

# SECURING HOMES

## ACTION AGAINST BURGLARY



# HOME SECRETARY'S FOREWORD



Keeping homes safe from burglary is one of my top priorities as Home Secretary. Since 1997 we have had unprecedented success in cutting crime –

overall crime is down by 39% and burglary is down by 55%. I am determined that we maintain these reductions. People are understandably more worried about household security in difficult economic times, and we are taking pre-emptive action to keep burglary down.

Securing Homes is about delivering advice, practical support and visible justice. I want to reassure people that there are simple steps that they can take to protect their homes. That there are thousands of people working together to help protect them, including police, local authorities, prisons and probation, Neighbourhood Watch schemes, charities, private companies (e.g. insurers, manufacturers and retailers of security products), and community groups. That we are one step ahead of the most persistent offenders.

There is no inevitability to a rise in burglary, and the public will rightly expect us to use our considerable knowledge and resources to help keep their properties safe.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jacqui Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

**Jacqui Smith**  
Home Secretary

# INTRODUCTION

There were over 890,000 fewer burglaries in 2007/08 than in 1997, reducing the risk of being a victim of burglary from 5.6% to 2.4% over the same period. Between practitioners and government, we know how this was achieved. The Government invested an additional £27 million between 1999 and 2002 in rolling out and evaluating the different approaches to tackling burglary through the Reducing Burglary Initiative. The police and their partners have built on the learning ever since.

So we know what works:

- **Making homes harder to break into (target hardening), e.g. through proper door and window locks, burglar alarms, lighting and alley-gating.**
- **Making sure that people use the security equipment installed in their homes by providing good crime prevention advice in ways that mean that they will act on it.**
- **Marking property so that it can be recovered and to help catch and convict burglars.**

- **Targeting prolific offenders, frustrating their activity, bringing them to justice quickly and addressing the root causes of their offending.**
- **Disrupting markets for stolen goods.**

Securing Homes is about refreshing and intensifying this activity, and making sure that it reaches those people who are still more vulnerable to burglary. It is also about looking for opportunities to create new partnerships and innovative solutions.

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and Community Safety Partnerships are at the forefront of tackling burglary, especially where it has been identified as a priority locally. But the Government can add value – for example by leading work with national organisations, bringing together new partners to create a united front.

# ACTION PLAN

The Government has already invested significant funding in local partners, empowering them to tackle the issues, like crime, that matter most to their communities. The Home Office has invested nearly £95 million in England (through Area Based Grant and other programme and capital funding) and £13 million in Wales to tackle local priorities, including crime and community safety. In over 110 areas in England and Wales serious acquisitive crime is a local priority, and around 90 areas are prioritising dealing with prolific and priority offenders.

On top of this, the Home Office is now investing a further £15 million in the Securing Homes programme for 2009/10. This money is supporting an action plan that brings together partners from the public, private and voluntary sectors to keep burglary down, as well as tackling crime against business (a retail crime action plan will follow in early summer). In addition, £1.6 million has already been invested in running a public information campaign – ‘Crime – Let’s Keep it Down’ – to remind people about the simple steps they can take to prevent burglary.

# PROMOTING BETTER HOME SECURITY AMONG THE WIDER PUBLIC

## **Providing accessible crime prevention advice**

We know that people are often concerned about burglary, but there are simple steps that they can take to protect their homes. For example, 36% of burglaries happen through unlocked or open doors and windows. 18% of households don't have proper door locks and 14% don't have window locks.<sup>1</sup> There is much advice and guidance on home security already available, and many organisations are very proactive and creative about getting this to the public. Building on these good examples, there is more we can do to make sure that people have the advice that they need:

- On 4 February 2009, the Home Office launched new webpages providing a single source of advice and information on preventing burglary, including an online self-assessment questionnaire leading to tailored advice: [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/secureyourhome](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/secureyourhome)
- From 7 April 2009, a free burglary prevention advice pack, including a hard copy of the self-assessment

questionnaire will be available by phoning 0800 456 1213.

