

# BE SAFE, BE SECURE

## Your practical guide to crime reduction

Protecting yourself and your family, safeguarding your property and building safer communities



Household and property



Drugs



Family



Personal



Vehicles



Prevention



Security



Work



Community

This booklet tells you how you can help reduce your risk of being a victim of crime. Follow these simple suggestions and you can help to protect yourself, your home, your property and your community.

Please remember that most crime is against property, not people, and that crime levels are going down in most places. Most crimes are 'spur of the moment', where thieves see an open window or valuables on display.

Following a few common sense rules can make a big difference. By securing your home and property, you can save yourself the distress and cost of crime. Plus you can make your community a safer and better place to live in.

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## Personal and community safety

**This section looks at how you can make your community safer. There are lots of different things you can do to prevent crime in your street or neighbourhood.**

### Making your community safer

#### Quick tips

- You might like to join a Neighbourhood Watch scheme or become a Special Constable.
- Become a volunteer – there are a lot of other opportunities to do useful things locally.
- Or you could form a residents' association and get involved in improving your neighbourhood – for example by organising a 'community clear-up' of a run-down or grimy area.

#### Join your local Neighbourhood Watch or 'Home Watch'

This is when a group of local residents (for example, on a street or an estate) agree to look out for each other. They keep an eye out for anything suspicious and tell one another or the police. It is sometimes called 'Home Watch'. Neighbourhood Watch and Home Watch schemes can:

- help to reduce crime and the opportunities for crime
- be a good way to help people feel more secure in their neighbourhoods
- encourage neighbourliness and closer communities.

#### Volunteering

Your local voluntary services council will be able to tell you what opportunities there are locally. You can get details from the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) or from your local council. Information about neighbourhood volunteering opportunities can usually be found at your local library.



### For more information

[www.mynhw.co.uk](http://www.mynhw.co.uk)

[www.direct.gov.uk/neighbourhoodsafety](http://www.direct.gov.uk/neighbourhoodsafety)

[www.crimereduction.gov.uk](http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk)

[www.navca.org.uk](http://www.navca.org.uk)

[www.safercommunity.net](http://www.safercommunity.net)

## Local policing

### The Policing Pledge and what it means for you

The Policing Pledge has been created to tell people what services the police can deliver within the community. Many people do not know what they can expect from the police beyond the 999 emergency number.

The Policing Pledge gives 10 service commitments that are standard for all forces, ensuring that you know how to contact your local police, what response to expect, how you can have your say and get involved in shaping local policing priorities, and how you should be kept informed about the ways in which crime and anti-social behaviour are being tackled in your neighbourhood.

All 43 police forces across England and Wales have signed up to deliver this. No matter where you live, the police are dedicated to delivering the same standard of service for local people.

For more information about the Policing Pledge or to find out more about crime and policing in your area, visit

**[www.direct.gov.uk/policingpledge](http://www.direct.gov.uk/policingpledge)**



## How to have your say: contact your neighbourhood policing team

Neighbourhood policing provides police teams to ensure a visible, accessible and responsive local service to tackle community-identified issues. They will also ensure that local communities are told about what is being done to tackle their priority issues.

Neighbourhood policing is not emergency policing. You should continue to dial 999 in an emergency (see below).

## Special Constables

Special Constables are trained and uniformed police volunteers, who patrol in their local community. They have full police powers.

## What you should do in an emergency

In an emergency, you should always dial 999.

An emergency is:

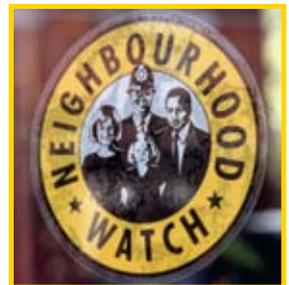
- when a crime is happening
- when someone suspected of a crime is nearby, or
- when someone is injured, being threatened, or in danger.

If you need to report a crime that is not an emergency, you should call your local force's non-emergency number.

### For more information

[www.direct.gov.uk/policingpledge](http://www.direct.gov.uk/policingpledge)

[www.direct.gov.uk/neighbourhoodsafety](http://www.direct.gov.uk/neighbourhoodsafety)



## Dealing with anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour (also known as ASB) includes a range of problems. Behaviour can be anti-social because it is capable of causing a nuisance or annoyance to both individuals and the wider community. This type of behaviour can include:

- nuisance neighbours
- thoughtlessness, perhaps noise nuisance caused by late-night fireworks or loud music
- intimidating groups taking over public spaces
- vandalism, graffiti and fly-posting
- pets/dog fouling
- people buying and taking drugs on the street
- people dumping rubbish and abandoning cars
- people drinking alcohol in the street
- reckless driving of mini-motorbikes
- high hedges.





## Tackling anti-social behaviour

A number of agencies can take action to deal with anti-social behaviour. These include the police, local authorities and social landlords (local authority landlords and housing associations). These agencies have a wide range of powers available to them to take action against a tenant of a social landlord, against someone renting from a private landlord or against a homeowner.

### Reporting incidents of anti-social behaviour

- Speak to your local anti-social behaviour co-ordinator. To find out who this is, you can visit [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/anti-social-behaviour](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/anti-social-behaviour) and search by your postcode.
- If you live in Cardiff, Sheffield, Hampshire or on the Isle of Wight, dial 101. This is a 24-hour non-emergency number provided by your police and local council. For further information, please visit [www.101.gov.uk](http://www.101.gov.uk).
- Report non-emergency incidents online. You can do this on most local police force websites. Visit [www.direct.gov.uk/neighbourhoodsafety](http://www.direct.gov.uk/neighbourhoodsafety)

No matter how you report anti-social behaviour, all complaints are treated as confidential. You do not need to worry, as your identity will not be revealed.



