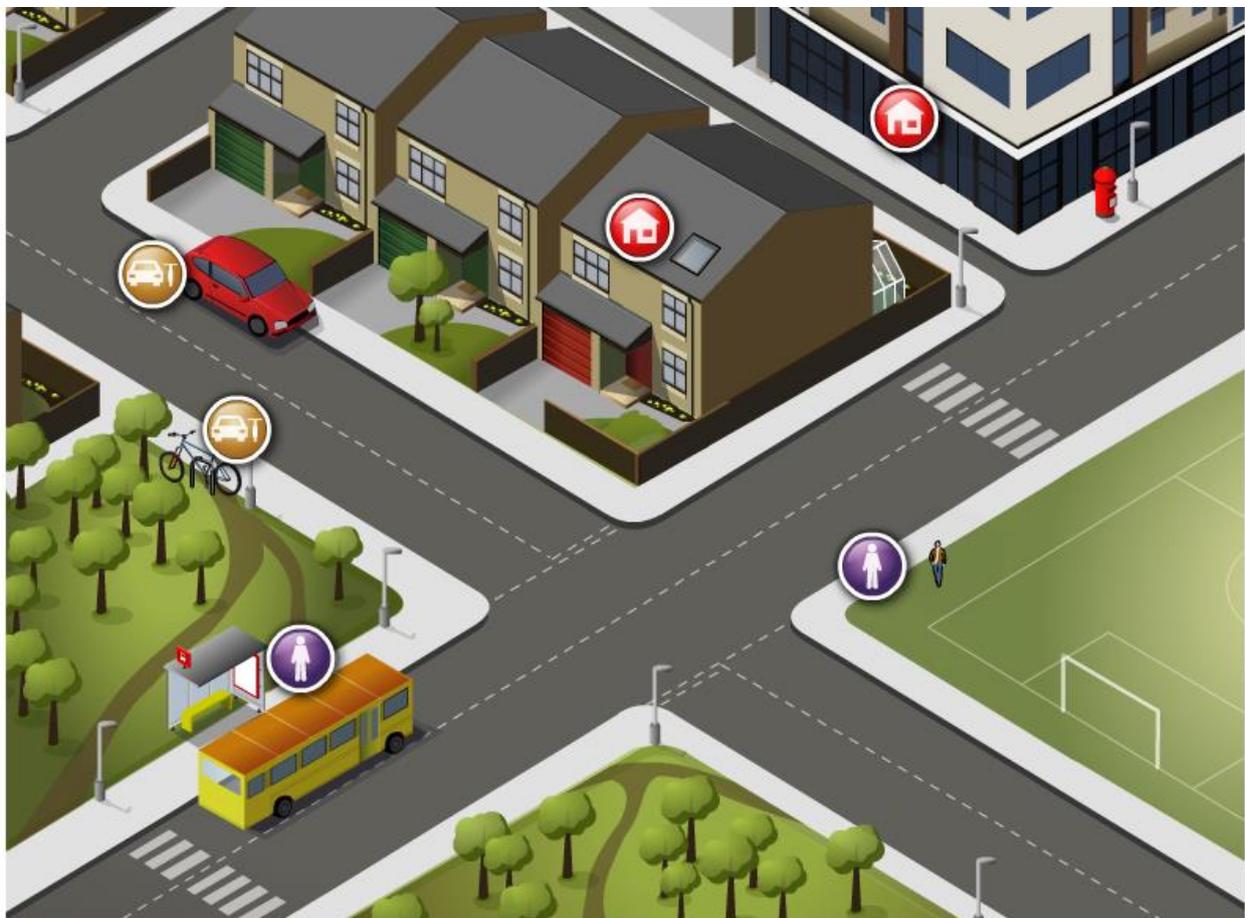


# Keep Yourself Safe at home or out and about

Crime Prevention Advice



(Interactive Crime Prevention – [www.merseyside.police.uk](http://www.merseyside.police.uk))

