

The Police Crime Prevention Handbook



Introduction

This publication contains National Police guidance on crime prevention in various categories.

This handbook is not an exhaustive guide to home security and crime prevention, but it does cover a broad range of subjects and contains up-to-date crime prevention advice.

Secured by Design is the national crime prevention initiative operated by the Police Service of the United Kingdom. There is a wealth of information on the Secured by Design website and the website also contains a list of products that have been accredited to Police Preferred Specification.

Products that have met the Police Preferred Specification have undergone rigorous testing and certification as the SBD focus is on the critical factors that combine to deliver a product's performance – design, use, quality control and the ability to deter or prevent crime. Better quality means these products last longer too, making them more cost effective and leading to greater sustainability in crime prevention.

www.securedbydesign.com



The Ten Principles of Crime Prevention

The advice within this booklet is based upon the ten principles of crime prevention. Each of the principles considers a particular way to address the offending behaviour of criminals.

1 Access Control

Reducing access to a building or any adjoining area can reduce the opportunity for criminals to enter and commit crime.

2 Target Hardening

The use of tested and certified security products such as doors, windows and locks etc can make it harder for criminals to commit crimes. The use of secure passwords can prevent online crimes.

3 Target Removal

Preventing desirable objects from being seen will reduce the possibility of a criminal seeing and targeting them. People, objects and places can all be targeted.

4 Removing the Means to Commit Crime

The removal and securing of certain items can prevent their use to commit a crime eg garden tools.

5 Rule Setting

This sends out a clear message of the type of behaviour which is not acceptable and also removes any excuses for potential offenders.

6 Surveillance

The ability to see over a place can help to reduce the opportunity for a criminal to commit crime. Surveillance can include passive surveillance from pedestrians or neighbourhood watch groups as well as formal surveillance via CCTV or security patrols.

7 Reducing the Payoff

Reducing the ability of a criminal to benefit from a crime can potentially deter the crime itself eg immobilisers on vehicles, the routine blocking of stolen phones and other electronic goods, the use of property marking to make stolen goods harder to sell.

8 Increase the Chances of Being Caught

An array of measures can help to catch a criminal, eg burglar alarms, good lighting, forensically marked property which can be quickly identified as stolen, tracking devices on stolen vehicles.

9 Environmental Change

The creation of places that are less likely to experience crime owing to the use of proven designs, layouts and certified physical security products.

10 Deflecting Offenders

By diverting the energy and effort of offenders into other lawful activity, crime can be reduced.

When measures based upon these principles are used in combination with each other, there is a greater likelihood that crime can be prevented or reduced. All crime prevention advice should be Appropriate, Realistic and Cost Effective in order to Deter, Delay or Detect.

How do burglars choose a home to target?

Recent interviews with prolific burglars conducted by researchers at the University of Huddersfield and West Yorkshire Police indicate that burglars target homes that they think will have valuables inside.

Burglars are very observant and opportunistic, they often look for homes with windows or doors left open or with vulnerable features that they can exploit.

Burglars are aware of the times when someone could be away from their home – no matter how short a time – whether at day or night.

Many burglars typically do not want to be seen or heard and if they feel that they would be noticed by a neighbour or passer by, they are more likely to feel vulnerable and choose somewhere else.

Burglars often choose a home because they know there is a specific vehicle or motorcycle or bicycle they want to steal.

Sheds and garages are often vulnerable as they are not very secure and contain tools with which the burglar can use to assist them to gain entry into a home.

Overgrown bushes and trees make it easier for a burglar to get close to a home unnoticed.

It is not uncommon for burglars to return to homes that they had burgled once before because the homeowner had not updated their security after the first burglary.

How do burglars get in?

Common methods burglars use to break into homes:

Open windows and insecure doors

Fishing for keys through a letterbox,
window or even a cat flap

Communal doors left insecure
or wedged open

Attacking and snapping
euro profile cylinders

Using force on inadequate doors
or windows

Slipping locks

Valuables targeted by burglars included:

- Cash, credit cards, jewellery, family gold
- Portable electronic devices, phones, laptops and tablets
- The vehicle parked outside
- Pedal cycles, motorbikes and mopeds
- Passports and documents (for identity theft and fraud)
- Tools
- Antiques

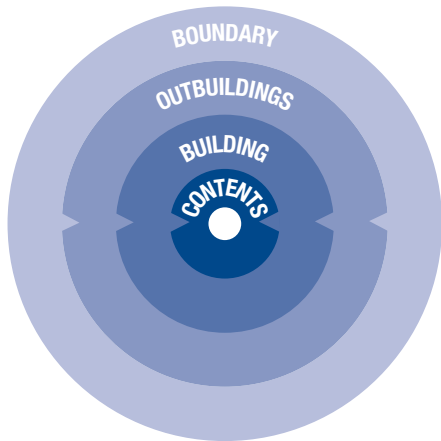
Reduce the hassle and stress of losing your personal property and having to call Police and your Insurance company by taking some simple measures to ensure it doesn't happen to you.

Remember if your valuables are out of sight and can't be seen they are less likely to be taken.

Conducting a Home Security Survey

The best way to conduct a review of your own home security is to approach it with the mindset of a potential burglar.

This is referred to as the “onion peeling principle” and can be approached by starting with the boundaries and working inwards towards the centre.



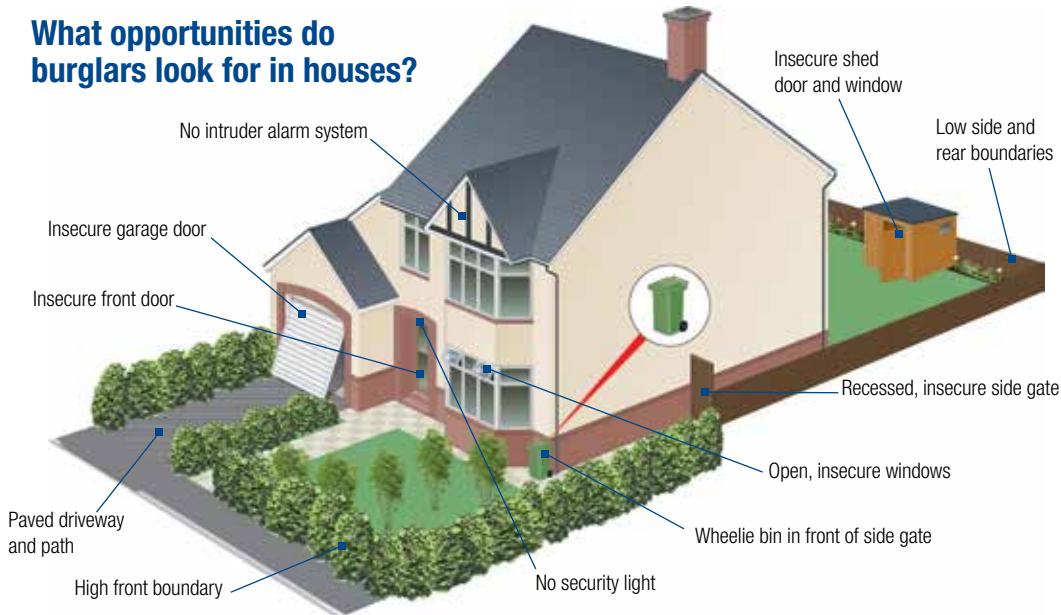
There are 3 key areas where you can be most effective in reducing the likelihood of your home being burgled.