## Protecting yourself and your children

The chances of you or a member of your family becoming a victim of violent crime are low. Violent crimes by strangers in public places are rare and account for a very small part of recorded crime.

You can make yourself even less likely to be the victim of a violent crime – for example, robbery (mugging) or assault – by taking a few sensible precautions. Many are common sense, and may be things that you already do.

Think about how you would act in different situations before you are in them. Would you stay and defend yourself using reasonable force (see 'Self-defence' on page 8) or simply get away as quickly as you can? There is nothing wrong with doing either, but you should consider the options.

### Quick tips

- You will be safest in bright, well-lit and busy areas.
- Act confidently – look as if you know where you are going and walk tall. Be alert to your surroundings.
- Spread your valuables around. For example, keep your phone in your bag, your house keys in your trouser pocket and your money in your jacket.
- If someone tries to take something from you, it may be better to let them take it, rather than getting into a confrontation and risking injury.
- You can use reasonable force in self-defence. You are allowed to protect yourself with something you are carrying (for example keys or a personal alarm), but you may not carry a weapon.
- Be aware that your attacker might be stronger than you or may take what you are using in self-defence and use it against you. It is often better to shout loudly and run away.
- If you use a wheelchair, keep your things beside you rather than at the back of the chair.
- Don't advertise your valuables such as your mobile phone, laptop, jewellery or watch.
- When out walking, be careful not to make your MP3 player or personal stereo an easy target for robbers. Keep it hidden.



## Issues for teenagers and young people

Helping your children to be independent is a vital part of helping them to grow up. But they must also know how to look after themselves.

Young people are more likely to be the victims of theft and assault than any other age group. They are also the least likely to report a crime against them. Being honest with your children, while encouraging them to be honest with you, helps to build trust. You should ask them to tell you if they are in trouble, or if they have experienced any crime. Talk to them about ways to stay safe when they are out and about.

## Self-defence

The law says you can use reasonable force to protect yourself, protect another person, protect your property, prevent crime or assist in the lawful arrest of a criminal.

What is 'reasonable' in any situation will depend on the circumstances and the scale of the threat you are facing.

Broadly, for force to be reasonable it must be necessary and proportionate. But:

- a claim of self-defence is allowed if a householder has done no more than he or she instinctively believes is necessary to protect himself or herself from attack (or similarly to protect others or property)
- an individual in that situation is not expected to 'weigh up' the measure of defensive force he or she uses.

The law recognises that in the heat of the moment it may be hard for you to assess the level of danger you face and the amount of force necessary to ensure your safety or the safety of others. The courts, police and prosecutors will take account of all the circumstances, including whether it is in the public interest to bring charges.

So, injuring a criminal while defending yourself or your property will not necessarily mean you will face criminal charges. But the police may have to investigate and may ask you for a statement. They may then send a report to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

The law does not allow you to deal out your own justice to a criminal. Punishing criminals is a matter for the police and the courts. So don't take the law into your own hands by trying to punish an offender.

There have been examples of cases where householders or occupiers of private property have been prosecuted for violence committed on intruders. But these are cases where the violence used was really extreme and excessive in the circumstances.

### For more information



[www.direct.gov.uk/en/CrimeJusticeAndTheLaw/VictimsOfCrime/DG\\_069883](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/CrimeJusticeAndTheLaw/VictimsOfCrime/DG_069883)

## Safety on public transport and in taxis

This section offers some general tips on how to keep yourself safe and secure when you're making a journey – either catching a bus, taxi or train.

### Public transport

- You are safest where there are other people and where it is well lit.
- Plan your route.
- Sit near other people, near the driver if you are on a bus or near the guard if you are on a train. If someone makes you feel uncomfortable, move away.
- Take extra care at crowded bus stops and on crowded buses and trains. Keep your bag closed and make sure your pockets are inaccessible.





## Taxis and minicabs

- If in any doubt about your safety, don't get into the taxi.
- If you are going to be out late, arrange a lift home or pre-book a taxi or minicab. Check that the one that arrives is from the correct company.
- If you pre-book your taxi, make a note of the company you are using and the phone number. Leave these details with a friend.
- Always sit behind the driver in the back seat.
- If you feel uneasy, ask to be let out in a well-lit area where there are plenty of people.
- Always keep the number of a reliable firm handy. Avoid minicabs or private-hire cars that tout for business and are unlicensed.

Cabwise is a text service that holds contact details for licensed black taxi and mini-cab services in London. Text 'HOME' to 60835 and you will be sent contact details for one taxi and two licensed minicab services in London.

Transport for London's Find-a-Ride service also holds contact numbers for licensed minicab operators and can be contacted by calling 020 7222 1234.

### For more information



[www.tfl.gov.uk](http://www.tfl.gov.uk)

[www.dft.gov.uk/transportforyou](http://www.dft.gov.uk/transportforyou)

## Safety at work

Violence in the workplace covers a wide range of behaviour, from threats and verbal abuse to intimidation and physical assault. It may also include sexual or racial harassment. It can be carried out by customers, suppliers or colleagues.

Your employer has a legal duty of care to protect you from violence and abuse while you are at work. There should be a written policy for dealing with the risk of violence to staff.

Reduce your personal risk by planning ahead, so you can deal with difficult situations before they arise.

