

# BE SAFE, BE SECURE

Your practical guide to crime reduction



Household and property



Security



Vehicles



Drugs



Prevention



Personal



Work



Family



Community

  
Home Office



This booklet tells you how you can help reduce your risk of being a victim of crime. You can make yourself safer and protect your home, your family and your belongings by following some of these simple suggestions.

It is important to remember that most crime is against property, not people, and that crime levels are going down in most places. The majority of crimes are 'spur of the moment' actions, often in response to the opportunity of an open window or valuables on display.

Many of the steps suggested here are common sense, but they can make a real difference.

By securing your home and property, you can save yourself the distress and expense of crime, and make your community a safer and better place to live in.

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## Your home

**Home security is the best way to reduce your chances of being burgled. A lot of burglaries are spur of the moment, as a burglar may see an open window or other easy point of entry and take their chance.**

### Tips to avoid becoming a victim

- When you go out, always close and lock the external doors and windows – even if you are just going out for a short time.
- If you are installing new doors and windows, get ones that are certified to British Standard BS7950 (windows) or PAS 24-1 (doors).
- Window locks, especially on older windows, will help stop people getting in (and remember – a burglar is less likely to break in if they have to smash a window).
- 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.
- 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.





- Use timers for lights and radios if you need to be away from home overnight or when you are on holiday. They will create the impression that someone is in.
- Visible burglar alarms, good lighting and carefully directed security lighting can put burglars off. But make sure that lights don't disturb your neighbours and that alarms turn off after 20 minutes.
- Fences at the back of the house may make this area more secure but walls and solid fencing may let a thief break in without being seen. A good compromise is chain-link fencing or trellis with prickly shrubs.
- 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.
- Never leave garages or sheds unlocked, especially if they connect to your property.

## Who can help you do this?

### Homeowners

Spending money on security measures can seem daunting but it is a good investment, 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 advise you on the best measures to protect your property and may even have grants to help cover the cost.

### Tenants

If you rent your house or flat, your landlord has some responsibility towards its security. If your home is not secure, ask your landlord if they will make necessary improvements. It will be cheaper for them to fit window locks than to mend a broken window.

If you live in social housing or in a block of rented flats, forming a tenants' association might make security easier.

Flat owners should make sure that main entrance doors close behind them and they don't let other people in with them. Do not give out entrance codes/keys to a third party.



## Protecting your property

- There are laws (planning regulations) that govern many of the changes you can make to the outside of your home, including building walls and fences. However, you do not need to apply for planning permission for everything.
- Unless you live in a listed building, or your council has removed your 'permitted development rights' (your rights to carry out limited development without applying for planning permission), you can build a fence or boundary wall up to one metre high where it will be next to a road or footpath, or up to two metres high elsewhere. These height limits would include, as part of the wall or fence, any barbed or razor wire you put up. You may seek further advice from your local planning authority.
- If you use barbed or razor wire, under the Occupiers Liability Act 1984 you must take reasonable precautions to prevent injury to other people, including trespassers, caused by dangers on your property. 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 to get special permission.

### For more information



#### Home Office leaflets:

- 'Your guide to keeping your home secure'
- 'Peace of mind while you're away'
- 'Peace of mind while you move home'

## Personal safety at home

**Securing your property will make you safer in your home, and will make your home and your belongings safer while you are out.**

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

- If you think you have an intruder, only you can decide how to deal with the situation. Think about what you might do now – you might not be thinking clearly in a real incident.
- You may respond differently if you are alone in the house, or if there are other people there.
- 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 also 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 go into the house.
- Go to a neighbour's house and call the police, or ring the doorbell – someone who should be in the house will come to the door, whereas intruders are likely to run away.





## The law on self-defence

**Under the law, you are entitled to use reasonable force to protect yourself, to protect another person, to protect your property, to prevent crime or to assist in the lawful arrest of a criminal.**

The force that it is reasonable to use in any situation will depend on the circumstances of the case and the threat you are facing. Broadly, for force to be reasonable it must be necessary and proportionate. But cases have established that:

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

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 take this into account. And the police and prosecutors take this into account in deciding whether to bring charges. They 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 retaliate against a criminal. Punishing criminals is a matter for the police and the courts and you must not take the law into your own hands by trying to punish an offender yourself.