# The Ten Principles of Crime Prevention

1. **Target Hardening** – make targets more resistant to attack, e.g. fit better locks, install alarms or fit a wheel lock to a vehicle.
2. **Target Removal** – make sure any object an offender might be interested in is not visible e.g. keep car keys out of sight, remove items from view in a parked car, don't put handbag on back of chair in busy café / pub.
3. **Removing the Means** – make sure material capable of being used by an offender is not accessible, e.g. lock away garden tools, hide PIN numbers at cash machines.
4. **Reducing the Payoff** – reduce the profit that can be made from the crime, e.g. property marking make items identifiable and therefore less valuable, register mobile phone on immobilise.
5. **Access Control** – prevent the criminal gaining access to the target e.g. 1.8m fencing with trellis, prickly shrubs, lock windows.
6. **Visibility / Surveillance** – make sure offenders would be visible if they carried out a crime by pruning / removing shrubs, install low level lighting, consider CCTV.
7. **Environmental Change** – changing the environment to reduce the opportunities for committing crime and make it appear looked after by local residents, e.g. clearing waste, improve street lighting and install alley gates.
8. **Rule Setting** – give clear indications to potential thief, i.e. leave lights on when you are out to suggest someone is home, display no cold caller signs.
9. **Increase chances of being caught** – anything that slows down the offender or increases risk of being caught, e.g. property marking, CCTV, security lighting, tracking software on PC/tablet.
10. **Deflecting Offenders** – divert offenders and potential offenders from committing crime through education, training and work experience.

## Keep your Home Safe

Following this crime prevention advice could stop you from becoming a victim of burglary:

- It is vital residents ensure windows and doors are secured before going to bed and that all car and house keys are kept out of sight from the front door or vestibules, particularly those with glass panelled doors or porches. A thief requires only a very small hole to gain access.
- UPVC doors should be secured by lifting the handle to activate the bolts and ensuring the key is turned, as the latch itself will not provide adequate security.
- Securing access to the back of the property can act as a deterrent to offenders. You can add trellis to the top of fences to make the barrier higher. Trellis makes it difficult for a potential thief to climb over. Some shrubs and plants can also act as a deterrent. See section on natural barriers.
- Other methods for securing access to the property include spiked toppings or other anti-scaling measures, which can be fitted to the top of fencing or gate posts at the sides of the premises providing adequate warning notices are displayed. If adequate notices are not displayed you could find yourself liable for prosecution.
- Residents should also consider fitting an intruder alarm and internal locks, fitted to rear kitchen and living room doors, will help prevent a burglar gaining access to the rest of the house. Consider installing a wire free system for ease of installation.
- REMEMBER that an alarm system requires regular maintenance. One of the main reasons for false alarm activations is due to worn out batteries.
- Consider the installation of security lighting – this could be simple Passive Infra Red (PIR) operated or dusk till dawn lights, which can now be fitted with cost efficient energy saving bulbs.

- Use a timer light to operate internal lighting. These can operate a table lamp to indicate that there is someone at home. Another could be set to come on and off at random in another room. Remember that leaving just your hall light on is an obvious indication that there is no one at home. There are also other items available such as fake TV's that simulate a TV flickering in a room. These can also be plugged into a timer switch to go on and off.
- Consider property marking. This can be done with UV pens, however DNA markers are even more secure. There are a number of providers for DNA marker kits.
- If you are considering replacing your windows and doors, look for products that carry Police Approved 'Secured by Design' certification. This is particularly important when considering locks.

## Which Locks should I buy?

It is important you install locks that meet the standards outlined below. These standards ensure your property has optimum security. Installing locks of a lower standard could invalidate your house insurance. (Your insurance policy will provide more details on specific requirements)

The minimum standards you should be looking for are as follows;

**BS3621** for mortice locks. Any locks conforming to these standards will display the kite mark.

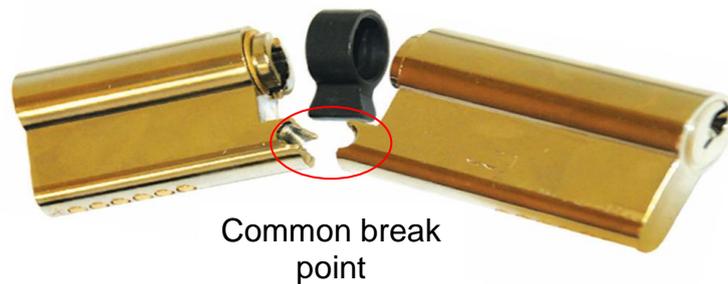
**PAS 24 2016** for UPVC doors and windows. If you are buying new windows and doors and the supplier cannot confirm they comply with this standard, use another supplier.