1. **To Deter** – measures you can use to make it harder for a criminal to identify your home as an easy target.
2. **To Delay** – measures you can use to make it more difficult for a criminal to physically break into your home and take away your property.
3. **To Detect** – measures that you can use to help detect if a criminal tries to break into your home or attempts to steal your property.

Remember most criminals will not target your home if the risk to them of being seen, noticed and getting caught is too great.

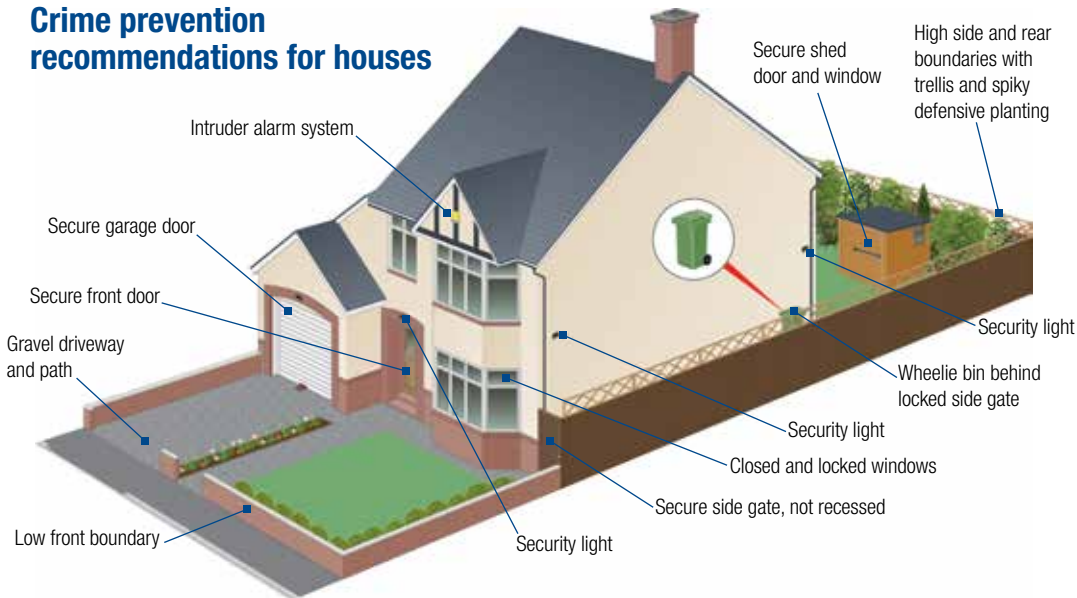
Securing Houses

What opportunities do burglars look for in houses?



Securing Houses

Crime prevention recommendations for houses



Boundary

- Lower fences at the front of a property around 1 metre high are better than high fences as they allow for natural vision over and do not provide cover for someone hiding.
- At the rear and sides of a property taller fencing is recommended to prevent easy access; a minimum height 1.8 metre is advised. Contact your local planning office to find out how high rear and side boundaries can be for your property.
- Consider someone climbing over a fence or gate and try to make it difficult for them to do so by adding light trellis, thorny plants or a suitable anti climb topping such as a bed of small rigid plastic cones. Barbed wire or broken glass is not recommended on walls or fences.
- Planting along boundaries and fence lines acts a powerful natural barrier to someone getting in. Thorny plants make a great deterrent when planted in depth at vulnerable spots on boundaries.
- Gravel driveways and paths are ideal at preventing a silent approach.
- Lighting can help to identify movement and deter intruders. See the lighting section for more details.
- CCTV can alert you to someone getting inside your boundary if it is linked to a smart phone.

Remember most criminals will not target your home if the risk to them of being seen, noticed and getting caught is too great.

Outbuildings – Sheds and other outbuildings



Shed alarm

Closed shackle padlock on a hasp and staple

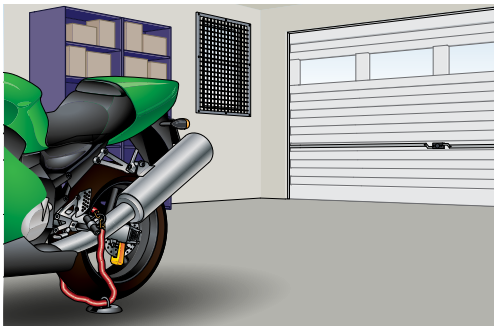
Many criminals target sheds and outbuildings to steal tools and they use these tools to break into your home.

Ensure that your contents insurance covers the items stored within your garage, shed or outbuildings.

To prevent criminals from simply lifting up smaller sheds to gain entry, make sure it is firmly anchored down into the ground



Outbuildings – Garages



Many criminals target sheds and outbuildings to steal cycles and tools and they often use these tools to break into your home.

- Remember to secure the window in your garage by screwing it closed or locking it. Alternatively you can place a grill over the window but always think about how will you get out in an emergency.
- Use a ground anchor to secure motorcycles, pedal cycles and other high value items to stop them being easily removed.

- Garage doors are vulnerable and ideally you can make them more secure by installing additional security such as padlocks to provide multiple locking points or using floor mounted locking T bars.
- If you have an internal door leading to your home directly connected to your garage ensure this door is solid and robust and secured with an accredited British Standard mortise lock and additional security such as hinge bolts and Birmingham bars.
- Remember if items can be seen from outside they will be vulnerable so cover up valuable items and tidy away tools. Don't forget that ladders, tools and wheelie bins can be used to break into your home.
- Consider extending your burglar alarm to include your shed, garage or outbuildings or use a separate audible alarm system.
- Garages are often used as additional storage rather than as the main place to leave a vehicle. By using it as a place to park this can reduce the chances of your vehicle being stolen or damaged.

