

Bolton Neighbourhood Watch Newsletter



January 2026

Strengthening your home against **sneak-in burglary** in the UK is all about closing the tiny gaps burglars exploit. Police forces consistently report that these crimes happen **when doors or windows are left unlocked for just a moment**, often while someone is home. The good news: the most effective defences are simple habits and low-cost upgrades.

What Sneak-In Burglars Look For

- An unlocked door or window — even for 60 seconds.
- Bags, keys, wallets, phones or laptops left near the entrance.
- A quick, quiet opportunity while you're distracted (in the garden, upstairs, cooking, etc.).

Essential Security Actions

1. Lock Doors *All the Time*

- Police emphasise that **doors and windows should be locked at all times**, not just when going out.
- Remove keys from locks and keep them out of sight and out of reach of letterboxes or cat flaps.

2. Secure Windows

- Lock windows whenever you're not in the room.
- Use restrictors or security film for vulnerable ground-floor windows.
- Police.uk highlights the importance of choosing burglar-resistant windows and locks.

3. Use the **WIDE(N)** Method

Neighbourhood Watch recommends the **WIDE(N)** combination, which can make a home up to *50 times more protected*.

WIDE(N) Element What to Do

W – Windows	Lock all windows
I – Interior	Use timer lights to simulate occupancy
D – Doors	Double-lock or deadlock doors
E – Exterior	Install sensor-activated outdoor lighting
(N) – Neighbours	Ask neighbours to keep an eye out

4. Visible Deterrents

- CCTV, video doorbells and alarm signage strongly discourage opportunistic burglars.

- Police.uk recommends using secure doors, windows, and alarm systems as part of layered protection.

5. Remove Temptation

- Don't leave valuables, bags, car keys or parcels near the door or visible through windows.
- Sneak-in burglars often grab items within arm's reach of an open door.

6. Manage Daily Habits

- Close and lock doors even when you're in the garden or garage.
- Keep front and back doors locked when answering the other.
- Don't rely on "I'll lock it in a minute" — this is exactly when sneak-ins happen.

7. Strengthen the Perimeter

- Fit a lockable side gate.
- Use gravel paths or driveways to create noise.
- Secure sheds and garages — tools stored there can be used to break in.

8. Use Problem-Solving Thinking

The College of Policing recommends using structured methods like **SARA** (Scan, Analyse, Respond, Assess) to identify your home's weak points. This means:

- Identify where a burglar could enter.
- Analyse what makes that point vulnerable.
- Respond with targeted improvements.
- Review whether the change reduced risk.

Quick Comparison Table

Risk Factor	Why It Matters	Fix
Unlocked door	Most common sneak-in entry	Lock doors, remove keys
Visible valuables	Encourages quick-grab theft	Keep items away from entrances
Dark entrances	Provides cover	Install motion lights
No neighbour awareness	Fewer witnesses	Join or coordinate with Neighbourhood Watch

<https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/burglary-WIDEN>

Join Neighbourhood Watch for FREE!

Neighbourhood Watch is all about community, safety, and looking out for each other. By joining, you'll help reduce crime, share vital information, and make Bolton a safer, stronger place to live.

Together, we can protect our streets, support our neighbours, and build a communities we're proud of.

Sign up today and be the difference!

<https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/joinNW>



Report Fraud launches

This week, the City of London Police, the national lead force for fraud, announced the full public launch of Report Fraud, which has now officially replaced Action Fraud.



Cyber crime and fraud are now the most common crime in the UK, accounting for around 50 per cent of all offences and costing the economy billions of pounds each year. Cyber-enabled crime and fraud continues to grow in both scale and sophistication, targeting individuals, small businesses and major organisations alike. Report Fraud has been created to meet this challenge head-on, providing a single, modern national gateway for reporting and intelligence that will strengthen the collective response of policing, government and the private sector.

