

A Pubwatch scheme is a voluntary unincorporated body, run for the benefit of its licensee members. It can have a positive impact on crime and anti-social behaviour, not just in pubs and clubs, but also the wider area.

Pubwatch should remain independent of public bodies; particularly in relation to making Common Law banning decisions. This doesn't mean that a public body can't provide help in meeting your aims and objectives to reduce harm or prevent crime.

National Pubwatch does not run local Pubwatch schemes but can provide free advice, support and materials. If you want to set up a new scheme or improve an existing scheme, then help is available via the [National Pubwatch website](#)

The following step by step guide will provide you with a simple route to set up your own scheme:

Step 1. Gather support

People usually start thinking about Pubwatch as a result an incident occurring in their venue or near vicinity; a so called 'trigger' event such as a serious assault. Or it may be that another stakeholder has suggested it as good practice. If you think it might be something for you, then speak to fellow licensees about local problems and find out if there is an appetite to work together.

Also speak to the police and council licensing department to see if they will support your efforts. It's possible that not everyone will want to join at first but don't let that stop you; as you progress and start to make a difference it's likely that they will come on board.

Some people may have questions or concerns about how Pubwatch will affect their business. National Pubwatch has produced a series of short and informative 'Frequently Asked Question' (FAQ) films which will help you (and them) understand many of the issues. The films can be found on our website [YouTube page here](#).



Step 2. Plan a meeting

If you think you have sufficient support to start a scheme, then plan an inaugural meeting for like-minded individuals, so that you can speak face to face and discuss the way forward. Invite the Police and Council Licensing Team. They will attend as 'guests' but their input and support will prove invaluable as you move forward.

Arrange for the meeting to be held in a venue where you can speak in private. It's important that anything spoken about in a Pubwatch meeting remains confidential. Only members and invited guests should be in attendance. At this planning stage, obtain a copy of the National Pubwatch Good Practice Guide which will help you understand many of the practical issues related to running a scheme. The documentation is password protected – [request access here](#).

If you can't find the information you need from our website or Good Practice Guide then we also have a number of regional representatives who will be happy to provide advice and guidance. [The National Pubwatch contact list can be found on our website here](#).

Step 3. Form a committee



You will want to keep things simple but it will help to formalise your processes so that everyone is clear about what you want to achieve and everyone's responsibilities. Discuss your aims and objectives and how you want to run the scheme.

You might decide to have a written constitution which sets out frequency of meetings, how members can vote, election of committee etc. This will help to inform current and future members about how the scheme works and what is expected of them.

National Pubwatch can provide a generic 'constitution' which can be amended for your own purposes. The documentation is password protected - [request access here](#).

It also has a short film called 'The Meeting' which demonstrates typical roles carried out by Committee members. The film can be seen on the [National Pubwatch YouTube page](#).

Step 4. Agree processes to comply with data protection

Most Pubwatch schemes will ban problem individuals. In doing so they will discuss and probably record and 'control' personal information.

Under the Data Protection Act 2018 you have a legitimate interest to control personal data in order to manage the process of banning individuals. It's very important that members fully understand their responsibilities in relation to confidentiality.

You will need to register your 'legitimate interest' with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO). The process can be completed online.

If the Police are willing to share images of banned individuals you will need an Information Sharing Agreement (ISA) between them and the Pubwatch. National Pubwatch does not supply ISA's as local Police will have their own preferred documentation.

National Pubwatch can provide generic documentation that will help you comply with data protection issues, for example a data sharing protocol, banning letter etc. The documentation is password protected - [request access here](#).

Step 5. Set up a process for recording and sharing data

You will need to keep a record of decisions taken by your committee, particularly if it relates to an incident leading to a ban. There is always a possibility that a banned person may make a 'data subject access request' to find out what information the scheme holds on them.

So, keep any information factual and concise. Any personal information (including images) should be kept secure and only made available to Pubwatch members and staff on a need-to-know basis.

You may decide to keep paper records of Pubwatch 'minutes' and banned lists. But there are now a number commercial companies, such as [Schemelink](#), which can provide you with a secure on-line system for recording and sharing information and images etc.

Step 6. Launch the scheme

Once agreement has been reached and all necessary documentation completed then you will be in a position to officially launch the scheme. You may want a low-key approach or to organise a more high-profile event – the decision is yours.

However, whatever your decision, we encourage you to make an effort to ensure that the public is made aware that a Pubwatch operates in their town. This is so that potential troublemakers are made aware that unacceptable behaviour will be reported and acted upon. Many Pubwatch schemes will provide members with plaques or window stickers for entry and exit points and/or posters for display inside venues.

Make sure that you register your scheme on the [National Pubwatch mapping tool](#) (Provide Link) so we can keep in contact with you and provide support. If you have limited resources National Pubwatch can provide [free posters and window stickers here](#).



Step 7. Continue to develop

As your scheme matures you will start to consider how you might make your scheme more effective. Many schemes implement training programmes to upskill staff or introduce specific initiatives to impact on different problems.

For example, if you have had an upsurge in drink spiking or sexual assault, you might decide to train staff in how to identify vulnerable customers and implement an Ask for Angela initiative.

National Pubwatch can provide free training materials on a range of subjects either in their [Good Practice Pub here](#) or [You Tube page here](#).

Step 8. Evaluate and celebrate success

Your members might be entirely happy that the scheme is performing well and reluctant to carry out an evaluation. There is nothing wrong with this attitude. We believe that Pubwatch has proved its effectiveness over many years.

However, carrying out research will help you understand the impact you are having in your local area and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the scheme. It will also demonstrate to other stakeholders and potential sponsors that you deserve to be supported.

Whatever your decision please demonstrate and celebrate good practice. The local press is always interested in news worthy stories, particularly if you are tackling topical issues. The effectiveness of the scheme, range of initiatives or actions of individual members might also be worthy of applying for local or national awards or nominating members for personal recognition.

National Pubwatch can provide a **'toolkit'** to help you carry out your own local evaluation. In addition, it helps to promote and recognise good practice through its own prestigious annual **National Pubwatch Awards**. It provides local schemes a fantastic opportunity to receive recognition for their efforts. We also promote good practice through a range of awards for individuals who have provided outstanding support to Pubwatch or have made the night-time economy safer.