**Whats the problem with standard uPVC locks?** The Euro profile cylinder locks, which are installed as standard by most door manufacturers can be broken in a matter of seconds, using everyday tools. No matter how expensive your door, or the number of locking points, criminals can still enter your property by breaking the lock.

Cylinder locks are vulnerable to two types of attack

- Snapping
- Bumping

**Lock snapping** occurs where pressure is applied to the lock, causing it to snap at its weakest point.



The below images show a 'Secured by Design' anti-bump anti-snap lock of a PAS 24 2016 standard. There are many manufacturers of these locks, which can be found on the 'Secured by Design website.



You can see the artificial break point in these locks. This break point ensures the lock doesn't snap at the locking mechanism, and therefore the burglar is unable to enter your house.

Using reinforced handles that cannot be bent can make it even harder for the burglar to attack the lock.

**Bumping** a lock is where the locking mechanism is tricked into thinking the correct key has been entered into the lock. PAS 24 2016 anti-bump anti-snap locks prevent burglars entering through your door.

If you need further crime reduction advice for your home, please contact your local policing team.

## General Advice about Cold Callers

Most people who call at your door are genuine, but some are not. Therefore it is vital to take precautions when you answer the door.

- Always make sure visitors to your home are who they say they are by asking to see their identification.
- Do not let people into your property that you do not know. These types of people pretend to be an official or may just ask for a drink or water or if they can use the toilet. Remember, 'if in doubt, keep them out'.
- Remember to close and lock the back door before answering the front door.
- The best defence against a bogus caller is to have a viewer or spy hole and a stout door chain fitted to your door.
- If the caller claims to be from the electricity, gas or water company, ask them to quote your customer reference number. A genuine caller from these companies will be able to quote these numbers.
- If you are not sure who is at your door, don't open it. Check the identity of the caller by calling the company they are purporting to be from, i.e. Police, Council, Gas, Electricity or Water companies. Use the telephone numbers listed in your local directory or provided independently by your service provider.
- DO NOT use any telephone numbers provided by the caller as they may be bogus. You may just be calling an accomplice.
- Many utility service providers like gas, electricity and water provide password schemes for customers. Sign up to these. When unannounced callers claiming to be from these utility providers call at your door they should know the password if they are genuine.

- Water Boards no longer exist. It is an obsolete phrase used only by bogus callers.
- Don't keep large quantities of cash at home. Put it in the bank where it is safe.
- Ensure that if you do let somebody into your home that you close the door behind them – distraction burglars often work in teams where one will distract you whilst others sneak in through an insecure door.
- If someone asks for your help (i.e. needs to make a telephone call, lost a ball in your garden, needs a drink or pen and paper) either close the door whilst you go and retrieve the ball etc, or if you feel uncomfortable, refer them to a younger neighbour to assist them through a closed door or call a friend or neighbour to come and help.