- The Home Office and the Association of British Insurers will jointly agree clear information for customers about the home security measures that get customers the best deal from the market, which insurers will communicate to their customers. See [www.abi.org.uk](http://www.abi.org.uk)
- Neighbourhood Watch will work closely with Neighbourhood Policing Teams to distribute the Government's crime prevention advice and will also use local meetings and engagement opportunities to provide crime prevention information to the public. See [www.mynhw.co.uk](http://www.mynhw.co.uk)

## **Supporting people to act on home security advice**

As well as receiving advice, people often need support to act on it, for example to purchase the right security products.

- Discount vouchers for security products from the DIY retailer B&Q will be included in the burglary prevention advice packs: [www.diy.com](http://www.diy.com)

<sup>1</sup> British Crime Survey, 2006/07

- In addition, some DIY retailers, including B&Q and Focus DIY, along with security product manufacturers, will be supporting Securing Homes in various ways such as by providing advice and information in-store, product demonstrations and targeted discounts. See [www.focusdiy.co.uk](http://www.focusdiy.co.uk)

There are many good sources of further advice:

Association of Chief Police Officers:

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

The Master Locksmiths Association:

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

The British Security Industry Association:

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

Sold Secure: [www.soldsecure.com](http://www.soldsecure.com)

Crimestoppers: [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)

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

### **Norwich Union and Norwich Police – Safer Street project**

Norwich Union, soon to be Aviva, has launched the Safer Street project to show the average homeowner some easy and inexpensive steps they can take to help reduce their risk. Working in partnership with Norfolk Police, they took a typical row of Victorian terraces in Norwich and gave them a simple security makeover. Police experts carried out detailed inspections of each property. Recommendations were made to each resident, taking into account their current security, practicality and lifestyle. The measures ranged from the basics – door and window locks – to the more innovative – prickly plants and strategically placed lighting. They also emphasised personal responsibility, communities working together and good neighbour relations.

**[www.norwichunion.com/saferstreet](http://www.norwichunion.com/saferstreet)**

## Securing rented properties

Security in rented properties is a shared responsibility between landlords and tenants. Many landlords already take this very seriously. However, only half of privately rented households, and six in ten social rented households, have proper door locks (double/deadlocks) and window locks, compared with eight in ten owner-occupied households.<sup>2</sup> There is a need for more advice and information for landlords and tenants about what can be done.

- **The Home Office, local authorities and the representative bodies for landlords, tenants, letting and managing agents are working together to provide clear advice to tenants and landlords about what they should each be doing to ensure that properties are protected against burglary.**

- **The Home Office is working with the same partners to promote landlord accreditation schemes with both landlords and tenants. These schemes ensure that a landlord has taken sufficient account of home security in order to receive accreditation.**
- **The Government is working with social housing providers and the insurance industry to provide easier access to and encourage take-up of affordable home contents insurance for all social housing tenants:**  
[www.financialinclusion-taskforce.org.uk](http://www.financialinclusion-taskforce.org.uk)

<sup>2</sup> British Crime Survey, 2007/08

### **Age Concern: Sure At Your Door**

Age Concern research revealed that older people were leaving themselves unnecessarily vulnerable to being burgled by bogus callers. Less than a quarter had spy holes (a simple way to check the identity of callers) and there was a lack of awareness of the tactics used by bogus callers. In response, the innovative 'Sure At Your Door' programme was launched, providing information to more than 6,000 older people about beating the threat of doorstep thieves. The project used theatre performance and volunteers offering one-to-one advice to promote the message and was supported practically by handyperson schemes. Older people were also urged to sign up to the Priority Services Register, which enables them to set up an agreed password between them and their gas and electricity suppliers. People should contact their energy or water supplier for more details, which will entitle them to a number of benefits – one of which is a personal password for gas, electricity and water staff to use every time they call at their home. Details of where to contact energy or water suppliers will be on the latest bill or the provider's website.

# REACHING THE PEOPLE MOST VULNERABLE TO, OR CONCERNED ABOUT, BURGLARY

## **Responding to victims of burglary and their neighbours**

Responding to burglary is a top priority for the police. Many forces run burglary operations, such as increasing patrols and enforcement coupled with technology (for example to capture images of burglars) and forensic resource, to increase the detection of burglars. The police should visit all homes that have been burgled, and a key part of the police response is providing advice to victims on securing their homes to prevent burglary from happening again. Some forces also provide information to the immediate neighbours of victims, to encourage them to secure their homes as they are likely to be at heightened risk as well.