Report Fraud is the most significant evolution of our national capability. It provides, for the first time, a single, modern national reporting, triage and intelligence platform for both cyber crime and fraud, enabling the City of London Police to lead policing's 4Ps response – pursue, protect, prevent and prepare - at a national level. Through the new service, intelligence will be assessed and disseminated across forces, serious and complex cases will be identified for specialist investigation, and victims will be directed into a consistent national standard of care and support.

The service also reflects the City of London Police's position at the heart of the UK's financial centre, with unparalleled access to industry, regulators and international partners. This proximity enables real-time collaboration, faster disruption of criminal networks, and a stronger collective defence of the UK's economic security, supported by specialist capabilities and training delivered through the force's Economic and Cyber Crime Academy.

More than just technology, Report Fraud is the result of one of the largest transformation programmes ever undertaken by the City of London Police. Built from the ground up around the victim journey, it brings together the reporting of both cyber crime and fraud in one place for the first time, making it quicker, clearer and more supportive for people and businesses to come forward - and ensuring that every report counts, helping to protect others.



Call 0300 123 2040
reportfraud.police.uk

Theft From Insecure Vehicles– Don't Make It Easy for Thieves

Across the UK, police forces are reporting a steady increase in theft from insecure vehicles. These crimes are overwhelmingly opportunistic: offenders walk down streets trying door handles until they find one that's been left unlocked. It takes seconds for them to grab valuables and disappear without a trace.

What Thieves Look For

- Vehicles left unlocked, even for a short time
- Bags, wallets, laptops, tools or loose change left on display
- Keys, fobs or work passes left inside the vehicle
- Vans with visible tools or equipment
- Cars parked in dark or isolated areas

Simple Steps That Make a Big Difference

- Always lock your vehicle, even on your driveway or when popping back into the house
- Remove valuables or store them out of sight
- Take tools out of vans overnight where possible
- Use steering locks or van deadlocks for added protection
- Park in well-lit areas or near CCTV
- Report suspicious behaviour to the police or your local neighbourhood team

Why It Matters

Theft from vehicles doesn't just cause inconvenience — it can disrupt work, increase insurance costs, and leave victims feeling targeted. Most incidents are preventable with small changes to daily habits.



Help Keep Our Community Safe

A few seconds of prevention can save hours of stress. Please take a moment to check your vehicle before you walk away. Encourage neighbours, colleagues and family members to do the same. Together, we can reduce opportunistic crime and keep our area safer.

<https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/protectyourcar>



☕️ Support Bolton Neighbourhood Watch ☕️

When you donate a coffee, your contribution doesn't go to an individual — it goes directly to Bolton Neighbourhood Watch. Every donation helps us provide crime prevention advice, strengthen local connections, and create a safer, more secure communities for everyone.

☞ Together, we can keep Bolton a place where neighbours look out for each other and families feel protected.

www.buymeacoffee.com/boltonneighbourhoodwatch

Neighbourhood Watch has developed a clear, practical approach to [Active Bystander Training](#), aimed at helping ordinary people step in safely when they witness harmful, inappropriate, or escalating behaviour. The training is grounded in evidence about the *bystander effect* — the tendency for people to do nothing when others are present — and gives communities the confidence to act.

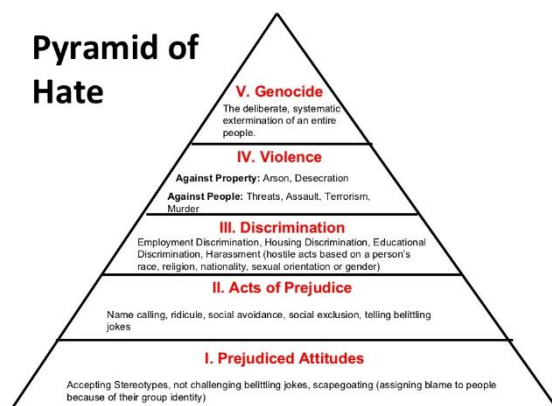
What Active Bystander Training Is

Active bystander training teaches people how to recognise harmful behaviour and intervene safely, without putting themselves at risk. Neighbourhood Watch explains that the bystander effect occurs when people hesitate to help in emergencies or when witnessing bullying, harassment, or crime.

