

»»» FEBRUARY 2025 «««



OUR NEWS

FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH SUPPORTERS ACROSS ENGLAND & WALES

What's in February's newsletter?

With 2025 well underway (wow, didn't January last a long time!?), we are delighted to share that the launch of our new Youth in Action newsletter has been a huge success, with nearly 200 individuals and organisations receiving it and engaging with the exciting content inside. [If you'd like to join the mailing list for the next issue of the newsletter, click here.](#) In other news, applications for the current round of Community Grants funding have now closed, and successful groups will be contacted soon.

Romance fraud and scam awareness

P2

Professional Security Monitoring with SimpliSafe

P3

Phonely protects: Love is in the air – but so are scammers...

P4

Celebrating a decade of safety: Neighbourhood Watch and Patlock

P5 - 6

Protect Your Belongings with Multplx

P7

Start the year by protecting your privacy - a stalkerware quick check with Avast

P8

We wish the very best of luck to Ruby Smart, our Head of Communications and Digital, who is leaving Neighbourhood Watch at the end of February. We'll soon be welcoming Charmian Walker-Smith to take on this exciting role, and are excited for the positive impact that she will have on the charity.

John and Sandra visited North Wales at the end of January to support the BT project!



Romance fraud and scam awareness

Romance fraud is when scammers use an apparent (but fake) romantic connection or relationship to lure their victims into a false sense of security, before tricking them into giving them money, or information which helps them steal money from them.

If the scammer successfully persuades their victim to lend or give them money, they will usually come back with further reasons for needing more. Sometimes, the victim is asked to pass money from another country through their account – this could be money laundering.

Spotting the signs

People who have fallen victim to romance scams tend to report the same pattern. If you or someone you know is using online dating or friendship sites and sees any of these signs, it may indicate you or they are being scammed:

- The scammer asks you a lot of questions about yourself without saying much about themselves in return
- The discussion is friendly at first but turns romantic very quickly
- Their story, or parts of it, change over time and become inconsistent
- They refuse to video call you, or meet in person
- Eventually, the scammer asks you to lend them money

What can you do to protect against romance fraud?

Despite the prevalence of online romance scams and fraud, it doesn't mean that you have to stop using dating sites altogether. You just have to be aware that scammers do exist, and follow some simple rules to protect yourself online:

- If you're using social media sites like Facebook, don't accept friend requests from people you don't know
- Don't give away too many personal details about yourself online
- Never send or receive money or give away your bank details to someone you've only met online
- Use reputable dating sites

[Read more guidance on spotting the signs of romance fraud on our website](#)

SimpliSafe



**EXCLUSIVE
20%**
accessory discount
for Pro Premium
customers.

February Focus: The Importance of Professional Security Monitoring

Neighbourhood Watch plays a vital role in keeping our communities safe. However, even the most vigilant neighbourhood can benefit from an extra layer of protection. That's where 24/7 professional security monitoring comes in with SimpliSafe's Pro Premium Plan.

Understanding Professional Monitoring

When you arm your SimpliSafe system, it's constantly monitoring your home for potential threats like break-ins, fires, and leaks. If an event occurs, our monitoring centre is immediately alerted, and the security team will then:

 <p>Verify the alarm: To ensure it's not a false alarm.</p>	 <p>Contact the appropriate authorities: Alert the police or fire services as needed or dispatch one of their security guards to the property.</p>
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Why Consider Professional Monitoring?

 <p>Peace of Mind: Knowing that trained professionals can watch over your home in the event of an emergency provides valuable peace of mind, whether you're at home or away.</p>	 <p>Fast Response Times: In an emergency, every second counts. The security team work around the clock and will react quickly.</p>	 <p>Community Safety: By deterring crime and responding quickly to emergencies, professional monitoring helps to contribute to a safer community for everyone.</p>
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Learn More

For more information on how SimpliSafe's professional monitoring can enhance your home security and contribute to a safer neighbourhood, check out this video.

Want to help make your neighbourhood safer?

Neighbourhood Watch members can exclusively save 50% on security systems - click here!

If you're already a SimpliSafe customer and would like to find out more about the security monitoring service, please give the team a call on 0800-456-1789, or you can sign up for the service via the app.



Love is in the air – but so are scammers...

This February, Phonely is proud to continue our partnership with Neighbourhood Watch, helping protect families across the UK.



Our mission at Phonely is simple: to keep you and your loved ones safe from phone scams. This is why we launched our [Who Called Me?](#) platform, for people to actively report scam numbers. Our Who Called Me? site has rapidly grown to become one of the most popular in the UK, with thousands of numbers reported weekly – all of which are immediately added to Phonely's automatic call blocking list.