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

The CPS and Association of Chief Police Officers have issued a short leaflet called 'Householders and the use of force against intruders'. It deals with people's main concerns such as 'Does the law protect me?', 'What is 'reasonable force'?' and 'How will the police and CPS treat me?' It is available on the CPS website at [www.cps.gov.uk/publications/docs/intruder\\_leaflet2005.pdf](http://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/docs/intruder_leaflet2005.pdf)

## Dealing with abusive phone calls

- If you get an abusive or threatening phone call, do not respond to it. The caller wants 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.
- Do not 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.

## If you live in a flat or shared housing

- Consider having a phone-entry system fitted to the main door to your building. 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.
- Think about getting home contents insurance to cover all of the contents of your house against burglary and damage.
- If you are a student, during holidays, take high-value goods with you or take advantage of secure storage schemes at your university or college.
- In halls of residence, always lock your room door, even if you are just going down the corridor.

### For more information

[www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crimevictims/how-you-can-prevent-crime](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crimevictims/how-you-can-prevent-crime)

Home Office leaflets: 'A Guide to Home Security' and 'Student Survival Guide'.





## Older people

**Older people may feel more vulnerable to some crimes, but are actually less likely to become victims. A few simple steps can also help reduce your risk of crime.**

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



### For more information

[www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime-victims/how-you-can-prevent-crime/bogus-callers](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime-victims/how-you-can-prevent-crime/bogus-callers)

Home Office leaflet: 'How to beat the bogus caller'

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

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



## 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 a pre-arranged appointment, check their identity card carefully. Close the door while you do this. If you are 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 fake!

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 having work done by someone who is just passing by. If you think work needs to be done, get at least two quotes from other companies.