All victims of burglary can also receive support from Victim Support, whose services are free and available to everyone whether or not the crime has been reported to the police or when it happened. In many areas, Neighbourhood Watch schemes are proactive in supporting victims of burglary and their neighbours. To enhance this:

- The Home Office is working jointly with ACPO, Victim Support and Neighbourhood Watch to ensure that all victims of burglary receive a pack of information and advice on preventing future burglaries (also including discount vouchers from Focus DIY and B&Q, to provide real practical help), as part of supportive contact from the police and Victim Support (and Neighbourhood Watch, where appropriate).
- These partners are also working together to ensure that this information is extended to people who live in homes immediately around victims of burglary.

## **Providing accessible crime prevention advice**

Third sector organisations are well placed to reach people who may be more vulnerable to burglary. There are numerous examples of where they are working together with statutory agencies and private companies (such as energy and water companies) to identify people who are vulnerable and provide a trusted source of advice and guidance about securing their homes including, for example, how to avoid burglary by bogus callers. To enhance this:

## Home Shield

Suffolk's Home Shield offers a one-stop shop service for the over-60s, putting them in touch with a wide range of services which help people stay safe and secure. Last year, Home Shield helped over 1,100 customers to live independently and safely. Services available include police home security checks and replacing faulty locks, alongside addressing other issues such as installing smoke detectors, carrying out basic home repairs and putting people in touch with befriending services and social events. Home Shield is supported by a wide range of local services including the Community Safety Team, police, Age Concern and Citizens Advice.

- The Home Office is working with Age Concern and Help the Aged and a coalition of partners to promote crime prevention advice to older people. Activities will include local roadshows with leaflets and other information being made widely available through Age Concern's Information Line and Help the Aged's Senior Line. There will also be a peer training scheme to enable volunteer older people to advise other older people on home security and publicising HandyVan and other useful services.  
[www.AgeConcern.org.uk](http://www.AgeConcern.org.uk)  
(0800 00 99 66),  
[www.helptheaged.org.uk](http://www.helptheaged.org.uk)  
(0808 800 6565).
- The Home Office is also working with the National Union of Students to prevent burglary among the student population, for example by setting up a student ambassadors scheme, and running a 'one less thing to worry about' campaign during the summer exam period. [www.nus.org.uk](http://www.nus.org.uk).
- Neighbourhood Watch will receive funding to reach more people in helping to secure their homes, warn them about crime in their area and take action to prevent it, and raise awareness of how to prevent distraction burglary. [www.mynhw.co.uk](http://www.mynhw.co.uk).

## Knowledge

The Knowledge Campaign is aimed at students in Leeds, encouraging them to make changes to avoid being a victim of crime (prompted by high levels of crime – especially burglary – in areas where many students live). The campaign takes information from the police and presents it to students in an accessible and relevant way, including through a website. Christmas is a peak time for burglaries against students and a novel video produced by Leeds University Union featured a thief as Santa and highlights how easy it is to take simple precautions to stop becoming a victim. The Knowledge Campaign is a partnership between the city's universities, student unions, police and Safer Leeds Partnership.

practical support, for example by installing home security devices and, importantly, by ensuring that people are confident about how to use their security equipment. To enhance this:

- A £6 million Safer Homes Fund will provide practical support to improve home security for people in groups known to have lower rates of adequate home security, in 90 priority areas. This activity will include, for example, fitting window locks, repairing windows and doors, advising people on using security effectively, and signposting people to further support.
- The Home Office will be working with the Community Alliance to deliver this fund, aiming to secure up to 45,000 homes of people such as older people and people on very low incomes.

## Practical support to improve home security

There are also numerous examples of voluntary, statutory and private partners working together to provide proactive

### **Bishop Creighton House**

Bishop Creighton House provides home safety services to the elderly, disabled and vulnerable residents of Hammersmith and Fulham. They run a number of schemes including home safety checks and free and low-cost handyperson services. The flagship programme, Keep Safe, aims to reduce the number of burglaries in the area and reduce the effects of crime on elderly and vulnerable residents by providing handy people to install home security equipment such as spy holes and bolts at no charge. The handy people also help clients maintain their independence and remain in their homes safely by helping with small jobs around the house including garden clearing (as homes with neglected gardens can be a target for burglaries).