Recent scams trending on our Who Called Me? platform include:

1. "Hi Mum and Dad" scams: Fraudsters impersonate loved ones, sending urgent messages asking for financial help
2. Energy saving scams: Callers promise fake government incentives or services to exploit concerns over heating costs
3. Amazon purchase scams: Scammers claim your account has been compromised, tricking victims into revealing sensitive details to gain access to it

At Phonely, we believe you should always feel safe answering the phone. That's why we created CallGuard, our advanced, automatic, scam protection service, that keeps you one step ahead of fraudsters.

Our CallGuard service takes the worry out of answering your phone by:

- Automatically blocking known scam numbers
- Providing anti-scam greetings to deter fraudsters before your phone even rings
- Allowing [Trusted Person](#) intervention, so loved ones can join calls in real-time for extra support, when invited

Together with Neighbourhood Watch, we're helping families stay safe. And, [as a Neighbourhood Watch member, you can enjoy 10% off any Phonely plan](#), making scam protection affordable and accessible.

[Join us today and let's keep scammers out of your life.](#)



Celebrating a decade of safety: Neighbourhood Watch and Patlock

As we celebrate ten years of partnership with Neighbourhood Watch, we at Patlock are proud to reflect on a decade of collaboration that has significantly helped to enhance home security across the UK. This milestone is a testament to our shared commitment to making communities safer and more secure.

Patlock was created with a clear mission: to provide homeowners with an effective solution to secure their French doors and patio doors. Patlock is the original patented home security product that works by holding the internal door handles secure, meaning the external handles cannot be operated. This ensures that the door mechanism remains in the locked position, even if the locks are snapped or removed. Since its inception, Patlock has been dedicated to improving home security and providing peace of mind to homeowners.

In 2015, we formed a strategic partnership with Neighbourhood Watch, recognising the synergy between our goals. Neighbourhood Watch's extensive network and commitment to community safety made them the perfect partner to help us promote Patlock. Together, we aimed to reduce home burglaries and enhance the overall security of neighbourhoods.

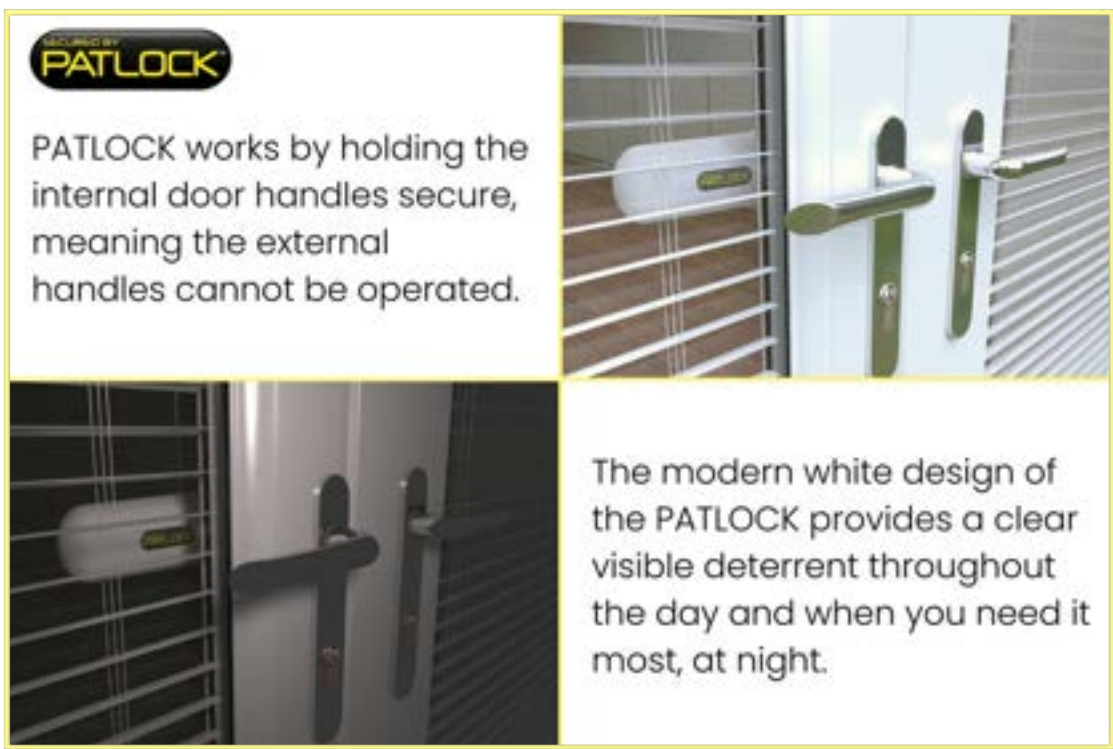
Our partnership has been mutually beneficial and has had a significant impact on local communities. For every Patlock sold through the Neighbourhood Watch network, a portion of the proceeds is reinvested into local Neighbourhood Watch associations. These funds support various community projects, from crime prevention initiatives to educational programs, helping to build stronger and safer communities.

