources to publicise the cost savings the project creates. The Home Office has calculated that each domestic burglary costs the public purse £2,300. So the "savings" in the first six months from reducing burglaries from 106 to 65 could be almost £100,000. If these reductions continue, the project could, if burglary is not displaced elsewhere, be cost neutral over a five year period. • You should expect a wary response at the very outset. Residents may be suspicious of a free service or may confuse the project with private sector operators. Vehicle livery and distinctive uniforms will help differentiate your service from others. • Safe and Secure Homes has successfully separated formal line

management from day to day management. Delegating decision making to the practical level enables the project to operate with minimum bureaucracy.

- You will find it important to ensure a smooth process of ordering supplies. Recognise that more specialist products may take time to deliver.
- Inform all the partners of the success of the programme and encourage the more traditional to “think partnership” and “think regeneration”. Positive media coverage is effective as a support for word of mouth.
- You need to remember that even in the best run projects occasionally things go wrong. Remember to include a compensation element in your budget. In practice, Safe and Secure Homes have almost never had to make a compensation payment – the current level is 0.25% of jobs – just a quarter of one percent.
- You will need to link with the service with the security audit and continuing project promotion and advice. 30% of burglaries that did occur were through open windows or unlocked doors and 85% of the total of 68 were in properties that hadn’t yet had an alarm fitted.

Contacts

Name**Telephone number****Email address**

Anne Chisholm
NRF Development Officer
Mansfield Area Strategic
Partnership
Civic Centre
Chesterfield Road South
Mansfield
Notts NG19 7BH

01623 463463

Achishom@mansfield-dc.gov.uk

Tim Menzies
Partnership and Crime
Reduction Inspector
Mansfield and Ashfield
Division
Mansfield Police Station
Great Central Road
Mansfield
Notts NG18 2HQ

01623 420999

tim.menzies@nottinghamshire.pnn.
police.uk