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

**If you have any doubts, KEEP THEM OUT!**

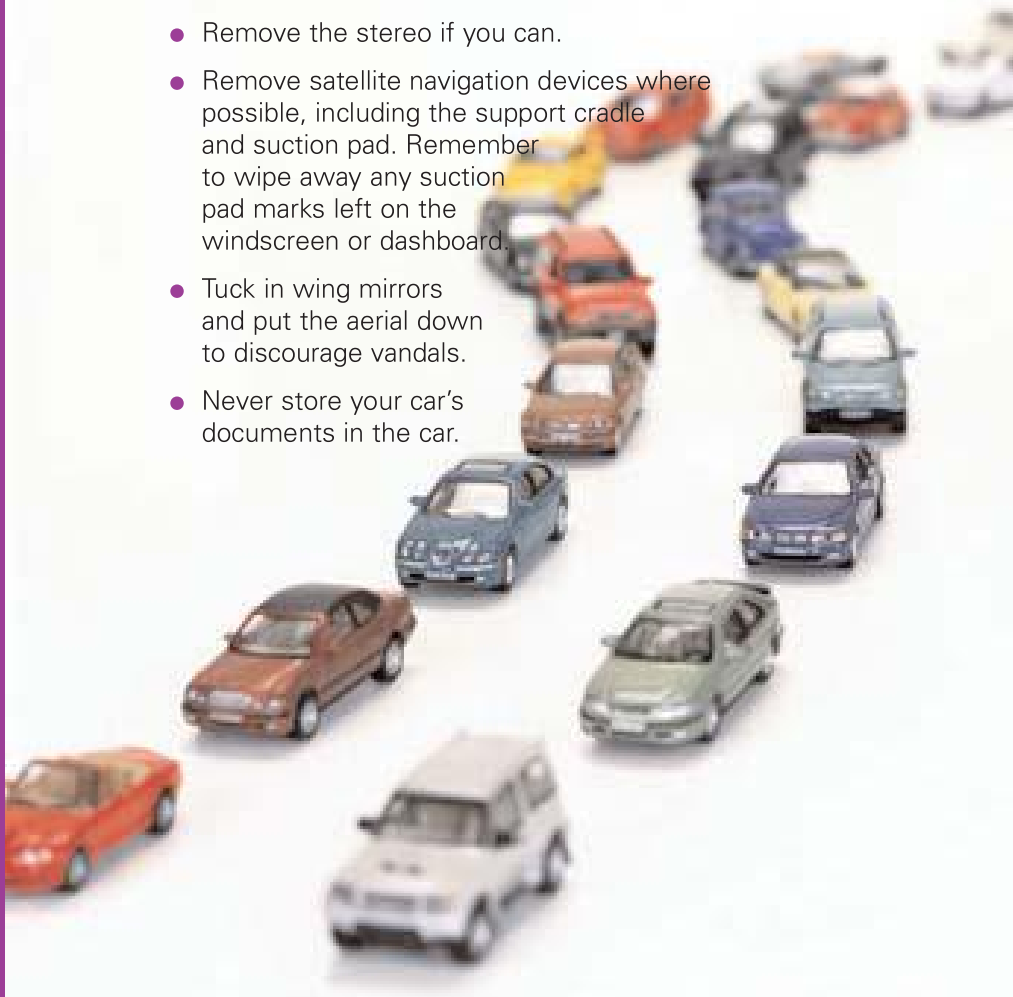


## Cars, motorbikes and bicycles

**A lot of crime is against cars, motorbikes and bicycles, including the theft of vehicles and theft from vehicles. Most of it can be prevented.**

### Cars

- 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 seem like 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. Remember to wipe away any suction pad marks left on the windscreen or dashboard.
- Tuck in wing mirrors and put the aerial down to discourage vandals.
- Never store your car's documents in the car.



- A Thatcham-compliant immobiliser or steering lock can help secure older vehicles.
- 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.



### For more information

Home Office leaflets:

- 'Steer clear of car crime'
- 'Steer clear of caravan crime'
- 'Steer clear of cycle theft'
- 'Steer clear of bike crime'

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

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

[www.dvla.gov.uk](http://www.dvla.gov.uk)  
DVLA 0870 240 0009

[www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime-victims/how-you-can-prevent-crime/cycle-theft/](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime-victims/how-you-can-prevent-crime/cycle-theft/)

### Motorbikes

- 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 ground anchors are available, bring this to the attention of your local authority.
- At home, you can fit special attachments to lock your bike.
- Have the vehicle marked with its vehicle identification number (VIN).





## Buying a used car

**Most car sellers are genuine, whether it is a private sale or through a garage. However, some sellers are not genuine and may be selling stolen cars.**

You can protect yourself by following the advice below:

- Consider 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 finance.
- 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.
- Always check the registration documents and 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 come back.

- 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.

## Car-jacking

**Car-jacking, although uncommon, is nonetheless distressing to the victim.**

You can help prevent yourself being a victim of car-jacking by:

- Keeping your doors locked in built-up areas and trying to keep the windows wound up, especially at traffic lights.
- Being aware of what people are doing around you.
- Driving to the next garage or police station:

- if someone tries to pull you over for no reason;
- if you think someone may have ‘accidentally’ bumped into your car, aiming to get you out of your car so they can steal it; or
- if someone appears to have broken down or had an accident, particularly in an isolated area.

Always report your concerns to the police.



## Bicycles

- Always lock your bike, even if you are leaving it for a couple of 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 or robust street furniture such as lamp posts or railings. If provision is inadequate, bring this to the attention of 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.



## Community safety

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

You might like to join a Neighbourhood Watch scheme or become a Special Constable. Or, you could form a residents' association and become involved in activities to improve your neighbourhood, such as organising a 'community clear up' of a run-down or grimy area.

### Neighbourhood Watch

This is when a group of residents in a certain area (for example, on a street or an estate) agree to look out for one another. 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, can be a good way to help people feel more secure in their neighbourhoods and can encourage neighbourliness and closer communities.