Ensure that your contents insurance covers the items stored within your garage, shed or outbuildings.

Burglar Alarms



Two industry bodies accredit reputable alarm companies: the National Security Inspectorate (NSI) and the Security Systems and Alarms Inspection Board (SSAIB). Consider using a company who belongs to one of these bodies and who is also a member of Secured by Design.

There are 3 types of burglar alarm and each vary in capability and cost:

1. **Monitored** – once triggered an alarm company or designated key holder can check to ensure it isn't a false alarm.
2. **Unmonitored** – This type once activated will sound a loud alarm designed to scare off an intruder and alert neighbours but they are reliant on someone such as a neighbour checking the house.
3. **Auto Dialler** – this type once activated calls pre-programmed key holders using a text or call alert.

- The Police will typically respond to a burglar alarm if requested to do so by a monitoring company but are less likely to respond to an unmonitored alarm.
- Two visible audible alarm boxes are better than one. Mount them at the front and rear of your home high up to resist tampering.
- If you have an extension to your home, remember to extend your burglar alarm coverage as well.
- Signage is an effective deterrent if used with an active alarm system.

Remember to get 3 quotes from 3 accredited companies before you have an alarm installed.

CCTV

CCTV can be a valuable tool and may deter some burglars, however it does not prevent a crime from occurring and does have limitations. Most importantly CCTV cannot replace the requirement for good quality physical security.



- Two industry bodies accredit reputable CCTV companies: the National Security Inspectorate (NSI) and the Security Systems and Alarms Inspection Board (SSAIB). Consider using a company who belongs to one of these bodies.
- Some cameras work by day and night and record when they detect movement, some can be remotely viewed with a smart-phone device.
- Position cameras where they are best able to obtain good quality facial images, could you recognise or identify someone from the footage? Cameras should also be out of reach to prevent tampering.
- There is legislation for home CCTV use so always seek advice from an accredited installer first to ensure your system complies with the law. <https://ico.org.uk/for-the-public/cctv/>
- Place a sign warning that CCTV is in use.

Remember to get 3 quotes from 3 accredited companies who can give you appropriate advice before you have CCTV installed.

External Lighting

- Lighting is a good deterrent and is recommended at entrances and exits as it makes it safer for you coming and going after dark. Ensure it is out of reach to prevent tampering.
- Passive Infra Red or PIR lights automatically switch on when they detect movement. However, they are easily activated by animals and genuine visitors and this may not only lower their effectiveness but also cause unnecessary alarm.
- Consider instead Dusk till Dawn lights: they switch on automatically between dusk and dawn and can give a constant low white light.
- Check to make sure that trees and plants do not obscure your lighting, it is recommended that you cut vegetation back each spring and when further needed during the growing season.
- Bollard lighting is not advised as the primary external light source for a home, as it often fails to illuminate faces to a satisfactory level and can be easily tampered with.

Take care to position these lights so light pollution does not annoy your neighbours.

Internal Lighting

- Use an automatic plug in time switch to operate a lamp or light at pre-set times when you are away. Varying the times of operation is a good way to avoid familiarity. Lighting an upper room on a timer is also an increased deterrent.
- Energy saving LED bulbs are best as they do not use as much electricity, last much longer than conventional bulbs and do not generate heat – reducing your fire risk.
- In blocks of flats automatic low energy lights that detect movement are recommended for corridors, stairwells and communal areas such as car parks and cycle stores.



Windows



Roof Light



Tilt and Turn



Sash



Casement

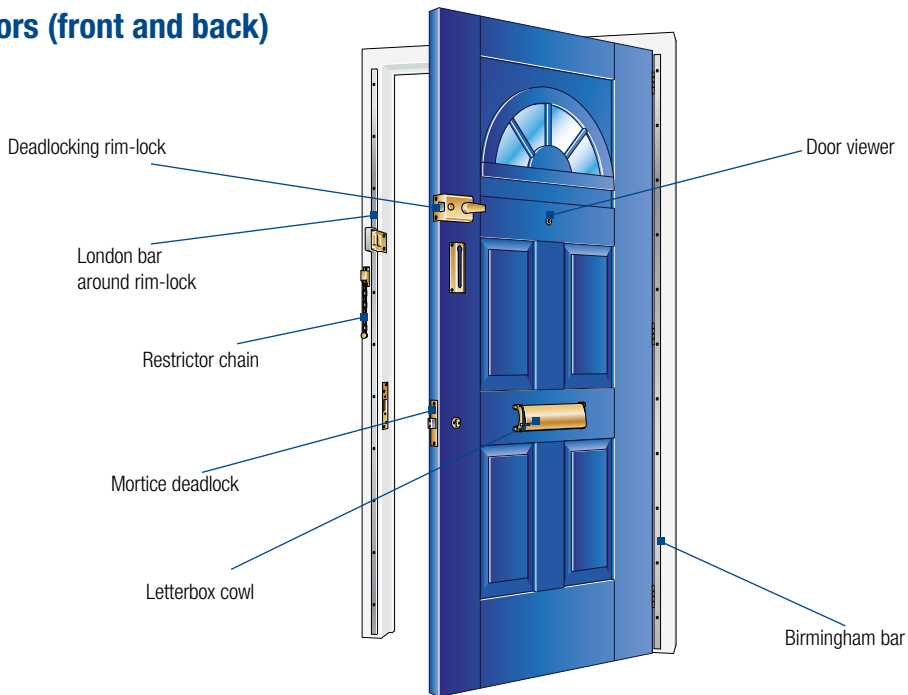
Windows

- Sash stops prevent someone opening the sash window enough to climb through.
- Key operated locks are recommended for all other window types and any ground floor or accessible windows (unless being used as a means of escape).
- Window opening restrictors allow you to ventilate your home but make sure they cannot be disengaged from outside. Laminated glazing or security film is also recommended.
- Remember window locks are only effective if used so check that you have locked them before you leave your home or go to bed.
- Consider additional security for any windows that could be easily reached by someone climbing from below.

Always remember to give yourself a means of escape – ensure that you can get out of your home quickly in the event of a fire.

If you are replacing your windows always consider a security accredited product to a standard such as PAS24:2016 as these windows are tested to British standards and are insurance approved. Secured by Design accredit such products.