- Voluntary and community groups will be able to bid for grants for activity to secure the homes of older people, people on low incomes, students and young adults. They will offer a trusted face to reach groups of people that statutory bodies may not have been able to reach. The fund will be targeted in areas with higher
- numbers of people in these groups, and it will be important for these organisations to link into the work being done by their local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and Community Safety Partnerships.
- The fund will be supported by bespoke training for handyperson services, ensuring that they are properly trained in providing home security advice and fitting home security products.  
[www-foundations.uk.com](http://www-foundations.uk.com).
  - Further details about the fund will be available at the end of April 2009 (in the meantime, please direct enquiries to [saferrhomesfund@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:saferrhomesfund@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)).
  - Neighbourhood Watch schemes will be able to apply for small grants to undertake home security improvements identified by residents as a priority.
  - In addition, the Home Office, working with the police and National Policing Improvement Agency, will be investing £2 million in new technology, such as simple equipment to record the images of bogus callers who commit distraction burglary.

# TACKLING OFFENDERS

Many police forces are running proactive campaigns to target known repeat burglars, including intelligence-led sweeps, 'warrant days' designed to pull in burglars with outstanding warrants and sting operations such as 'trap houses'. This tough enforcement provides reassurance to the public that these offenders will have their criminal activity disrupted and will be caught and brought swiftly to justice. It is vital that the public continue to see and feel that justice is being done against people who burgle homes.

## **Operation Nemesis**

Hampshire Constabulary are running Operation Nemesis, a force-wide campaign to cut burglaries and bring burglars to justice. Known burglars are being targeted, and intelligence is being gathered to identify burglars and their associates. In the first three weeks of the operation, 225 arrests were made, sending a strong message to the criminal community. Every effort is also being made to retrieve the proceeds of burglary under the Proceeds of Crime Act. Operation Nemesis is also receiving regular and positive support from local media organisations, publishing the names and photos of individuals wanted for questioning and highlighting success stories from the campaign.

To support this intensified activity, the Government will work with the police and partnerships to strengthen one of their key tools for gripping offenders. The Prolific and other Priority Offender scheme currently targets nearly 10,000 offenders identified by local services as a priority. The scheme aims to ensure that the response of all agencies to those offenders is joined-up, intensive and sustained. [www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/ppo/ppominisite01.htm](http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/ppo/ppominisite01.htm).

- **The Home Office will invest £3 million to ‘pump prime’ partnership work in target areas that will ensure we monitor and vigorously manage burglars once they are released from prison, sending a clear message that there is nowhere to hide and deterring them from going back to committing burglary.**

### **Tower Hamlets Prolific and other Priority Offender (PPO) scheme**

Tower Hamlets has achieved significant reductions in residential burglary, partly due to their PPO scheme. The police target offenders who are not engaging with probation, who are then assigned to a team as an ‘Adopted PPO’. They are subject to intrusive supervision, and their details are widely publicised across the borough through a ‘Top Ten List’. When they are arrested, officers attend court to try and remand them in custody. The police work with the Prison Service to draft licence conditions for PPOs who are to be released, to ensure that they can be picked up quickly if they get involved in crime again. The police cover every angle, from proactive use of objections to bail, media campaigns, additional training for police officers and staff in investigation and additional victim care.

- The Ministry of Justice and the Home Office will work with local partners to ensure that Prolific and Priority Offender schemes are gripping the right people – the offenders who are causing the most damage to communities. The 2004 PPO guidance will be refreshed to ensure that there is a strong focus on early police activity to disrupt offenders and to encourage all schemes systematically to review and revitalise their caseloads so that they move offenders on once the level of risk is reduced.
- The Ministry of Justice and the Home Office are also working with the police, probation, local government and many other partners to test ways of casting the net wider to bring more offenders into an intensively case managed approach, known as Integrated Offender Management.



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