### Special Constables

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

### Volunteering

There are a lot of other opportunities to do useful things locally. 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. There is also often good information about neighbourhood volunteering opportunities at your local library.

## Neighbourhood Policing

Some communities already have a dedicated Neighbourhood Policing Team covering the area but, by April 2008, there will be a team in every community which means you will be able to get in touch with teams easily by phone or email. You will see the same officers regularly in your neighbourhood and have opportunities to get to know them. You will be able to have a say in the issues that your local police team should address as a priority and you will receive regular feedback about how those issues are being tackled. You may know your local Neighbourhood Policing Team by another name such as the Safer Neighbourhood Team or Safer Community Team. To find out more and how to get involved, see: [www.neighbourhoodpolicing.co.uk](http://www.neighbourhoodpolicing.co.uk)



### For more information



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

[www.neighbourhoodwatch.uk.com](http://www.neighbourhoodwatch.uk.com)

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

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

[www.safer-community.net](http://www.safer-community.net)

### Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships

You can also find out about how crime is being tackled in your area by Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) by going to the Crime Reduction website. CDRPs are a combination of police, local authorities, fire service, transport operators and other organisations and businesses, which have worked together to develop and implement strategies for tackling crime and disorder in your neighbourhood.



## Tackling anti-social behaviour

**Anti-social behaviour is any activity that impacts on other people in a negative way; it includes a variety of behaviour covering a whole complex of selfish and unacceptable activity that can blight the quality of community life.**

Examples include:

- nuisance neighbours;
- intimidating groups taking over public spaces;
- vandalism, graffiti and fly-posting;
- people taking and buying drugs on the street;
- people dumping rubbish and abandoning cars; and
- anti-social drinking.

Sometimes, anti-social behaviour may be targeted at specific individuals or households; however, anti-social behaviour can also be a result of more general circumstances, such as an atmosphere of intimidation, or thoughtlessness, for example noise nuisance caused by late night fireworks. Either way, it shouldn't be tolerated.



### How to report anti-social behaviour

- Speak to your local anti-social behaviour co-ordinator. To find out who this is, you can visit [www.respect.gov.uk](http://www.respect.gov.uk) and search by postcode.
- If you live in Cardiff, Sheffield, Hampshire or the Isle of Wight, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, Leicester City or Rutland, you can now call 101, the new 24-hour single non-emergency number provided by your police and local council (for further information, please see [www.101.gov.uk](http://www.101.gov.uk)).

Anti-social behaviour can also be a crime. If this is the case, it should be reported to the police. You can do this by:

- contacting your local force – contact details are available at [www.police.uk/forces/default.asp](http://www.police.uk/forces/default.asp); or
- reporting it online at the non-emergency crime notification website, [www.online.police.uk/english/default.asp](http://www.online.police.uk/english/default.asp)

No matter how you report anti-social behaviour, all complaints are treated as confidential, so you don't have to worry about your identity being revealed.





## Personal safety

**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 still rare and account for a very small part of recorded crime.**

However, 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. Making yourself safer doesn't mean changing your entire lifestyle, personality or wardrobe, and it doesn't mean never going out at all.

You should 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) or simply get away as quickly as you can. There is nothing wrong with doing either, but you should think about the options – there will be no time to do so if you are attacked.



## Some general points

- You will be safest in bright, well-lit and busy areas.
- Try to look and act confident – look like you know where you are going and walk tall.
- You might like to spread your valuables around your body. 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 to get into a confrontation and risk 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.
- If you decide to defend yourself, 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.

- Try not to advertise your valuables such as mobile phone, laptop, MP3 player, jewellery or watch.
- When out walking, be careful not to make your MP3 player or personal stereo an easy target for robbers. Try to keep it hidden.