Doors (front and back)



- A member of the Master Locksmiths Association can check to see if your door is secure and solid timber or of robust composite construction. The locksmith can also reinforce the frame (with London and Birmingham bars) and check if the locks and hinges are British Standard approved.
- Ideally the door and frame should be of solid construction with a British Standard mortise lock and an automatic deadlocking rim latch.
- Always remember to use both locks and check to make sure that the mortise lock is engaged every time you leave your home.
- If your door has a letterbox, a letterbox guard fitted to the rear of the door will prevent someone reaching in and opening the door or fishing for any items close by. Consider cat flaps also and position keys and valuables away from the opening in the door.
- Modern multi locking and UPVC doors use a system of hooks and latches to secure the door but these only work if you lift up the handle and then remember to turn and remove the key.
- Glazing can be reinforced by using special film or by installing laminated glass panels.
- Door viewers or restrictor chains are recommended so that someone visiting can be identified before the door opens.

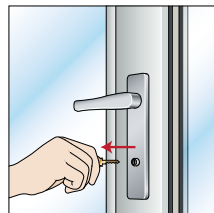
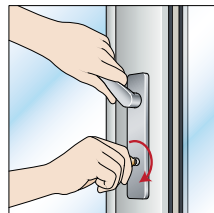
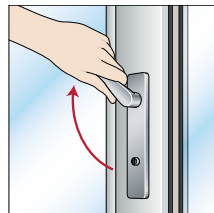
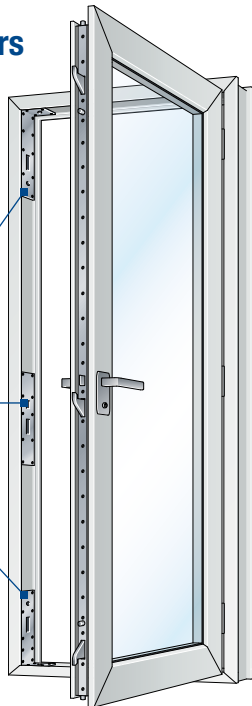
- A timber back door will require a British Standard mortise sashlock in the centre of the door, with either rack bolts or surface mounted lockable bolts in the top and bottom corners.

If you are replacing your door always fit a security accredited product to a standard such as PAS24:2016. These are tested to British Standards and are approved by the insurance industry. Secured by Design accredit such products.

Always remember to give yourself a means of escape – ensure that you can get out of your home quickly in the event of a fire.

PVC-U and Sliding Doors

Multi-point
locking system



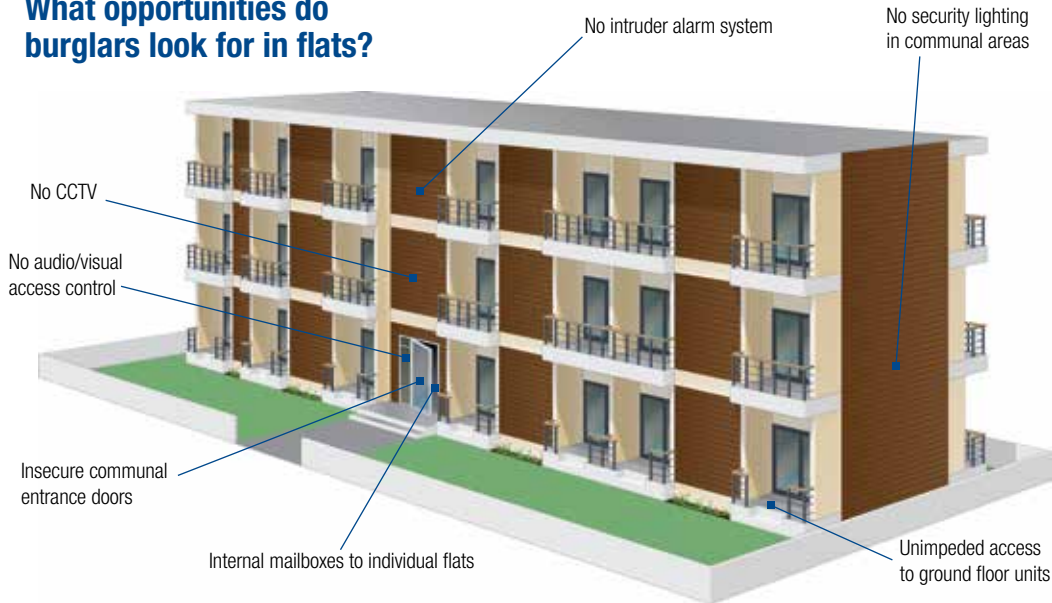
- Sliding patio doors are vulnerable to forced entry, therefore check yours has an anti lift device fitted so they can't be lifted off their runners.
- If you have a euro profile lock inspect the lock from the outside and if it protrudes beyond the frame handle, consider getting a member of the Master Locksmiths Association to change the lock to a shorter one that is more resistant to being snapped and is security accredited to British Standards.
- Always double lock UPVC and multi-point locking doors (lift handle and turn and remove the key).

If you are replacing your door always use a security accredited product to a standard such as PAS24:2016. If you are changing components such as locks, then always use products accredited by Secured by Design. These products are tested to British Standards and are approved by the insurance industry.

Always remember to give yourself a means of escape – ensure that you can get out of your home quickly in the event of a fire.

Securing Flats

What opportunities do burglars look for in flats?



Securing Flats

Crime prevention recommendations for flats



Boundary

- Check that the managing agent or landlord cuts shrubs and planting back every spring so they do not obscure someone from view or interfere with lighting or CCTV.
- If you notice something is not working properly or if a light is out let the managing agent or landlord know so that it can be fixed as soon as possible.

Outbuildings

Cycle stores and bin stores can attract anti-social behaviour if they are left insecure.

Building

- Remember to check that the communal door and other doors are closed and secure behind you.
- Always double-lock UPVC and multi point locking doors (lift handle and turn and remove key).
- If you live on the ground floor ensure that your windows are closed and locked every time you leave your flat.
- Consider an accredited burglar alarm system.

Communal Doors

- Your communal door is only effective if it is closed and secure, so always remember to check that your communal door locks behind you - if it doesn't, report it to your management agent or landlord so it can be repaired quickly.
- The ideal communal door will be robust and security accredited, it will be fitted with a good self closing arm and 2 magnetic locks top and bottom and be linked to the fire alarm and an electronic access control system operated by a key fob.
- Communal doors should fail safe open in the event of a fire and be fitted with a manual override, such as an internal thumb turn or push to exit button.
- Consider where the post-boxes are located as these are often targeted by criminals. Ideally they should be in a secure lobby area and be lockable, they should also prevent thieves from fishing out the mail.