- Check which areas of your organisation's policy on preventing work-related violence are relevant to you and your work.
- Know which procedures to follow if violence occurs.
- Be aware of any risks and possible causes of violence arising from the work you are doing and your place of work.
- If you work alone or are working away from your workplace, try to make sure someone knows where you are going, when to expect you back and what to do if they think something's wrong.
- You may feel safer carrying with you a mobile phone, personal alarm or pager.

If you are in a situation that could turn violent:

- stay as calm as possible
- be mindful of your body language and watch that of the other person
- try to keep a safe distance and avoid physical contact if possible
- if you cannot calm the situation, call for help or look for opportunities to move away
- report all such incidents to your employer.



### For more information

[www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk) or call 0845 345 0055

[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk) (enter 'safety at work' into the search box)





## Protecting your identity

If criminals find out your personal details, they can use them to open bank accounts or get credit cards, loans and state benefits in your name.

Criminals may also attempt to obtain documents in your name, such as a driving licence or a passport. Information that is helpful to criminals includes your name, date of birth, address, National Insurance (NI) number, and bank and credit card details.



### Quick tips

- Destroy unwanted documents that contain personal details before you dispose of them. Use a shredder.
- If your passport, driving licence or credit card has been lost or stolen, report it to the issuer immediately.
- Get a copy of your personal credit file from one of the three credit reference agencies. This will help you to find out if someone else is applying for credit in your name.
- If you move house, tell your bank, credit card companies and all other organisations with which you do business. The Royal Mail's redirection service can ensure that your post arrives at your new address.
- Check bank and credit card statements as soon as they arrive. Report any unfamiliar transactions to your bank or credit card companies.
- Never give personal or account details to anyone who contacts you unexpectedly, either by phone, post, email or in person.
- If you use the internet, always use a different password for each account. Do not use family names or dates of birth as passwords.

**For more information**



[www.cardwatch.org.uk](http://www.cardwatch.org.uk)

[www.identitytheft.org.uk](http://www.identitytheft.org.uk)

[www.getsafeonline.org](http://www.getsafeonline.org)

[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk) (enter 'identity theft' into the search box)



## Parental tips for internet safety

The internet is very much a part of our lives and provides a useful educational tool for both adults and children.

Children make far greater use of the internet than their parents are aware of. A high proportion of children (one in 12) arrange to meet people that they have met online.

Encourage your children to:

- never give out information that could allow someone to find them in person
- never arrange to meet someone without taking an adult with them
- only use moderated chat rooms and not to add people they don't know to their instant messaging buddy lists.

Many children are sent, or find, threatening or unsuitable material online. Parents may want to use the safety filters already in the computers, browsers and search engines or buy software designed to prevent children from accessing unsuitable material.

Keeping computers in family areas (not in the bedroom) will enable parents and children to learn how to get the most out of the internet together and to talk about what they find.

**For more information**



[www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

[www.identitytheft.org.uk](http://www.identitytheft.org.uk)

[www.ceop.gov.uk](http://www.ceop.gov.uk)

[www.getsafeonline.org](http://www.getsafeonline.org)



## Problems with drugs and alcohol

### Alcohol

Alcohol can make people more sociable and friendly, but excessive drinking can lead to problems.

The Department of Health sets sensible drinking limits at two to three units of alcohol per day for women and three to four units a day for men.

Binge drinking, 'drinking to get drunk' and drunkenness can be a factor in crime and can increase your chances of being a victim of crime:

- Just under half of all violent crime is thought by victims to be alcohol-related.
- Drunkenness can lead to disorder and crimes such as criminal damage and violence, both in public and at home.



### Alcohol and young people

It is illegal to buy alcohol if you are under 18, yet annually more young people 'overdose' on alcohol (suffer alcohol poisoning) than take illegal drugs.

There is a lot of social pressure to drink.

Discuss drinking with your children. But be aware that they will see you as a role model. So setting a good example will help them understand how to handle alcohol.

Drinking and driving causes many deaths every year.

## Drugs

Possession of controlled drugs and their supply (including giving drugs to friends or family) is illegal.

Drugs are divided into Classes A, B or C according to the harm they can do. Class A drugs like heroin and crack cocaine are the most harmful. The penalties for possessing or dealing drugs are different depending on the class and the circumstances. But the penalties for dealing are a lot more severe than those for possession of small amounts for personal use.

Drug use can lead to other criminal activity too, like stealing to pay for more drugs or driving under the influence of drugs, which is just as illegal and dangerous as drink driving.

If you are worried about someone's drug use, the best thing to do is to talk to them about it.

### For more information



[www.drinkaware.co.uk](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk)

[www.units.nhs.uk](http://www.units.nhs.uk)

Drinkline 0800 917 8282

For information and advice about drugs and services in your area, call FRANK 24 hours a day on 0800 77 66 00 or visit [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

## Drugs and young people

Many young people don't take drugs and most that do try them will stop. Only a small minority of young people will end up as problem drug users. Although the risks are real, most young people who take drugs do so safely and without getting into trouble. Using one sort of drug does not necessarily lead to another. Most young people trust their parents, so giving your child the facts in a balanced argument can make all the difference. Research shows that talking to your child about drugs reduces their chances of becoming a problem user.





## Violent crime

**The chances of you or a member of your family becoming a victim of violent crime are low. Violent crimes by strangers in public places are rare.**

You can make yourself even less likely to be the victim of a violent crime – for example, robbery (mugging) or assault – by taking a few sensible precautions. Many are common sense, and may be things that you already do.

Think about how you would act in different situations before you are in them. Think about whether you would stay and defend yourself (using reasonable force, see page 8) or simply get away as quickly as you can. There is nothing wrong with doing either, but you should consider your options.



## Protection against domestic violence

Domestic violence accounts for 14% of all violent incidents in the UK. Anyone can experience domestic violence – it can happen in all kinds of relationships, regardless of age, race, gender, sexuality, disability, wealth, geography and lifestyle.

Women are more likely to be at risk in the home. Statistics show that three in ten women experience domestic violence in their lifetime.

Everyone has a right to be safe in their own home. All statutory services (such as the police, Crown Prosecution Service, housing department and social services) have a duty to serve victims of domestic violence and to bring offenders to justice.

### Getting help

If you experience domestic violence, you may feel as if you have nowhere to go, or no-one to turn to. The most important thing you can do is tell someone you trust.

Never be afraid to ask for help. You may decide to report your abuser to the police. **In an emergency always call the police by dialling 999.**

You may decide to leave the house and go to a friend's or relative's house, or even to a refuge or hostel for women.

If you do decide to leave, take important documents with you, such as your marriage certificate and birth certificate, any court orders, your passport and health records. Only leave when it is safe to do so.

### Accept that you are not to blame

It is not easy to accept that a loved one can behave so aggressively. Often, you assume that you are to blame. You are not and there is no excuse for domestic violence.



## What is domestic abuse?

It involves being abused, threatened, or physically or sexually assaulted by a partner, a former partner, or a family member.

As well as actual physical violence, domestic violence can include a wide range of abusive and controlling behaviour, such as:

- threats
- harassment
- physical attacks
- financial control
- emotional abuse.

Domestic violence is a way to gain power and control over another person and may include destructive criticism, disrespect, isolation and harassment.

Crimes in the name of honour, forced marriage and female genital mutilation are also considered to be domestic violence.

## For more information



Freephone 24-hour Domestic Violence Helpline 0808 2000 247

Men's Advice Line 0808 801 0327

Broken Rainbow 08452 60 44 60 (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender domestic violence forum)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office 020 7008 0135 or 020 7008 0230  
(for forced marriage guidance)

A helpful leaflet called *What is a forced marriage?* has been produced by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and can be downloaded at [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk).

A leaflet on domestic violence has also been produced by Broken Rainbow for members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community.

## Dealing with hate crime

Hate crimes are directed against people because of some feature of who they are, or because they are seen as different.

A hate crime is any criminal offence that a victim or any other person thinks is motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's:

- disability
- gender identity
- race
- religion and belief, or
- sexual orientation.

If you feel that you have been the victim of a hate crime, report it to police either directly or through a reporting scheme (see below). The police can gather intelligence on what is happening in an area to stop it happening again.

### Tell someone – stop hate crime

- If you believe the crime was because of your disability, gender identity, race, religion, beliefs or sexual orientation, you should say so to the police. You can ask them to keep any personal information about you confidential.
- If the crime has happened more than once, tell the police this. You should also tell them if the problem has become more serious.
- If your child is suffering hate crime or hate incidents at school, make sure you tell the school and find out what they are doing about it.
- If you want special arrangements for the police to contact you, let them know what these are.

If you have been a victim of a hate crime, contact:

- your local police
- your neighbourhood policing team
- local race equality councils and/or voluntary groups.

You can report the crime online directly to your local police force at [www.direct.gov.uk/neighbourhoodsafety](http://www.direct.gov.uk/neighbourhoodsafety)

**In an emergency dial 999.**



If you can't report the crime in person, there are organisations which can help you:

- Victim Support can help you report a crime – they may even be able to go with you to the police. Call 0845 30 30 900 or email [supportline@victimsupport.org.uk](mailto:supportline@victimsupport.org.uk).
- Report the crime anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.
- Your church, temple, mosque, synagogue or other place of worship might be able to help.
- The local gay and lesbian group might help you.
- Your Citizens Advice Bureau or library should be able to tell you what other local organisations might be able to help.
- Many local councils also run schemes to allow people to report hate crimes without having to go to the police directly.
- A lot of police forces also provide other reporting options without having to deal directly with the police such as True Vision, a police-funded initiative to encourage the reporting of hate incidents. For more information, visit [www.true-vision.org.uk](http://www.true-vision.org.uk) or [www.report-it.org.uk](http://www.report-it.org.uk).

### Dealing with abusive phone calls

- If you get an abusive or threatening phone call, do not rise to it. The caller wants to provoke a strong reaction from you.
- You may want to make a record of when you receive the calls, so you can see if there is a pattern.
- Some phone companies offer a service that blocks calls from people who have withheld their number, and a service allowing you to retrieve the last caller's number.
- Don't give your name or number when you answer the phone.

If you are receiving many abusive calls, contact your phone company or the police for help.



## Sexual assault

Everyone has the right to live free of unwanted attention, harassment and abuse. You have this right, whoever you are, whatever your race, background, religion or sexuality, and however you dress or act.

No-one has the right to interfere with this, whether they are strangers, colleagues, friends, acquaintances or family.

- Sexual assault is more likely to happen in crowded places. It includes being touched or rubbed against. It can be hard to know who is doing this, so it is often easier to move away, if this is possible.
- If you feel confident enough, a stern 'take your hands off me' may make the person stop. This will also alert other people to their behaviour.

## Serious sexual assault and rape

Contrary to popular belief, rape by a stranger is very uncommon.

Serious sexual assault and rape are more likely to happen in quieter places. Reduce your risk of this type of attack by following the general guidance on page 7.

If you are attacked, you must decide whether to defend yourself, which may put you at risk of further injury. Or it may not be possible to defend yourself (see 'Protecting yourself and your children' on page 7).

If you have been raped, you may or may not want to report it to the police, or to see a nurse or counsellor.

The police are specially trained to work with people who have been sexually assaulted. You will be able to choose to speak with either a male or female officer and a male or female doctor or nurse, if you go to hospital.

If you want to report the crime straightaway, whether you get medical help or go straight to the police, try not to wash or change your clothes. If you want to report the crime at a later date, this is okay too.



If you know someone who has been raped, try to be supportive, but not judgemental. It is up to them what they want to do.

In some areas, you can go to specialist sexual assault referral centres where you can get medical care and counselling, and also assist the police with their investigations.

Another way to avoid violence is to stop a confrontation escalating. Think about how you react when you get angry. If you feel yourself getting angry with someone, or if they get angry with you, try to walk away as quickly as you can.

### **Men's actions**

A lot of the fear that women can feel about crimes such as sexual assault comes from men's actions. Men can help women feel more secure by thinking about how they and their friends act in public places.

For example:

- don't start conversations with women on their own
- try not to walk too close behind them – they may think you are following them and feel threatened
- respect women's personal space
- don't make personal comments about women who walk past
- remember that 'no' means 'no'.

### **Date rape**

Most rape happens between people who know each other – it is rare to be raped by a stranger.

Teenagers and young people are more likely to become victims of date rape. For teenagers, talking about relationships and sex can be difficult. But an open relationship with parents or carers will make things better if something does go wrong.

There are a lot of pressures to become sexually active at an early age. It is important that young people know they do not have to do anything they are not happy with.

Sometimes, drugs are used to make rape easier. This is usually through 'spiking' drinks with a drug or drugs or with strong alcohol. So beware. Keep your drink with you, drink out of a bottle and make sure that you take your drink straight from bar staff.

Being drunk can make you more vulnerable to sexual assault. Alcohol can make you less alert, lowers your inhibitions and affects your reactions. Sexual assailants may take advantage of this and target you because of your vulnerability.

If you are raped or sexually assaulted, it is important to remember that it is not your fault, even if you have been drinking.

## Men as victims

Women are not the only victims of sexual assaults. Men can also be victims, or can experience violent relationships. While women are most at risk from men on their own, men are more at risk from groups of men. People are sometimes sexually assaulted when they are open about their sexual orientation to their family, friends or wider community. If this happens to you, it is not your fault – you have the right to live your life free from abuse and violence (see pages 17–18).

### For more information



[www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk) or call the  
Victim Supportline 0845 30 30 900

[www.rapecrisis.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk)

[www.homeoffice.gov.uk/sarcs](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/sarcs)

[www.thesurvivorstrust.org](http://www.thesurvivorstrust.org)



## Protecting children from bullying and abuse

Children are more likely to be the victims of abuse in the home, or from someone they know. They can be just as traumatised by witnessing domestic violence as by being abused themselves.

### If your child is being bullied

Bullying can be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour that is repeated over a period of time.

Your child may not tell you directly that they are being bullied, but may display other symptoms such as headaches, irritability and anxiety, and may not want to go to school. If your child is behaving like this or out of character and you suspect they are being bullied, try talking to them about:

- their progress with school work
- friends at school
- what they do at lunchtimes and breaks
- any problems or difficulties they are facing.

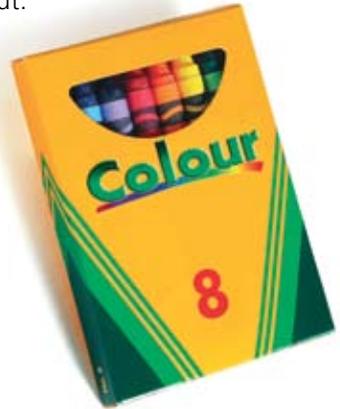
Finding out that your child is being bullied can be very upsetting, but if this happens, try to talk calmly to your child about what is happening and:

- make a note of what they say: who was involved, where, when and how often?
- reassure your child that they have done the right thing by telling you
- tell your child to report any further incidents to a teacher straightaway
- talk to your child's teacher about the bullying.

Tell your children that they can break rules to stay safe.

### Kidscape guidance

Kidscape is a national charity working to prevent bullying and child sexual abuse. This is what they recommend to help you keep your children safe:



- Children must know that their bodies belong to them, especially the private parts covered by their swimsuits.
- Tell your children that it's all right to say 'no' if someone tries to hurt them. A lot of children are told to always do what grown-ups tell them.
- Bullies pick on younger, more vulnerable children. Tell children to get friends to help them, and to say 'no' without fighting. Make sure they tell a grown-up. Tell them to give up something a bully wants, such as a bike, if they are going to get hurt. Tell them that you will not be angry if they come home without it.
- Tell your children that they must always tell you what has happened and that you will not be angry with them.
- If your child wants your help, they need to know they will be believed and supported. This is especially true in the case of sexual assault, as children rarely lie about it.
- Molesters often say that a kiss or a touch is 'our secret'. Tell your children that some secrets should never be kept, even if they said they wouldn't tell. Never force your child to hug or kiss anyone.
- Tell your children they can say 'no' to touching or kissing if they don't like it. If someone touches them and tells them to keep it a secret, they must tell you.
- Most decent people will not approach a child who is on their own, unless the child is obviously lost or distressed. Tell your children never to talk to strangers, and to politely ignore any approach from a stranger. Get them to tell you if a stranger tries to talk to them.
- Tell your children that they can break rules to stay safe. They can run away, scream, lie or kick to get away from danger.

### For more information



[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk) (enter 'bullying' into the search box)

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) or call 0800 11 11

[www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

[www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)



## Protecting your home

### General home security

Good home security is the best way to reduce your chances of being burgled.

#### Quick tips

- Going out? Always close and lock the external doors and windows – even if you are just going out for a short time.
- Installing new doors or windows? Make sure that they are certified to the appropriate British Standard (BS). The standard for windows is BS7950 and the standard for doors is PAS 24-1.
- Use window locks. Window locks, especially on older windows, will help stop people getting in (a burglar is less likely to break in if they have to smash a window).
- Use deadlocks for doors. If you have deadlocks, use them. They make it harder for a thief to get out again. But don't leave the key near the door or in an obvious place.
- Be careful with spare keys. Don't leave spare keys outside or in a garage or shed, and put car keys or garage keys out of sight in the house.



## Fire safety

Make sure that your home security improvements don't stop you escaping from the house quickly if there is a fire.

- Put burglars off. Burglar alarms that are visible, good home lighting and security lighting in the right places can put burglars off. But make sure that lights don't disturb your neighbours and that burglar alarms turn off after 20 minutes.
- 
- Timers are good. Use timers to switch on lights and radios when you are away from home. Burglars will think twice because there might be someone at home.
  - Have burglar-proof fences and walls. Fences at the back of the house may add security. But walls and solid fencing can hide a burglar's movements. Avoid this by using chain-link fencing you can see through or garden trellis with prickly shrubs.
  - Fit a door 'spy hole'. Fitting a spy hole allows you to see who is at the door. A door chain lets you open the door a little way to talk to the caller.
  - Lock garages and sheds. Never leave garages or sheds unlocked, especially if they are connected to your property.

## Staying safe at home

Make your property secure and you will feel safer when at home. Your home and belongings will also be safer when you are out.

Here are some guidelines for dealing with different situations that you may find yourself in:

- If you think you have an intruder, only you can decide how to handle the situation. Think now about what you might do, as you might not think clearly in a real incident.



- You may act differently if you are alone or if other people are with you.
- You could make a noise and hope it puts them off, or keep quiet and hope they don't come into your room.
- You could keep a phone in your bedroom so you can raise the alarm. This may make you feel safer.
- It is generally best not to challenge an intruder.
- If you come home and find a broken window or lights on, and you think there may be a burglar inside, you may decide not to enter the house.
- Go to a neighbour's house and call the police. Or ring the doorbell – intruders are likely to run away.



### Homeowners

- Spending money on security for your home is a good investment. Security fittings will last a long time and can add value to your property.
- Contact your council or local police for help. They may be able to give you advice on the best ways to protect your property and may offer grants to help cover some or all of the cost.



- Flat owners should make sure that main entrance doors close securely. Never 'buzz' open the door for strangers or hold the door open for someone who is arriving just as you are leaving or entering the building. Do not give out entrance codes/keys to anyone who is not a resident. Change these codes regularly.
- You do not need to apply for planning permission for certain home security improvements, but there are planning regulations (laws) that affect many of the changes you can make to the outside of your home, including building walls and fences.
- You can build a fence or boundary wall up to one metre high where it will be next to a road or footpath, unless you live in a listed building, or your council has removed your 'permitted development rights' (your rights to carry out limited work without applying for planning permission). You can erect a wall up to two metres high if it is not next to a road or footpath. This height limit includes the height of any barbed or razor wire you put up. Get further advice from your local planning authority.
- If you use barbed or razor wire, you must take reasonable steps to prevent injury to other people, including trespassers, caused by dangers on your property. (This is law under the Occupiers Liability Act 1984.)
- If you are building a wall on the boundary with your neighbour, you may need your neighbour's permission (under the Party Wall Act 1996). If you live somewhere, such as an estate, where there are building restrictions in force, you may need special permission before you can erect the wall.

## Tenants

If you rent your house or flat, your landlord has some responsibility for keeping it secure. If your home is not secure, ask your landlord to make it safer. It will be cheaper for the landlord to fit window locks than to mend a broken window.

If you live in social housing or in a block of rented flats, form a tenants' association and this will make it easier to work together on improving security.



## Householders and the use of force against intruders

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the Association of Chief Police Officers have issued guidance for householders on the force they can use against intruders. It deals with people's main concerns, such as:

- Does the law protect me?
- What is 'reasonable force'?
- How will the police and CPS treat me?

The guidance is available on the CPS website at [www.cps.gov.uk](http://www.cps.gov.uk).

### For more information



[www.direct.gov.uk/homesecurity](http://www.direct.gov.uk/homesecurity)

[www.homeoffice.gov.uk/homesecurity](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/homesecurity)

## Home security for older people

If you are an older person, then you may feel more vulnerable to some crimes. But older people are actually less likely to become victims. A few simple steps can also help reduce your risk of crime:

- Think about joining a community alarm scheme if you trip or fall, or are feeling at risk at home.
- Some companies operate a password scheme for older or vulnerable customers – their representatives are expected to confirm a password to prove that they are genuine.
- Don't keep large sums of cash at home – use a bank account instead.
- Many areas run schemes aimed at assisting older people with their home security and general maintenance. You should ask for advice from the police, the local authority or a voluntary group.
- Have a list of useful numbers by your telephone. These may include the numbers of your family, local police station, local council, etc.

## How to deal with bogus callers

Most people who call at your home will be genuine. But sometimes someone may turn up unannounced, with the intention of tricking their way into your home. If someone calls on you:

- **LOCK** – Keep your front and back doors locked, even when you are at home.
- **STOP** – Before you answer, stop and think if you are expecting anyone. Check that you have locked the back door and taken the key out. Look through a spy hole or window to see who it is.
- **CHAIN** – If you decide to open the door, put the chain or door bar on first, if you have one. Keep the bar or chain on while you are talking to the person on the doorstep.
- **CHECK** – Even if they have an appointment, check the identity card carefully. Close the door while you do this. Still unsure? Look up a phone number in the phone book and ring to verify their identity. Do not use a phone number on the identity card, as this may be false.

Bogus callers may be smartly dressed and claim to be from the council, police or utility companies. They can also turn up as builders or gardeners and try to trick you into paying for unnecessary work. You should never agree to have work done by someone just passing by. If you think work needs to be done, get at least two quotes from reputable companies.

If you think a bogus caller has called on you, report it to the police immediately.

**If in doubt, keep them out!**

### For more information



[www.homeoffice.gov.uk/boguscallers](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/boguscallers)

[www.direct.gov.uk/boguscallers](http://www.direct.gov.uk/boguscallers)

[www.ageconcern.org.uk](http://www.ageconcern.org.uk)

[www.helptheaged.org.uk](http://www.helptheaged.org.uk)



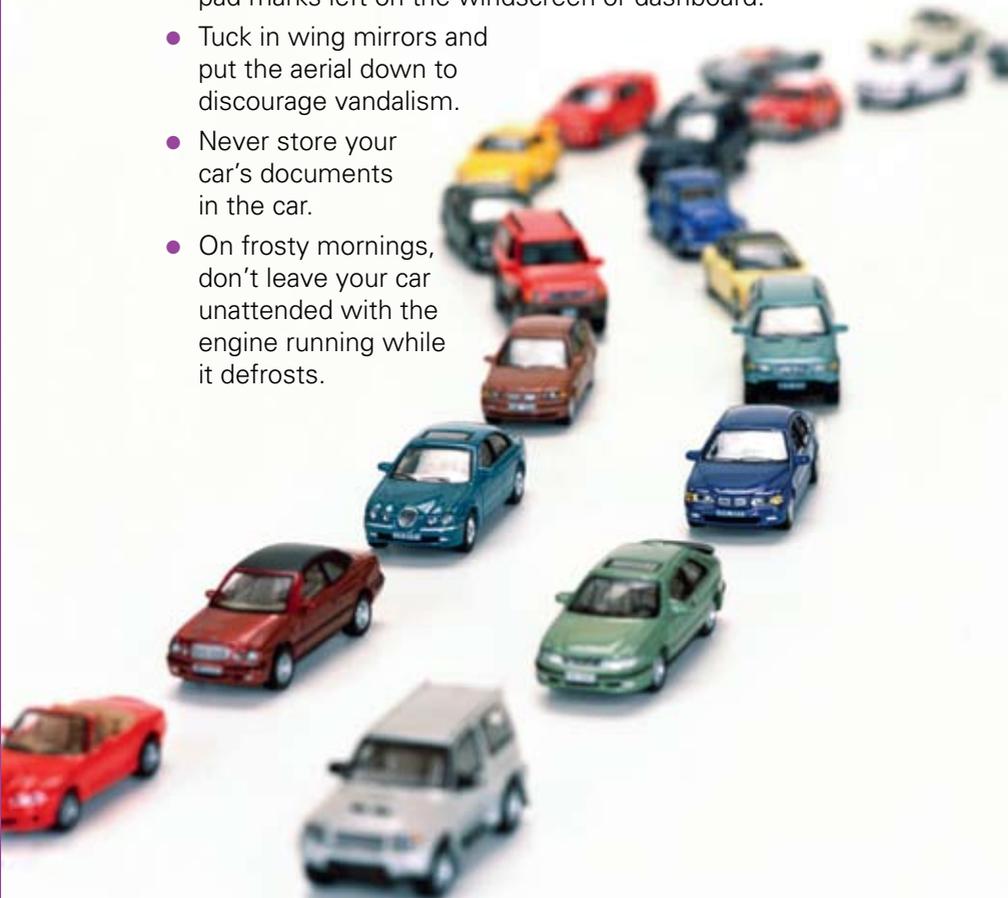
## Protecting your vehicle

### Car security

Vehicle crime has fallen but many thefts – of your vehicle or its contents – can be prevented.

#### Quick tips

- Lock the doors, and close the windows and sun roof when you leave the car for any length of time.
- Don't leave anything on display – even a jacket can be an appealing target for a thief.
- Remove the stereo if you can.
- Remove satellite navigation devices where possible, including the support cradle and suction pad. Wipe away any suction pad marks left on the windscreen or dashboard.
- Tuck in wing mirrors and put the aerial down to discourage vandalism.
- Never store your car's documents in the car.
- On frosty mornings, don't leave your car unattended with the engine running while it defrosts.



- A Thatcham-compliant immobiliser or steering lock can help secure older cars.
- Think about having the windows etched with the car's registration number or the last seven digits of the vehicle identification number (VIN), or some other unique identifying number linked to a recognised database.
- Keep your car keys out of sight, even in your house, so that someone breaking in cannot steal your car too.
- If you are going to buy a new car, think about security when choosing which one. Use the Thatcham website to compare security scores for different cars, and find out which new cars won security awards in the annual British Insurance Vehicle Security Awards.

## Driving

- Keep your car in good condition and make sure you have enough petrol to complete your journey.
- Keep doors locked when driving and keep bags, phones and other valuables out of sight (preferably in the boot).
- Park in well-lit or busy areas whenever possible. If you park during the day, think about what the area will feel like after dark.
- Where possible, use car parks approved under the police Safer Parking Scheme. These display the Park Mark<sup>®</sup> sign. A list of approved car parks can be found at [www.saferparking.com](http://www.saferparking.com)
- If you break down on the motorway, follow the arrows to the nearest phone. Never cross the carriageway. Wait outside your car, as far away as possible from the carriageway (unless you feel unsafe, in which case you should sit in the passenger seat).
- Do not give lifts to, or accept lifts from, people you do not know or from someone who is under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.
- You may feel more comfortable carrying a mobile phone with you. Try to keep it out of sight and do not use it while driving, as this is a criminal offence.



## Buying and selling used cars

Most car sellers are genuine, whether it is a private sale or through a garage. However, there are some bogus sellers and they may be selling stolen cars.

Protect yourself by following this advice:

- Think about checking – with one of several private companies that hold information on vehicles – whether the car has been reported stolen, seriously damaged or is still subject to a finance agreement (such as hire purchase).
- Always arrange to meet the person selling the car at their house, not at your house or another meeting place.
- Check any security etchings to make sure they match and have not been removed. Check that the chassis number matches that on the vehicle registration document.
- Always check the registration documents and look for a full service history.

### Selling a used car

There are some simple steps you can take to protect yourself from becoming a victim of crime when selling a car:

- Never let the buyer go on a test drive alone. They may not return.
- Don't leave the buyer alone with the keys in the ignition.
- Be careful when accepting cheques or banker's drafts. If they are fraudulent or counterfeit, you will lose the money. Like cheques, banker's drafts take time to be cleared, so don't part with your car until you are sure the payment is genuine.
- Ask the buyer for some form of identification, such as a passport or driving licence. If in doubt, check with the police.

## Carjacking

Carjacking, although uncommon, is distressing for the victim. You can help prevent yourself being a victim of carjacking by:

- keeping your doors locked in built-up areas and keeping the windows wound up, especially at traffic lights
- being aware of what people around you are doing
- driving to the next garage or police station if:
  - someone tries to pull you over for no reason
  - you think someone may have 'accidentally' bumped into your car, aiming to get you out of your car so they can steal it, or
  - someone appears to have broken down or had an accident, particularly in an isolated area.

Always report your concerns to the police.

## Motorbike and bicycle security

### Motorbikes and scooters

- Always lock your bike and set the alarm, if it has one.
- When leaving your bike for some time, try to lock it to something secure. If no posts or frames are available, tell your local authority that a post or frame is needed.
- If you are using a chain lock, try to ensure that the chain is kept short and does not hang down to the ground, so that it is harder for thieves to cut or break.
- At home, you can fit special attachments to lock your bike.
- Have the vehicle marked with its vehicle identification number (VIN).
- If you are going to buy a new motorbike, think about security when choosing which one. Use the Thatcham website to compare security markings for different motorbikes.





## Bicycles

- Always lock your bike, even if you are only leaving it for a few minutes.
- Avoid parking your bike in isolated and/or dimly lit places – leave your bike where a potential thief can easily be seen.
- Get a good bike lock. Hardened steel D-shaped locks are recommended as the minimum standard. Check out [www.soldsecure.com](http://www.soldsecure.com) for certified locks, or ask your local bike shop for a recommendation.
- Lock your bike to an immovable object – use a bike rack, lamp posts, railings or some solid object. If you have problems securing your bike, tell your local authority.
- Secure removable parts (for example, wheels) or take smaller parts with you (for example, lights and quick-release saddles).
- Think about having your bike security marked or engraved. Register your bike – contact your local police station for further advice.

### For more information

[www.direct.gov.uk/vehiclecrime](http://www.direct.gov.uk/vehiclecrime)

[www.homeoffice.gov.uk/vehiclecrime](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/vehiclecrime)

[www.saferparking.com](http://www.saferparking.com)

[www.thatcham.org](http://www.thatcham.org)



## Useful contact details



## For more information

Age Concern:	0800 00 99 66
Alcoholics Anonymous (AA):	0870 600 0371
Childline:	0800 11 11
Citizens Advice Bureau:	To locate your local branch, visit <a href="http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk">www.citizensadvice.org.uk</a>
Crimestoppers:	0800 555 111
Directgov:	<a href="http://www.direct.gov.uk">www.direct.gov.uk</a>
Domestic Violence Helpline:	0808 2000 247 (24 hour)
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA):	0870 240 0009
FRANK:	0800 77 66 00 or visit <a href="http://www.talktofrank.com">www.talktofrank.com</a>
Health and Safety Executive (HSE):	0845 345 0055
Help the Aged:	England 020 7278 1114 Scotland 0845 833 0200 Wales 029 2043 1555 Northern Ireland 02890 240 5729 or 02890 230 666
Home Office:	<a href="http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk">www.homeoffice.gov.uk</a>
Kidscape:	<a href="http://www.kidscape.org.uk">www.kidscape.org.uk</a>
Neighbourhood Watch:	<a href="http://www.mynhw.co.uk">www.mynhw.co.uk</a>
Rape Crisis:	0115 900 3560
Samaritans:	08457 90 90 90
Suzy Lamplugh Trust:	020 7091 0014
Victim Supportline:	0845 30 30 900
Women's Aid Helpline:	0808 2000 247

In an emergency, you should always dial 999.

### **Other information**

To order more copies of this booklet, visit  
[www.crimereduction.gov.uk/publicity\\_catalogue](http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/publicity_catalogue)

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