### For more information



Home Office leaflet: 'Keep safe – A guide to personal safety'

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

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





## Theft and robbery

**Street robbery is generally known as mugging. It can also cover snatching bags. Pick-pocketing is slightly different, as you will not be aware of the offence taking place. Robbery is more likely to take place in quiet or dark areas, and pick-pocketing where it is busy, for example on a busy train in rush hour.**

### Tips to avoid becoming a victim

- Remember – be aware of your surroundings.
- Don't give thieves the chance to take your valuables from you.
- Don't leave your bag, wallet, valuable jewellery, mobile phone or MP3 player on display to thieves.
- If someone tries to take something from you by force, it may be best to give it to them. This will help you avoid getting injured.





## Credit cards

- Keep your cards separate from your cheque books.
- If your cards are stolen, call your bank or credit card company as soon as possible. Most banks put the number to call if your cards are stolen on your statement. They are also often shown on cash machines.
- Treat your cards like cash – never let them out of your sight and never keep your PIN number with your cards.

## Mobile phones

Register your phone with your network operator.

If your phone is stolen, report your number to your network and the police – the handset can now be barred on all networks and will be useless to thieves.

Record your registration number (IMEI) and your phone number. Keep these in a safe place separate from your phone. You can get your IMEI number (15-digit serial number) by keying `*#06#` into most phones or by looking behind your phone battery.

Register your phone on a property asset register.

Stay alert – your phone is a valuable item. When you are out, be aware of your surroundings and don't use your phone in crowded areas or where you might feel unsafe.



For more information



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



## Transport

**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, or when you're in the car.**

### Public transport

- As with everything, you are safest where there are other people and where it is well-lit.
- Plan your route.
- Try to wait in busy or well-lit areas.
- 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, get up and 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 not accessible.

### Driving

- Keep your car in good condition and try not to run out of petrol.
- Keep doors locked when driving and keep bags, phones and other valuables out of sight, preferably in the boot.
- Try to park in well-lit or busy areas. If you park during the day, think about what the area will feel like after dark.
- Use car parks approved under the police Safer Parking Scheme. These display the Park Mark® sign and can be found at [www.saferparking.com](http://www.saferparking.com)





## 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 to protect you from violence and abuse while you are at work and should have a policy for dealing with the risk of violence to staff.

You can help reduce your personal risk by planning strategies to deal with difficult situations before they happen.

- Check which areas of your organisation's policy on preventing work-related violence are relevant to you and your work.
- Make sure you know which procedures to follow if a violent incident happens.
- Be aware of risk factors and the possible causes of violence arising from the work you are doing.
- If you work alone or away from your workplace, try to make sure someone knows where you are going and when you expect to come back.
- You may feel safer carrying a mobile phone, personal alarm or pager.

If you are in a situation that could turn violent:

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

### For more information



Ask your union representative

Contact the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), which publishes guidance for employers on how to prevent and control violence at work (HSE and local authority inspectors are also responsible for inspecting and enforcing health and safety in workplaces)

Phone the HSE information line on 0845 345 0055 or visit [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)





## Hate crime

**Hate crimes are directed against people because of some aspect of who they are, or because they are in some way seen as being different – typically, because they are from an ethnic minority or visible religious minority, because of their sexual orientation, or because they have a disability.**

Hate crime can be any crime. A hate crime is any incident that constitutes a criminal offence, perceived by the victim or any other person as being motivated by prejudice or hate.

If you have been the victim of a hate crime, you should report it to the police. The police can build up a picture of what is happening in their areas to stop it happening again.

### Tell someone – STOP hate crime

- If you believe it was due to your race, faith, sexual orientation or disability, you should say so to the police. You can ask them to keep any personal information about you confidential.
- If it has happened more than once, you should also tell the police. You should also tell them if the seriousness has changed.
- If you want special arrangements for the police to make contact with you, you should let them know what these are.
- You can report it directly to your local police or at [www.police.uk](http://www.police.uk)
- You can use assisted reporting sites like [www.report-it.org.uk](http://www.report-it.org.uk) or [www.silenceisnotgolden.org](http://www.silenceisnotgolden.org)
- If your child is suffering hate crime at school, make sure you tell the school and find out what they are doing about it.
- **In an emergency you should always ring 999.**

If you can't report it in person, there are organisations to help you:

- Victim Support can help you report a crime – they may even be able to go with you to the police. They can be contacted by phone: 0845 30 30 900 or email: supportline@victimsupport.org.uk
- You can also report it anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.
- Your church, temple, mosque, synagogue or other place of worship might be able to help you.
- The local gay and lesbian group might be able to help.
- Your Citizens Advice Bureau or library should be able to tell you what other local organisations might be able to help.

