

Let's fix things together

Is there somewhere near you where you don't feel safe? Do you avoid an alley at night because of poor lighting or bushes blocking the view? Do you detour round an area in your neighbourhood because youths tend to gather there and you don't feel safe? Is your local children's play area often occupied by badly-behaved youths?

In these cases, a crime is probably not being committed, but your wellbeing and feeling of safety are being affected. Can you report it and get something done?

Yes you can, and anonymously, using Streetsafe. This is a new service provided by the police across the UK, which was previously trialled in Norwich and was a great success. It allows anyone to report something in their community that needs to be improved. The system is not designed for lots of fine detail, but allows you to highlight areas of concern and explain why. By using this method, the police and other authorities can get a clear picture of "hot spots" and clarity as to why they are areas of concern.

Reporting is very simple and information is fed back to our local police, who can liaise with Woking Borough Council or Surrey County Council to rectify the problem. But this isn't just for Woking or Surrey – you can use the system to report things anywhere, such as where your elderly relatives or children might live.

With this information, councils can fix street lighting and cut back overgrown hedges, while the police can investigate things such as empty houses being used for criminal activity. The police can also set up foot patrols in problem areas at particular times of the day, for example. This is not another facility to report an actual crime – 999 and 101 remain for emergencies and non-emergencies, respectively – but it is a place to report concerns about your local environment and its impact on wellbeing and safety. It is simple and effective and has already started to make improvements.

To access the service, go to www.police.uk, scroll down to the Streetsafe image and click on it. Use the map to indicate the exact place, then click on the reasons why you are reporting. If you tick one of the "behavioural" boxes you will be asked to provide a few more details. That's all there is to it! The more people who report an area/issue, the more likely the problem will be resolved quickly.

Police forces across the UK are already using the service, so let's make a difference to our community and gets things that blight our lives fixed.