**REMEMBER** genuine callers will not mind you taking these steps to keep you safe.



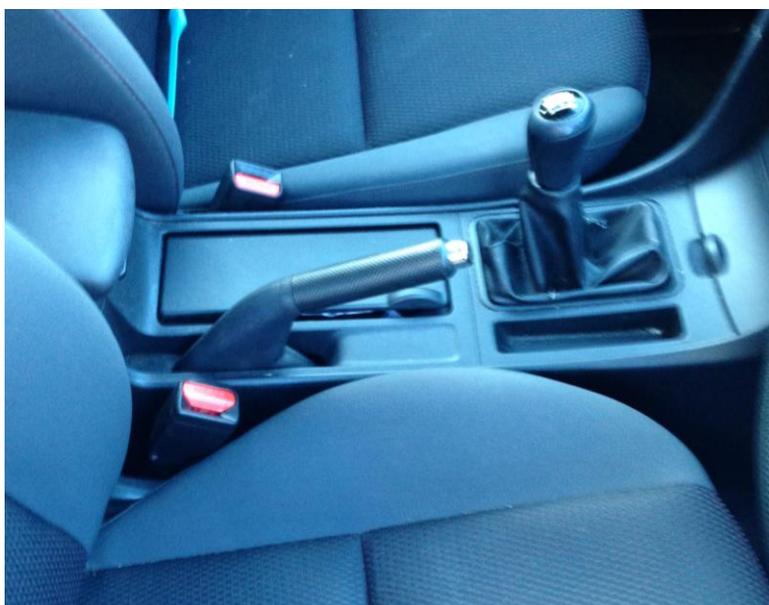
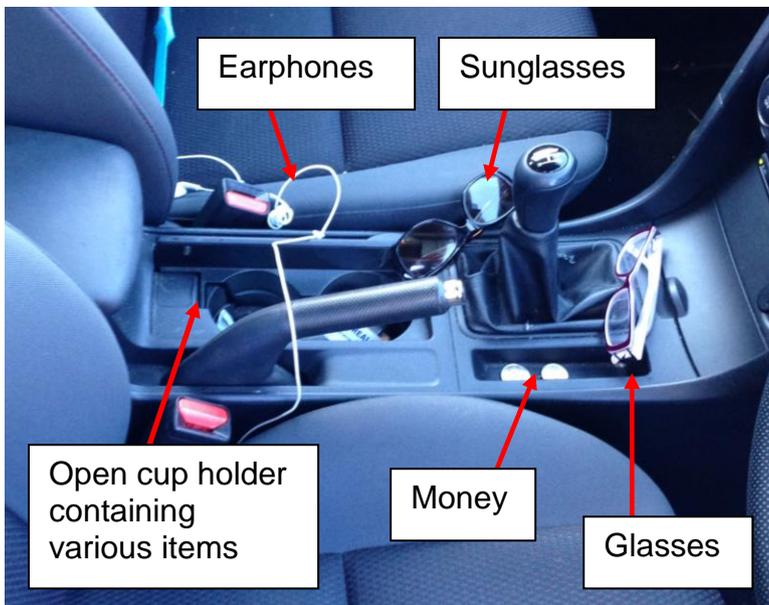
See page 16 for an example 'No Cold Calling' sign you can put in your window

## Keep Your Car Safe

Drivers should take consider the following advice to reduce the risk of becoming a victim of car crime.

- NEVER leave your vehicle unattended with the engine running. Not only is this an offence on the main road, but offenders watch and wait to see who does this, especially on cold and frosty mornings when heaters are left on to defrost the vehicle. This is likely to invalidate your insurance.
- Always lock and secure your vehicle and check that the windows and sunroof are closed.
- Never leave anything on display in your vehicle. It may be worthless to you, but a thief will smash a window to get at your 'old coat' because they may think it contains cash or valuables.
- Mobile phones, coats, bags, sat navs and CDs are all potential targets for thieves. Take all valuables with you.
- Never leave house or car keys on view near a door or window. Criminal can hook keys through open windows and letterboxes.
- If possible park cars in a secure garage overnight. If this is not possible, park it where it can be seen.
- When locking your car, make sure any security devices are activated. Consider installing a visible aftermarket security device.
- Park in well lit areas and consider where you are parking in the daytime if your vehicle will be there until after dark. The area may look rather different during the hours of darkness. Parking in the furthest part of the care park away from other cars could make you and your car vulnerable.
- Where possible park in 'Park Mark' Safer Parking car parks which have been approved by the Police.

- On returning to your car, check for any flyers or leaflets on either windscreen and remove these. If you are in your car before you notice these do not get out of your car to remove them before driving off. Leave them where they are until you get home.
- If you are intending to store something in your boot whilst you are away from your car, do this before arriving at your intended parking place. This will prevent a potential thief from seeing what is being put into the boot.
- If possible, try to refuel your car during daylight hours. Always lock your vehicle when leaving it and paying for fuel.



**Which car is less inviting for the potential criminal?**

Picture 1 indicates an owner who is happy to leave items on show. There may only be a small amount of money, along with glasses and earphones. However this indicates to the potential criminal that you may have left other items inside, putting your car at risk.

A criminal is less likely to target a car where everything is removed from sight, such as picture 2

**Remember**, even if a criminal takes a small amount of money, this soon adds up when taken from several cars.

# Keeping Safe Out and About

## Taking care of your valuables

- When carrying a bag or handbag, check it is closed with the opening facing towards your body, especially in crowded areas.
- Don't leave shopping bags on display in your car.
- Separate a little money from your handbag. That way, if your bag does get stolen you can still get home.
- Keep your wallet and valuables out of sight if you can – use an inside buttoned pocket in your coat or jacket.
- After paying for an item inside a shop, make sure you put your purse or wallet securely away before leaving the shop.