The training helps break that hesitation by giving people simple, practical tools.

Why It Matters

- Many harmful behaviours — including harassment and hate incidents — are under-reported.
- Everyday comments or actions can escalate if not challenged early.
- Intervening doesn't always mean confrontation; it can be subtle, indirect, or supportive. Neighbourhood Watch highlights how bias-motivated behaviours can escalate if unchallenged, using the "pyramid of hate" to illustrate this.



What the Training Covers

Neighbourhood Watch and local partners emphasise two core skills:

1. Noticing when behaviour is inappropriate or threatening.
2. Choosing a safe way to challenge or interrupt it. You don't need to confront someone directly — you can seek help from others or someone in authority.

Typical techniques include:

- Distraction
- Delegation
- Delay
- Direct action (only when safe)
- Providing support to the person targeted

How It Helps Communities

Active bystander training:

- Builds confidence
- Reduces tolerance for harmful behaviour
- Strengthens community cohesion
- Helps prevent escalation of harassment or hate incidents

It empowers residents to be part of the solution — not by being heroes, but by taking small, safe actions that make a big difference.

<https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/activebystander>

From the Road Safety Charity, BRAKE



The Department for Transport has published a new interactive map showing drivers across England how local highway authorities are repairing roads and investing in long-term road maintenance.

Drivers across England can now see how their local highway authority is tackling potholes and other road repairs thanks to a [new interactive map published by the Government this week](#).

The map uses a traffic light rating system to show every council's rating – either red, amber or green – based on the current road condition, and reveals how each is spending funding received from Government to fix potholes and invest in long-term measures to maintain roads.

In early December last year, [the Government announced a "record £7.3 billion" in funding for local roads](#), promising to fix potholes and prevent new ones, save drivers money on costly repairs and make a visible difference in communities.

Poorly maintained road surfaces, failing drainage, and unsafe footpaths and cycleways [all] disproportionately endanger people walking, cycling, using mobility aids and riding motorbikes.

Luca Straker, campaigns manager at Brake

Responding to the publication of the new interactive map, Luca Straker, campaigns manager at Brake, said:

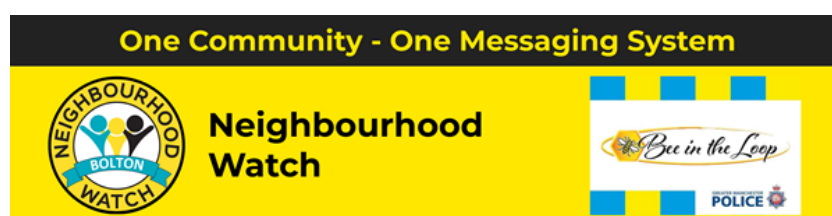
"Transparency about road maintenance is always welcome, and we know that potholes are a frustrating issue for many drivers. But fixing potholes is about far more than just protecting vehicles.

"Following the Safe System approach to road safety, roads must be designed, built and maintained to account for human error and vulnerability, so that mistakes do not result in serious injury or death. Poorly maintained road surfaces, failing drainage, and unsafe footpaths and cycleways undermine this principle, and disproportionately endanger people walking, cycling, using mobility aids and riding motorbikes.

"We are encouraged to see that the Government's new council ratings include preventative maintenance, footpaths and cycleways, and recommendations for wider best practice. To align fully with the Safe System, this information must now be used to prioritise long-term investment that proactively reduces risk across the whole network, rather than reactive repairs once damage has already occurred. We urge Government and local highway authorities to ensure this new transparency leads to safer roads by design, embedding the Safe System approach at the heart of all road maintenance and funding decisions."

[Click here to view and download the new interactive map.](#)

<https://dft-newsroom.prgloo.com/news/how-well-is-your-council-fixing-your-roads-new-map-rates-how-record-government-pothole-funding-is-being-used>



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