**Always remember to give yourself a means of escape
– ensure that you can get out of your home quickly
in the event of a fire.**

**If you are replacing your door consider a security
accredited product, as these products are tested
to British Standards and are approved by the insurance
industry. Secured by Design can provide standards
for communal doors.**

**Shared blocks of flats and houses of multiple
occupation are more vulnerable to burglary and
other crime if the communal doors are not secure.
Remember to check that the communal door and
other doors are closed behind you.**

Securing Home Contents

- Property marking makes it easier for the Police to trace and recover stolen articles and prosecute offenders.
- Use a Police accredited forensic marking system.
- Register your valuables free of charge using one of the accredited suitable property databases.
- Take photographs and keep documents such as receipts related to your property so you can prove ownership.
- There are approved etching products for some property types.
- You can also mark your property using a special marker using ultra violet ink or paint.
- Seek specialist advice regarding marking antiques.
- A home safe is designed to hold small valuables such as passports, credit cards, identification documents and jewellery.
- Home safes are insurance rated according to the type and value of the items designed to be placed inside them so check with your insurance company first to ensure you are adequately covered.
- Some safes are also approved as fire rated and are ideal for storing valuable documents or computer data inside.

- Remember to adequately secure your safe by bolting it to a wall or floor otherwise it can be simply carried away.
- Position the safe carefully so it won't be easily discovered but try not to place it in your bedroom as this is the first place a burglar will look.



Large collections of jewellery or other valuables can be targeted by organised gangs, even if stored in a domestic safe. Consider storing them at a safety deposit vault, where the risk to you and your home is removed.

Contents

- Do you have sufficient insurance for your contents and have you checked the small-print of your insurance policy recently?
- Remove valuables from open view and consider marking your valuables with an approved product.
- Keep handbags away from the postbox or cat flap and hide all keys, including car keys, out of sight (remember a device could be used to hook keys or valuables through the postbox).
- Store any high value items (i.e. jewellery, passports) in an insurance accredited fire rated safe, or consider using a safety deposit vault.
- In a flat, remember to regularly check and empty your postbox.

Going Away

- If you are going away on holiday, try not to advertise this on social media until you return home.
- Leave radios or lights in your house on a timer to make the property appear occupied.
- Get a trusted neighbour to keep an eye on your property or join a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.
- Ask your neighbour to empty the postbox and collect any deliveries for you.
- Make sure that you cancel all regular deliveries, such as newspapers.
- Try to get into the habit of completing a set procedure when you lock up your home; in this way you ensure that you don't forget anything.

Cars and vans

This is how you can help protect your car or van:

- **Leaving items on show is an invitation** – Power leads, SatNavs and mounts, stereo front panels, coins, sunglasses, tools, clothing and bags should be removed from the vehicle or placed out of sight.
- **Keys and ignition fobs should be kept safe and out of sight and reach** – The most common ways to steal a car or van is to take the keys or ignition fob, either when left in the vehicle or from your home through burglary.
- **Always lock and close the windows of your vehicle when unattended** – On the drive, the petrol station forecourt or when parking, an unlocked vehicle is the easiest to steal or steal from. A steering wheel lock is a good visual deterrent. When away from home, consider using a 'Park Mark' approved car park. A tracking device can help recover your vehicle if stolen.
- **Keep electronic keys safe** – Thieves are using scanners to read and copy electronic keys and steal vehicles without the actual key. When not in use keep your electronic key in a security pouch that blocks the signals from keyless entry fobs.
- **Fit theft resistant number plate fittings** – stolen number plates are commonly used to hide the identity of stolen vehicles. Use one-way clutch head screws.
- **Consider fitting a lock to your vehicle on board diagnostic port (OBD)** – this will prevent your vehicle from being reprogrammed by a potential thief. Speak to your vehicle dealer for more information.
- **If your vehicle has wing mirrors that fold in automatically when locked** – make sure you lock it properly. Criminal gangs are looking for vehicles like these where the wing mirrors are still out because it is clear to them that the vehicle has been left unlocked.

Catalytic Converter

This is how you can help protect your catalytic converter from theft:

- **Contact your vehicle dealership** on fitting an aftermarket product approved by the vehicle manufacturer and tested to Sold Secure Gold standard to prevent your converter being removed. The dealership can advise on the most suitable way to secure the converter, depending upon the make and model.
- **If you cannot park in a garage or secure compound** – leave your vehicle in a place that is well lit and overlooked. Try to park so that the converter cannot be easily reached by potential thieves.
- **Consider using a marking or etching system to identify your converter** – if stolen this will make it harder for thieves to dispose of.
- **Fitting a tilt sensor alarm** – will alert you if a thief attempts to jack up your vehicle in order to steal the converter

Motorcycles

This is how you can help protect your motorcycle:

- **Keep your motorcycle in a garage, shed, designated bike store or use a motorcycle cover** – Storing it out of view is one of the best ways to prevent opportunist theft. Consider fitting a garage or shed alarm.
- **Fit an alarm, immobiliser, preferably with tracking capability and property mark panels** – Alarms act as a deterrent; trackers and property marking assists in recovery, should your motorcycle be stolen.
- **Lock the rear wheel to an immovable object or ground anchor and use a disc lock on the front wheel** – Making your motorcycle less of any easy option will reduce the chances of it being targeted. Combine the use of a disc lock and a chain lock to a ground anchor.
- **When possible, keep the lock off the ground** – Whenever you lock and chain the rear wheel, wrap any excess chain around the rear wheel and try to enclose the lock. Keeping the lock off the ground can prevent it being attacked and smashed.

Mopeds

This is how you can help protect your moped:

- **Chain your moped rear wheel to an immovable object or ground anchor, don't rely on the steering lock** – Standard steering locks are easily defeated and your moped can always be lifted into a van, if not secured. Use a disc lock on the front wheel.
- **Fit theft resistant number plate fittings** – Stolen number plates are commonly used to hide the identity of stolen vehicles. Use one-way clutch head screws to secure plates.
- **Use a moped cover** – Covers are another hassle for an opportunist thief, if they cannot see what moped it is, they are less likely to target it.
- **When possible, keep the lock off the ground** – Whenever you lock and chain the rear wheel, wrap any excess chain around the rear wheel and try to enclose the lock. Keeping the lock off the ground can prevent it being attacked and smashed.