## Getting Home

- Plan your journey home before you set off – pre-book a taxi or arrange a lift with a non drinking driver – and go home with friends if you can.
- Don't get into unlicensed vehicles – they are not insured and you are putting your personal safety at risk riding in one. You can make sure you get home safely by using a private-hire company, whether you book your taxi beforehand by phone, or take a properly licensed Hackney cab. If your taxi company uses a text back facility, make sure the type of taxi matches the details provided.
- When taking a taxi, remember that all licensed vehicles have a license plate number. On private vehicles the plate should be firmly attached to the rear of the vehicle; they also have the same plate number on the front and inside of the cab.
- If you are walking, avoid dark alleys, waste ground or short cuts

- Trust your instincts, if something doesn't feel right, it won't be. Don't continue on into trouble.
- If you have a personal attack alarm, carry it with you and not in the bottom of your bag or briefcase.
- If you use public transport, make sure you know which bus or train you need and the time. You can pick up a Merseytravel Journey Planner from any Merseytravel office to assist you.

## **Cash Points and Carrying Money**

- Take care at cash points and always be extra vigilant.
- Think about when you need to withdraw cash – 2pm in the afternoon when there are other people about is better than 2am when the streets are empty.
- Go with a friend.
- Do not use a cash point when you have been drinking.
- Cover your hand when entering your PIN number. This will prevent others from obtaining your PIN number. This is important even when there is no one in the vicinity as some fraudsters install hidden cameras to obtain these details. Check the ATM to see if there is anything unusual attached to it. When possible use ATMs situated inside the bank.
- If you see anybody suspicious hanging around the cash point, walk away and either go back later or use another cash point.
- Look around before inserting your card.
- Only withdraw what you need. Don't walk around with bundles of cash in your pockets.

## Preventing Theft of Mobile Phones

Mobile phones, ipads, tablets and other personal organisers have become indispensable to our busy lives.

They are expensive items, seen by many as a status symbol and the latest 'must have' technology. They often contain vital personal and business information. Their loss would be at best inconvenient and at worst costly. A few simple measures can be taken to ensure these devices stay safe and secure.

- Keep your mobile out of sight when you are in a public place. Be aware of your surroundings and the people around you. If you are unsure, don't use it.
- Don't leave your phone on a table or desk, there is a good chance you will be distracted, leave it unattended and have it stolen. A distraction could be someone asking for directions. Who places a map over the table to enable them to steal your valuables.
- Set the PIN code on your phone to prevent anyone who steals it from making calls straightaway.
- Protect your data by making a back up of numbers stored on your SIM card onto a computer or in an address book.
- The moment you think your phone is lost or stolen, contact the police. Also contact your service provider, as they may be able to put a block on calls. The sooner you do this reduces any potential cost to you.
- Record your phones IMEI number. To locate this you can type `*#06#` in the screen where you would type the number to make a phone call.
- Get your phone property marked. Students should use their parent's postcode and/or student number.

- Remember that you become distracted whilst engaging in a phone conversation and may make yourself an easy target. A phone /tablet device takes second to snatch.
- Do you know where your phone is at all times?
- Increasingly we store personal details on our phones including PIN numbers, addresses etc. Consider concealing these in the device in a form that only you recognise in case the device is lost or stolen.
- Consider using an older phone if on holiday or if you are on a night out, i.e. a prepay with 'essential' numbers programmed in.



In addition to these basic points consider the use of software that is available on the various manufacturers website specifically designed for your particular device. Many of these are actually free and allow you to lock, remotely delete data or even track your devices should they be lost or stolen. It is advisable to consult with the manufacturer of your device regarding compatibility prior to installation.

## Natural Barriers and Deterrents

There are a number of natural defences you can use to protect your property. The following is a list of some plants and shrubs that can help keep thieves out.

Blue Pine (*Picea pungens Hoopsii*) - A small to medium sized evergreen tree of dense, narrowly conical growth, with rigid prickly silvery blue needles. It likes moist rich soil. Grows to a height of 4m.

Blue Spruce (*Picea pungens Globosa*) - A slow-growing conifer that makes a dense spreading evergreen shrub with rigid branches and blue-grey needles. Grows to a height of 1m with a spread of 1m.

Chinese Jujube (*Ziziphus Sativa*) - A medium sized tree with spiny pendulous branches. Leaves are bright green and the tree bears clusters of small yellow flowers. Grows to a height of 5-12 m.