The police are trained to deal with hate crime with sensitivity and tact. They will not treat you differently because you are from an ethnic or religious minority, or because of your sexual orientation. A lot of police forces also provide self-referral forms, so you can report a crime without having to deal directly with the police.

## Sexual assault

Women are not the only victims of sexual assaults. Men are also sexually assaulted, or experience violent relationships in their lives. People sometimes experience sexual assault 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.



### For more information

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

- your local police;
- your neighbourhood policing team;
- local race equality councils or voluntary groups; or
- the Commission for Racial Equality at [www.cre.gov.uk](http://www.cre.gov.uk)



## Women

**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.**

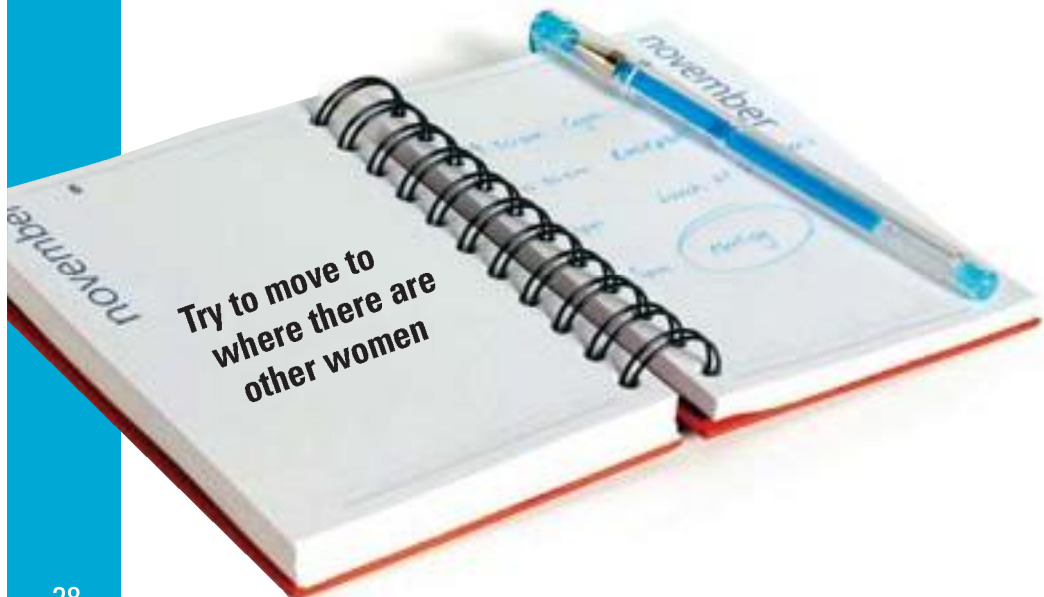
No-one has the right to interfere with this, whether they are strangers, colleagues, friends, acquaintances or family.

### Sexual assault

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. Try to move to where there are other women.

If you feel confident to do so, 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

Despite popular belief, rape by a stranger is very uncommon.

Serious sexual assault and rape are more likely to happen in quieter places. You can reduce the risk of this type of attack by following the general guidance earlier in this section.

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. Either way, you did not ask to be raped. It is not your fault, and you did not deserve it.

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 women who have been sexually assaulted. You will be able to talk to a female police officer and to a 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 do not be 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 access medical care and counselling, and assist the police with their investigations.