Patlock has received significant recognition over the years. We were particularly honoured when best-selling crime writer Peter James endorsed the partnership, highlighting the importance of innovative security solutions in crime prevention. Additionally, Patlock's accreditation under the "Secured by Design" initiative has further validated its effectiveness and reliability. 2025 also brings a decade of membership with Secured by Design and working with Police forces throughout the UK.

Patlock are proud that the discounted price offered to Neighbourhood Watch members of £42.50 has remained the same throughout the 10 year association, and we are committed to retaining the member price for the lifetime of our partnership.

We are grateful for the support of the Neighbourhood Watch community and partners, and are excited for the future as we continue to work together to help make our neighbourhoods safer for all.

To assist members and local Neighbourhood Watch schemes, we have created 10 safety & security information graphics which will be published in upcoming Our News issues. These useful tips can be printed and saved as a reference card. Look out for the first info card in next month's issue of Our News.



[CLICK HERE to purchase a Patlock at the Neighbourhood Watch discounted price of £42.50](#)

Protect your belongings with the AlarmID - portable security alarm by Mulptx

Life is busy, and we can't always keep an eye on our belongings. Unfortunately, it only takes a moment for a thief to snatch a bag, laptop, or other valuables. Recovery is often a long shot - but with AlarmID, you can stop theft before it happens.



The AlarmID is an innovative portable security device that acts as a security guard. Attach the 2 metre cable to or around your belongings, and if anyone attempts to take them by detaching or cutting the cable, a powerful 100-decibel alarm sounds, drawing attention and scaring off potential thieves. Its bright red cable also acts as a visual deterrent, reducing the chance of theft.



What AlarmID Protects:

- Backpacks and handbags
- Laptops and electronics
- Suitcases and travel gear

Where to Use AlarmID:

- At restaurants, cafes, or bars
- On public transport
- In airports and offices



The AlarmID is quick and easy to set up, taking just a few minutes. Activate and deactivate using the fingerprint sensor. There are no keys to lose or passwords to remember, making it convenient for daily use. It stores up to 10 fingerprints, so your family, friends, or colleagues can use it too!

Don't wait until it's too late to protect your belongings. With AlarmID, you're investing in peace of mind, knowing your valuables are safe whether you're commuting to work, spending time with friends, or enjoying a well-deserved holiday.

[Click here to buy the AlarmID at your Neighbourhood Watch member exclusive discounted price of just £38!](#)

Start the year by protecting your privacy - a 'stalkerware' quick check with Avast

Imagine starting the New Year with hopes of a fresh start, only to realise that someone might be tracking your every move without your consent. Disconcerting, to say the least.

Criminals can do this using stalkerware, a sinister form of spyware that secretly monitors a person's activities and takes away their privacy. But that's not all. With location-sharing apps being the norm, the tracking risks increase. Unlike traditional spyware, stalkerware is often installed with malicious intent by someone known to the victim, such as a partner or family member, to track their whereabouts, communications, and more.

The popularity of location-sharing features has added a new layer of risk. Many users unknowingly leave location-sharing settings on, exposing themselves to potential monitoring.

Stalkerware may be a serious threat, but there are things you can do to help protect yourself. Here are 5 things you can do to help shield yourself from stalkerware:

1. Check your app permissions

Stalkerware requires various permissions to function, such as access to SMS, call logs, contacts, and location. Regularly check the permissions granted to your apps and remove anything unusual or from apps you don't recognise.

2. Audit your location sharing

Location sharing is a convenient feature but can also be risky. Review who you're sharing your location with, especially if it's been a while. If it doesn't make sense for an app to have location access, revoke it.

3. Review your app list

Go through your installed apps and look for anything suspicious.

4. Watch for performance red flags

If your phone's battery drains unusually fast, you notice sudden error messages, or experience strange requests for permissions, it could indicate stalkerware.

5. Install security software

Use security solutions - think Avast One - to scan your phone for known malicious apps, including stalkerware and spyware. Regular scans can help you identify and remove potential threats.

Visit Avast's website to read the rest of their advice on stalkerware...