Pedal cycles

This is how you can help protect your cycle:

- **Use a good quality lock, proportionate to the value of your cycle** – Stolen cycles have a good resale value, so protect your cycle with a good quality lock. Quick release wheels and saddles are easily stolen.
- **Store in a garage or substantial locked shed, secured to a strong anchor** – Even when stored inside, chain cycles to a ground or wall anchor. Garden sheds can easily be broken into – see advice on shed security.
- **Record and register the details and frame number of your cycle and take out cycle insurance** – Each year police recover many cycles but are unable to restore them or prosecute offenders as the owner cannot be traced. Registering your bike will help, should it be stolen.



Caravans and trailers

This is how you can help protect your caravan or trailer:

- **Fit physical security and a caravan cover** – Fit a combination of hitch lock anti-theft device, wheel clamp and ground anchor, a physical barrier to theft is always a clear deterrent. Using a caravan cover and installing an alarm makes any theft more difficult and your caravan less attractive.
- **Register, record and property mark all parts of the caravan or trailer** – Register your caravan or trailer with the Central Registration & Identification Scheme (CRIS) and use overt and covert chips to mark it. If stolen, it may have its number plates, chassis, frame or CRIS numbers removed. Take photos, including specific fittings, marks or damage as these can help to identify your caravan or trailer.
- **Install an alarm and tracking system, including roof marking** – If stolen, being able to track and identify your caravan or trailer is vital. Add clear roof markings, giving the year of manufacture and CRIS number, to assist police identifying your caravan. (2014 – CRIS SGBS000BYA1234567)

Plant machinery

This is how you can help protect your plant machinery:

- **Remove keys, fit locking mechanisms or anchor to immovable objects** – Even when unattended for a short time keys should be removed. When left overnight machinery should be secured in a compound if possible and anti-theft devices fitted, chained to immovable objects or together.
- **Fit immobilisation and tracking systems** – The use of tracking systems can notify the owner the machinery is being interfered with or moved, allowing for a prompt response to either prevent the theft or detain offenders. Anti-theft devices make your plant less attractive to the thief.
- **Maintain accurate records of equipment owned or hired, including serial numbers and registration numbers** – Accurate and detailed records allow for the identification of stolen plant machinery. Without this, your mini digger could be any mini digger.

Goods Vehicles and Lorries

This is how you can help protect your lorry or commercial vehicle:

- **Lock it, remove it, alarm it** – When leaving your vehicle unattended, first remove valuable items and cash from view, lock it and take the keys with you or leave in a secure drawer or office at work. Overnight, remove tools from vans or if parking up with an empty trailer, leave the doors open. Always set the vehicle alarm and keep fuel tanks locked.
- **Plan journeys, have an itinerary, no hitch hikers** – Have a route planned, including lay-overs, so someone else knows where you are due to be. Where possible, use safe lorry parks or park where visible to passing traffic. Avoid insecure locations like remote laybys and quiet industrial estates. Do not pick up strangers, as you have no idea of their intentions.
- **Lock your vehicle and check it** – Even when on the move, making deliveries or refueling, keep your vehicle locked and the keys with you. Before you start off again, visually inspect your vehicle, to see if anything has changed and why that may be.

Recommendations

<http://www.thatcham.org/>

Insurance, lock and alarms testing standards

<http://www.soldsecure.com/>

Security products testing standard

<http://www.cris.co.uk/>

Central Registration & Identification Scheme

Check your insurance policy for any further requirements

Personal Safety

This is how you can improve your personal safety:

- **Tell someone where you are going** – Let people know where you are going, who you are meeting and what time you will be home. If you haven't met them before, meet them in a public location. Also consider if you are going to an area with a poor phone reception.
- **Plan** – Use common sense when planning your route, especially if you travel at night. If you are travelling somewhere new then research your journey. Use licensed taxis and mini-cabs.
- **Alcohol can affect your judgement** – Always know your limitations - never leave drinks unattended, don't take drinks from strangers and take care to stay with and look after your friends.

Street Robbery

This is how you can help protect yourself from street robbery:

- **Look confident** – Walk with a purpose and be aware of your surroundings. You are less likely to be targeted if you appear more assertive and less vulnerable. Avoid using distractions such as mobiles and headphones.
- **Plan your route** – If you are travelling somewhere new, research your journey. Keep to busy, well-lit areas which are more likely to be covered by CCTV. Only take licensed taxis and mini-cabs.
- **Keep your mobile phone and valuables out of sight** – If you have to use your mobile phone, be aware of your surroundings at all times. If you are distracted, a phone can easily be snatched away. Consider too what you need to take with you, expensive items may be targeted.

Bag Theft

This is how you can help protect yourself from bag theft:

- **Don't stereotype what a thief looks like** – The most accomplished bag thieves are those who are rarely seen and they dress to blend in. Be aware of your surroundings and people nearby.
- **Theft tactics** – There are many tactics thieves use for different locations: in particular avoid being distracted and having your attention diverted.
- **Look after your property** – Keep your personal possessions in front of you, in full view and where you have control of them. Never leave your property unattended or exposed, for example hanging on the back of a chair or a pushchair.

Pickpocketing

This is how you can help protect yourself from being a victim of pickpocketing:

- **Don't stereotype what a thief looks like** – The most successful pick-pockets are those who are rarely seen and dress to blend in.
- **Be aware of your surroundings** – Be wary of crowded locations and when on public transport - thieves are afforded cover and proximity in which to strike.
- **Look after your property** – Keep purses and bags closed and secure at all times and place wallets in an inside pocket. Carry bags in front of you or diagonally across your chest especially in crowded locations.

Mobile Phones

This is how you can help protect yourself from mobile theft:

- **Protect your phone** – Don't leave your phone unattended or out of your sight or left on a table. When you have finished with it put it away. Ensure you obtain your phone's IMEI number - this can be obtained by pressing *#06#. You need this information if the phone is lost or stolen. Use your phone's inbuilt security devices such as SIM locking and PIN locking mechanisms.
- **Record** – Register your phone's details on an accredited mobile phone database. This helps police to identify you as the rightful owner.
- **Tracking** – Consider installing a tracking application on your smartphone, this could help trace your phone if stolen.