### For more information



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

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

Victim Supportline 0845 30 30 900



## Men

**While women are most at risk from men on their own, men are more at risk from groups of men. Most commonly, young men are attacked by groups of other young men.**

You can reduce the risk by following the general guidance – for example, trying to stay in well-lit or busy areas.

Another way to avoid violence is to stop a confrontational situation turning into an aggressive one. 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 move away as quickly as you can.

If you have been attacked, you may want to go to the police or to a doctor. The doctor may also ask you what has happened, but if you don't want to tell them, you don't have to.

### Your actions towards women

A lot of women's fear of crime comes from men's actions.

You can help this by thinking about what you and your friends do. For example:

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

## Your family: young children

**Children are more likely to be the victims of abuse in the home, or from someone else they know, and can be as traumatised witnessing domestic violence as children who are physically abused themselves.**

### Bullying

Children are also at risk from other children, most commonly in the form of bullying, although they can also be bullied by an adult.



#### For more information

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

[www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying)

ChildLine 0800 1111  
[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)



## Kidscape guide

**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.
- Child molesters that the child knows 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.
- 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. Never force your child to hug or kiss anyone.
- Most well-meaning adults 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.

## Your family: teenagers and young people

**Helping your children to be independent is a vital part of growing 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, and encouraging them to be honest with you, will help. 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.



### 'Date rape'

Being open with teenagers about relationships and sex can be difficult – for you and them. But an open relationship will make things better for both of you if something does go wrong.

There are a lot of pressures to become sexually active, and it is important that young people know they do not have to do anything they are not happy with.

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

Sometimes, drugs are used to make people easier to rape. This is usually through 'spiking' drinks with a pharmaceutical-type drug or with strong alcohol. The best way to guard against this is to keep your drink with you, drink out of a bottle and make sure that you take your drink straight from the bar staff.

Research indicates that being drunk can make you more vulnerable to sexual assault. Alcohol affects your actions and reactions as well as your ability to be alert. Perpetrators of sexual assault 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.



## The internet

**The internet is very much a part of our lives these days, and provides a useful educational tool for adults and children.**

Research shows that many children make far greater use of the internet than their parents are aware of and that a high proportion of children (1 in 12) go to meet people they have met online.

Encourage your children to:

- never give out information that could allow someone to find them offline;
- never arrange to meet someone without taking an adult with them; and
- only use moderated chat rooms and not to add people they don't know to their IM (Instant Messaging) buddy lists.

Research also shows that 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 to buy specific software to prevent children 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.ceop.gov.uk](http://www.ceop.gov.uk)

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

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

## Protecting your identity

### **If criminals find out your personal details, they can be used 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 passport. Information that is helpful to criminals includes your name, date of birth, address, National Insurance number, bank and credit cards details.

### Tips to avoid becoming a victim

- Make sure you destroy unwanted documents that contain personal details before you dispose of them. You can do this with a shredder.
- If your passport, driving licence or credit card has been lost or stolen, report it to the organisation that issued it immediately.
- You could 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. You may also wish to consider using Royal Mail's redirection service to 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 and dates of birth as a password.



## Domestic violence

**Anyone can experience domestic violence – it can happen in all kinds of relationships, regardless of age, race, gender, sexuality, disability, wealth, geography and lifestyle.**

Unfortunately, women are more likely to be at risk in the home, and statistics show that one in four women experience domestic violence in their lifetime, although it also affects men.

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

Domestic violence is rarely a one-off event. Physical and sexual abuse tends to get frequent and more severe over time.

Domestic violence accounts for 35% of all homicides in the UK.

### Getting help

If you are experiencing domestic violence, you may feel as if you have nowhere to go, or no-one to turn to. That is not true. 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. **Remember, 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 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.



## Accepting that you are not to blame

It is not easy to accept that a loved one can behave so aggressively. Often, because you cannot explain their behaviour, you assume you are to blame. You are not. No one deserves to be assaulted, abused or humiliated. There is no excuse.