Common Holly (*Ilex Agulfolium*) – Age evergreen shrub with dark spiked leaves. Female plants have white flowers in May and berries in late November. This is a hardy tree. Grows to over 12 meters in height.

Creeping Juniper (*Juniperus Horizontalis Wiltonii*) – Also known as blue rug because of its long branches and prostrate shape which forms like a flattened blue carpet. This plant has a thorny stem and foliage. Grows to a height of 0.5 m and a spread of up to 4m.

Firethorn (*Pyracantha*) – A pretty shrub with white flowers in June that develop into bright orange / yellow / red berries in autumn. This shrub has a thorny stem. Grows to a height of 10-15 foot and can be used as an impenetrable hedge.

Giant Rhubarb (*Gunnera Manicata*) – also known as prickly rhubarb. Giant Rhubarb like leaves on erect stems with abrasive foliage. Can grow up to 2.5 metres in height.

Golden Bamboo (*Phyllostachys Aurea*) – an attractive evergreen and hardy bamboo that forms thick clumps up to 3.5 m high.

Juniper (Juniperus x media old gold) – A deep bronze / yellow evergreen shrub with prickly foliage. Grows to a height of 2ft with a spread of 6 ft. Low growing, excellent for ground cover.

Mountain Pine (Pinus Mugo Mughus) – A hardy large shrub / small tree with dense bushy foliage containing long sharp needles. Maximum height 4 metres.

Pencil Christmas Tree (Picea Abias Cupressina) – A medium sized tree of columnar shape and ascending spike branches. An attractive form with dense growth. Grows to a height of 12m.

Purple Berberis (Berberis Thunbergil Atropurpurea) – A medium sized evergreen shrub with rich purple foliage and a thorny stem. This shrub is deciduous. Grows to a maximum height of 1m.

Shrub Rose (Rosa Frau Dagmar Hastrup) – A small compact shrub with bright green foliage and pale pink flowers. Excellent for ground cover and has a thorny stem. Grows to a maximum height 1 m and spread of 1.5m.



The image to the right is a Pyracantha (Firethorn) in bloom. This blossom will develop into brightly coloured berries by the autumn, which attract garden birds.

The picture below shows the thorns that grow on the stems of the pyracantha.



Remember Merseyside is one of the safest counties in the UK and crime is low. However these measures can make you and your family even safer.

For interactive crime prevention advice, please visit the Merseyside Police website at:

<https://www.merseyside.police.uk/advice-and-protection/burglary-and-theft/interactive-crime-prevention>



Home Security



Vehicle Security



Personal Safety



MERSEYSIDE  
**POLICE**

**Polite  
Notice**

**NO COLD  
CALLING**

**We DO NOT buy at the door**

**No Sales  
No Surveys  
No Canvassing**

**Please Respect Our Privacy,  
Thank You**

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Please detach here  
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## Remember

**DO NOT** let strangers into your home

**ASK** for identification if they claim to be from a utility company

**USE** a chain when you open the door to unexpected visitors

**DO NOT** leave the door unattended to strangers whilst you go and get something from another room. Close the door first

**BEFORE** agreeing to have work done, get quotes from other firms first

**NEVER** hand over money to a cold caller as a deposit for work they promise to do.

If the caller makes you feel **UNDER THREAT**, shut the door and call the police immediately

**DO NOT** be pressured into buying anything or agreeing for work to be done. If you feel under pressure point to this sign, close the door and call a neighbour

**DO NOT** feel uncomfortable saying no. Genuine callers will understand

**NOT SURE, DON'T OPEN THE  
DOOR**



## Useful Contacts

**Emergencies** - For all emergencies dial 999

For **non-urgent** police enquiries or to report a crime please contact 101

**Crime Stoppers** – An independent crime fighting charity contact them anonymously on 0800 555 111 or at <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/>

**Merseyside Police Website** - [www.merseyside.police.uk](http://www.merseyside.police.uk)

**Stop Hate UK** - A third party Hate Crime reporting centre – 0800 138 1625 or [www.stophateuk.org](http://www.stophateuk.org)



**Secured by Design** – For information on products that meet the latest standards for security, look for the Secured by design logo, or view the website at [www.securedbydesign.com/](http://www.securedbydesign.com/)