ATMs and card security

This is how you can help protect yourself around ATMs:

- **Be vigilant** – While at an ATM machine, cover your pin and keep an eye on your card at all times. Be aware of who is around you and be suspicious of anyone hanging around the ATM. Thieves employ a wide range of tactics to distract you. When you have left the ATM, put your card away.
- **Look out for devices attached to the ATM machine** – Some devices are more obvious than others. If you do see something suspicious, contact the bank or the premises responsible for the machine.
- **Trust your instincts** – If in doubt, do not use the machine.
- **Be careful with contactless cards** – You can obtain a sleeve or cover that will prevent the electronic card details from being inadvertently read.

Recommendation

The Suzy Lamplugh Trust - www.suzylamplugh.org/
Action Fraud - www.actionfraud.police.uk

Stalking, domestic abuse and related offences

Stalking

This is how you can help protect yourself from stalking:

Stalking is behaviour that is persistent and unwanted by the victim, it could initially appear normal. However, when that behaviour is repeated and causes fear, harassment or anxiety, it is stalking and you do not have to live with it.

There are many forms of stalking ranging from unwanted attention from somebody seeking a romantic relationship, to violent predatory behaviour. A stalker does not have to be a stranger, the majority of stalkers are known to their victims such as ex-partners, a friend, neighbour, colleague or an acquaintance.

- If you think you are being stalked, then it is important you seek help, contact the police or get in touch with a support group.
- Gather any evidence you can. Keep a log / diary of all the incidents that have occurred, and record any sightings of the individual.
- Review your personal safety; see the personal safety section for advice.

National Stalking Helpline:

www.stalkinghelpline.co.uk
Call 0808 802 0300 or email the
National Stalking Helpline

Paladin, the National Stalking Advocacy Service:

www.paladinservice.co.uk

Suzy Lamplugh Trust:

www.suzylamplugh.org

Harassment

This is how you can help protect yourself from harassment:

Harassment is when someone behaves in a way which makes you feel distressed, humiliated or threatened. It could be anyone, someone you know or a stranger.

Harassment can include unwanted phone calls, abuse online, stalking, verbal threats and damaging property.

- Don't engage with the harasser.
- Keep a log of incidents.
- Photograph any damage or graffiti.
- Contact your local police for assistance.

If this happens in the workplace, consider contacting your HR, line manager or union representative.

Domestic abuse

This is how you can help protect yourself from domestic abuse:

Domestic abuse is the repeated, random and habitual use of intimidation to control a partner within an intimate or family relationship. The abuse can be physical, emotional, psychological, financial or sexual and can occur in any relationship.

Anyone forced to alter their behaviour because they are frightened of their partner's reaction is being abused.

- Recognise this is happening to you. Contact your local domestic abuse support group or the police for assistance.
- Plan in advance how you might respond to different scenarios.
- Consider having an escape route from your address.
- Develop a sign or a code word so that family or friends know when to call for help.
- Keep a charged mobile phone with you at all times.

Hate Crime

This is how you can help protect yourself from hate crime:

A hate crime is any criminal offence when the victim or any other person believes it to be motivated by prejudice or hostility towards a persons' disability, race, ethnicity, religion, faith or belief, gender identity or sexual orientation.

Hate crimes can include being physically attacked or threatened with violence, receiving offensive letters, emails or text messages, having property interfered with or damaged, or suffering from verbal abuse.

- Recognise it is happening and accept you are not to blame.
- Go somewhere you know is safe and get help.
- Hate crimes start as smaller incidents which may escalate into more serious and frequent attacks, therefore report any incidents to the police.

Stop Hate UK – national organisation

0800 138 1625

www.stopthehate.org.uk

Nuisance phone calls

This is how to protect yourself from nuisance phone calls:

If the calls are threatening, abusive or obscene, report them to the police and your service provider. Note down the date, time and number that called, along with any other useful information. Most providers offer products, services and advice to help you screen or block such calls.

Some silent calls are generated by automatic dialling equipment in call centres, where the number of calls made outnumber the operators. To prevent this, register your number free with the Telephone Preference Service (TPS).

- Screen calls using the caller ID function.
- Do not engage in conversation and hang up immediately.
- Never give personal information out over the phone.
- Use 1471 to retrieve the caller's number.
- Report threatening, abusive or obscene calls to the police and your service provider.
- Make sure your number is not visible online and opt for your landline number to be ex-directory.
- Use a number blocking service and register with the TPS.

Fraud and related crimes

Fraud

How to protect yourself from fraud:

- **Be suspicious of all 'too good to be true' offers and deals.** There are no guaranteed get-rich-quick schemes.
- **Do not hand over money or sign anything until you have obtained independent/legal advice and done some research.** Do not feel hurried into taking action or making a decision, however much pressure may be put on you. Always take 5 minutes to think.
- **Never give out your banking or personal details to anyone you do not know or trust.** Never give out **your bank PIN** code. Police, bank staff or other officials will never ask for your bank PIN code, or ask you to withdraw money or buy goods to give to them for safekeeping.
- **Do not be embarrassed to report a scam.** Fraudsters are cunning and clever, there is no shame in being deceived. By reporting you will make it more difficult for them to deceive others.

Read the Little Book of Big Scams at
www.met.police.uk/littlemedia

Recommended links

www.actionfraud.police.uk
www.met.police.uk/littlemedia
www.met.police.uk/fraud

Distraction burglary

How to protect yourself from distraction burglary:

- **Don't allow unexpected callers into your home unless they have a prior appointment.** Even if people visit unannounced with identification and appear trustworthy, do not let them in without checking who they claim to be.
- **Always ask for identification and check it before letting somebody into your home.** Use the phone number in the phone book or online, for the company that they claim to be from, not the one shown on their identity card.
- **If you do let someone in, make sure your front door is secure before you escort them through your home.** This ensures that no-one else can enter whilst you're occupied.
- **If you feel threatened or in danger by the presence of a caller ring the police on 999.**
- **For pre-planned appointments with utility companies, a password scheme can be set up.**

Rogue traders and door to door sales

How to protect yourself from bogus traders:

- **Don't be forced into making a quick decision on the doorstep.**
- **Do not allow uninvited callers into your home.**
- **Beware of a caller to your door claiming to be a builder highlighting an issue with your home – this is a common trick used by criminals.**
- **Refuse any offer of being taken to the bank to withdraw money to pay.**
- **If you ever feel intimidated by them, close the door and call the Police.**

As life and business in the 21st century has become increasingly reliant on being connected to the internet, there has been an increase in Internet of Things (IoT) products such as doorbells, smart locks, lightbulbs or voice assistants (Alexa, Siri).

You can reduce risks that these IoT products can pose whilst continuing to enjoy all that smart technology has to offer by following the recommendations below:

1. Update the Operating System

The operating system by which the IoT application/online account is accessed must remain up-to-date to prevent cyber criminals from exploiting vulnerabilities that will give them remote access and control over the IoT device

2. Evaluate Settings

Default settings are not always applied with security in mind. Take time to enable security settings as applicable and disable all that offer no benefit to you or the usability of the device

3. Turn on 2 Step Verification (2SV)

Where possible, enable 2SV to add an extra layer of security to the application/online account

4. Disconnect any IoT devices no longer in use

When a smart device serves no further purpose, immediately disconnect it from the network

5. Change default passwords

Many IoT products are produced with a default password either commonly used or easily obtainable online. Use strong passwords for a truly robust security solution

6. Secure router

Change the default administrator credentials for the router settings (accessible online) and also change the issued Wi-Fi password. Ensure to use WPA2 (Wi-Fi Protected Access) encryption to disguise the network from immediate view

7. Enable a firewall

This will monitor and block any unauthorised connections to the network

8. Use a separate/guest network for IoT devices

Any compromise of an IoT device will remain quarantined within the network of which it is connected, keeping your home / business network secure

9. Update software

As with all software, IoT needs updating to receive security fixes for vulnerabilities. Enable automatic updates to be applied automatically, to never miss the latest update release

Secured by Design has launched a 'Secure Connected Device' (SCD) accreditation scheme in consultation with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) which highlights products that have achieved the appropriate IoT standards/certifications, helping consumers make better informed choices when buying such devices.

For further advice on securing smart devices and to find a Secure Connected Device accredited product, please visit:
www.securedbydesign.com/IOT

Online crime

How to protect yourself from online crime:

- **Use hard to guess passwords.** Have different passwords for different accounts in case one is compromised. An ideal password is made up of three random words, with capitals, numbers and special characters. For a good example, watch the Little Guide to Passwords video at www.met.police.uk/littlemedia
- **Install antivirus software on your computer and mobile devices and always update it when prompted.** This can stop malicious software infecting your computer or device. Always update any software when prompted. This ensures that vulnerabilities are kept to a minimum.
- **Don't follow links or open attachments in emails unless they are from a trusted source, and you are expecting the link.** Opening links and attachments may allow malicious software to be downloaded on to your computer or device, and email addresses can be spoofed, so they might not be who they say they are!

- **Be wary of emails asking you to input private information such as login details or banking information.** The emails may not be from who they say they are and may be trying to trick you in to providing private information. No reputable company requests private information from you in an email. Do not click on links in emails. Log onto any existing accounts by using an internet browser and a known internet address.

Read the **Little Book of Cyber Scams** at www.met.police.uk/littlemedia

Recommended links

<https://www.met.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/central/advice/fraud/met/little-book-of-cyber-scams-2.0.pdf>

GetSafeOnline

Online dating

Many relationships start online and there are millions of UK users registered with online dating sites. Offenders exploit the anonymity and ease of use of dating websites to make themselves appear more credible to other users and to create a false persona.

How to improve your security when online dating:

- **Stay on the dating site.** Don't be too quick to leave the dating site's messaging service. If they are a fraudster, they will often be keen to use alternative methods of communication quickly.
- **Never give money** to someone you met on a dating site, especially if you haven't met them in person. For more information watch "The Little Guide to Avoiding Romance Fraud" at www.met.police.uk/littlemedia

- **Avoid feeling pressured** into meeting prematurely in person.
- **Create and adhere to a date plan** that is on your terms and considers the location, timing, duration of the date and method of transportation to ensure your safety.
- **Meet and stay in public;** treat the first date as a short screening process.
- **Report any offences to the police;** this can help to prevent similar offences in future.

Child safety online

People online might not be who they say they are and could be dangerous.

■ To keep your child safe you should tell them not to:

- Give out personal information to people they only know online, such as name and address, contact numbers, personal photos, bank details, PIN codes and passwords.
- Supply details for any account registration without asking for permission and help from you.
- Visit chat websites that aren't fully supervised.
- Arrange to meet an online friend in person without your knowledge and permission (if you agree to let them, you should always go with them).
- Give any indication of their age or sex/gender in a personal email address or screen name.
- Respond to unwanted emails or other messages.
- Keep anything that worries or upsets them online secret from you.

- **Make use of parental controls on any internet-enabled device.** Information on how to do so should be available on the service provider's website.
- **Agree and enforce boundaries with your child about what they can and cannot do online.**
- **Activate safe search settings on search engines.**
- **Consider monitoring your child's internet use** by checking the history folder on your browser as it contains a list of previously visited sites.
- **Install and regularly update filtering software** to protect against inappropriate internet access.

Fire and Rescue Services – Request a Home Fire Safety Visit

How at risk of fire is your home?

Fire and rescue services across England offer a free, home fire safety visit to assess your home and offer bespoke advice on how to make it safer. Where appropriate, smoke alarms will be fitted for free in all areas containing a fire risk other than kitchens.

The home fire safety visit is primarily aimed at people regarded as having a higher risk of fire in the home, such as:

- People more likely to have fires such as smokers, people with mental health conditions affecting memory, and people who've previously had fires or dropped cigarettes onto clothing/furniture.
- People with factors that could effect their ability to react, hearing impairment, learning difficulties or some mental health conditions, and those affected by alcohol or drugs (prescription or recreational).
- People with factors affecting their escape such as limited mobility, impaired vision or mental health conditions.

Visits are arranged at your convenience.

Book your free home fire safety visit


If you are concerned that your home may be at risk of fire, or you know someone who you think needs our help, you can find safety advice and arrange a free home fire safety visit via your local Fire and Rescue Service website.

Note: Home Fire Safety Visits are sometimes referred to as Home Safety Checks or Safe and Well Visits by other Brigades.

Medical advice

- Make sure you are registered with a local GP.
- If you need medical help, but not urgently, phone 111 for advice.
- In a medical emergency, for example if someone is unconscious or seriously bleeding, call 999 and ask for an ambulance.
- Ensure you know where your local pharmacy is.
- If you have difficulties with mobility, or sometimes fall when at home, contact your GP.
- Charities such as Age UK can assist the most vulnerable with personal advice even for complex situations, they can also help with loneliness and can enable independence through their local networks.



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www.police.uk/crime-prevention-advice/
www.securedbydesign.com