### For more information

Freephone 24-hour Domestic Violence Helpline 0808 2000 247

Women's Aid Helpline  
helpline@womensaid.org.uk

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

Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
advice on forced marriages  
020 7008 0135/020 7008 0230

Men's Advice Line and Enquiries  
(MALE) 0845 064 6800

## Recognising domestic abuse

If you are being abused, threatened, or physically or sexually assaulted by a partner, a former partner, or a family member, that is domestic violence.

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

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

Domestic violence is often 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.



## Alcohol

**Alcohol can be a positive factor in facilitating social interaction but irresponsible 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 for men.

Binge drinking, 'drinking to get drunk' and drunkenness can be a factor in crime and 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 every year more young people 'overdose' on alcohol (alcohol poisoning) than illicit drugs.

But there is a lot of social pressure to drink and the average number of weekly units drunk by school children has doubled since 1990.

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 Class 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.

Drug use in the family can be very worrying. There are no easy answers as to why some people take drugs and some don't. If you are worried about someone's drug use, the best thing to do is to talk to them.

#### For more information



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

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

Drinkline 0800 917 8282

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

### Drugs and young people

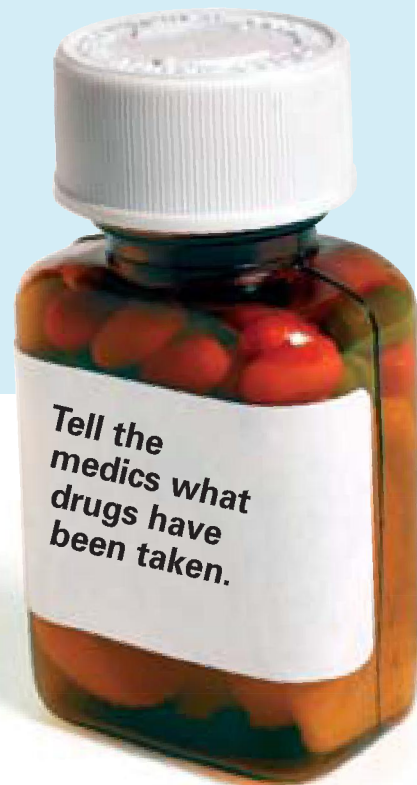
The truth is most young people DON'T take drugs and most of them that do try them don't continue using them. Only a small minority of young people will end up as problem drug users. Although the risks are real, most young people who take drugs do so safely and without getting into trouble, and using one sort of drug does not necessarily lead to another. Most young people trust their parents out of a range of authority figures, so giving your child the facts in a balanced approach can make all the difference. Research shows that talking to your child about drugs reduces their chance of becoming a problematic user.



## In an emergency

### If you suspect that someone has taken an overdose:

- If they are unconscious or vomiting a lot, phone 999 for an ambulance.
- Put them in the recovery position if they are unconscious (lie them on one side with a cushion behind them, bring their knees forward and point their head downward).
- Make sure there is good ventilation in the room and that there are no obstructions in their mouth. If they have taken ecstasy, they may be overheating, so remove any excess clothing and keep them cool.
- Speak calmly and reassuringly to them, telling them that help is on the way.
- When the ambulance arrives, tell them what has happened and what drugs they have taken, if you know. Neither you nor the person who has overdosed will get in trouble for telling them this.



## Useful contact numbers

- Alcoholics Anonymous (AA): 0870 600 0371
- Age Concern: 0800 00 99 66
- ChildLine: 0800 11 11
- Crimestoppers: 0800 55 51 11
- Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA):  
0870 240 0009
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE): 0870 354 5500
- FRANK: 0800 77 66 00
- Rape Crisis: 0115 900 3560
- Samaritans: 08457 90 90 90
- Suzy Lamplugh Trust: 020 8392 1839
- Victim Supportline: 08457 303 0900
- Women's Aid Helpline: 0845 702 3468
- Your local police station:
- Your local council:

**Other information**

To order any of the leaflets mentioned in this booklet, call Prolog on 0870 241 4680 or email [homeoffice@prolog.com](mailto:homeoffice@prolog.com)

For more information on personal safety/crime visit [www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk)