

# Crime reduction initiatives

Ways to reduce instances of residential burglary.

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See the best available research evidence on interventions for burglary in our crime reduction toolkit.

- [Crime reduction toolkit – interventions for burglary](#)

## Problem solving

Problem solving methods such as SARA (scanning, analysis, response and assessment) should be applied to crime reduction interventions. Using these methods can ensure that a crime problem is effectively identified and managed, making best use of available time and resources.

See:

- our guidance on [Problem-solving policing and the SARA model](#)
- our [Problem-oriented policing guidelines](#)
- the best available [research evidence on problem-oriented policing](#) in our crime reduction toolkit

## Offender disruption

Arrest and conviction for burglary offences is the best way to disrupt offenders, but evidential limitations may mean this is not always possible. The following tactics targeting those suspected of committing offences can deter and disrupt offenders and reduce offending.

- Monitor suspects and associates linked by intelligence to burglary offences. Prolific suspects should be the subject of daily tasking activity to arrest them or gather intelligence.
- Consider arrests for non-burglary offences, including outstanding warrants or fines.
- Enforce bail and curfew conditions, and use of stop and search powers whenever grounds exist.
- For juvenile suspects, work with parents or guardians to increase awareness of police activity and discourage further offending.
- Consider sending Christmas and birthday cards to persistent offenders, as a reminder of police attention.

- Restrict the movement of offenders and target motoring offences such as disqualified driving, no insurance and licence offences, making full use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR).
- Ensure there are intensive supervision programmes for the management of persistent offenders who may also be prolific drug users.
- Consider the use of civil injunctions, community protection notices or criminal behaviour orders. For example, through curfews or restricting the movement of offenders.
- Use the media to name convicted offenders where appropriate.
- Use forfeiture orders to allow the courts to forfeit a convicted person's property, where that property has been used to commit or facilitate the commission of an offence.

## Market disruption

Market disruption activity should be directed through analysis of the stolen goods markets and using problem-solving techniques.

Tactics include running information campaigns highlighting that selling, transporting and storing stolen property is illegal, and as serious as stealing the goods in the first place.

Publicity campaigns such as [We Don't Buy Crime](#) can encourage members of the public not to buy stolen property. Campaigns can also be used to encourage the public to report any information about stolen property.

Partnerships should be developed with local trading standards offices to use legislation – such the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 – to regulate the trade in second-hand goods and to make it more difficult for criminals to dispose of stolen property.

Dealers in second-hand goods can be required to be registered and to keep records of all transactions. Legitimate traders benefit from this both in trade and reputation, while dishonest traders are forced out of the market. The legislation can also apply to occasional sales such as boot fairs, markets and one-day sales.

## Partnerships

The prevention and reduction of residential burglary is not just the responsibility of policing. Every opportunity should be taken to engage with partners and other agencies to improve burglary reduction and develop prevention initiatives.

**Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998** places a statutory responsibility on local authorities to do all they reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in their area. **Community safety partnerships** should have a strategy based on a local crime and disorder audit. Advice and support should be available from local police crime prevention teams and local authority community safety officers.

Strategic collaboration between local authorities planning teams and designing out crime officers will ensure that Secured by Design principles are embedded in planning decisions and followed.

## Designing out crime officers (DOCOs)

DOCOs can provide specialist advice and guidance regarding the built environment at every stage of architectural design, from pre-planning to the full development control process (to minimise crime, fear of crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour).

See the **DOCO professional profile** (you will need to log in to ProfDev).

## Police Crime Prevention Initiatives (Police CPI)

**Police CPI** is a police-owned organisation. It works on behalf of UK policing to deliver a range of crime prevention and police demand reduction initiatives.

## Secured by Design

**Secured by Design** is a registered trademark of Police CPI. It licenses approximately 400 companies to supply security products that meet British and European Standards.

## Property marking or registration

Property marking can be either:

- overt, such as engraving or punching
- invisible, using ultraviolet sensitive marker pens or DNA marker solutions

DNA markers are available commercially from forensic coding suppliers. Covert markers should be advertised at the entry points to premises to maintain the deterrent effect.

Property registers – for example, the [National Mobile Property Register \(NMPR\)](#) and the [Bike Register](#) – provide nationally recognised databases for property marking and registration. These registers reduce the risk of theft and make it easier to return stolen property to the rightful owner.

## CCTV

The increasing use of CCTV in residential areas presents an opportunity to reduce residential burglary. Following a residential burglary, CCTV operators should be briefed on the location and suspect description as soon as possible to check footage to see if they have the suspect recorded.

Mobile CCTV units should be targeted at burglary hot spots to gather intelligence and deter offenders. Where it is being used, Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 requirements for authority to use the equipment should be considered – particularly if the cameras are deployed covertly or are used to target individual offenders.

## Alley gating

Properly implemented and maintained, alley gating can reduce residential burglary. It increases the risks and difficulty for the burglar by restricting access to the rear of houses. Alley gating schemes can reduce the fear of crime, create environmental improvements and better community relations.

## Diversion of roads or paths

[Section 119B of the Highways Act 1980](#) allows a local council to divert a road or path to reduce crime and for the benefit of the community, where property adjoining or adjacent to the road or path is affected by high levels of crime and is facilitating the offending.

## Target hardening

Risk assessments will help to identify vulnerable properties and advice should be given to improving security at those locations. For example, patrolling officers who notice property that looks unoccupied at night can post a crime prevention leaflet through the door giving advice to the occupier. This could include discount vouchers for do-it-yourself (DIY) stores to help the homeowner to buy and install timer-operated lighting.

## Home security

Initiatives can include prompt and affordable home security improvement services for victims of burglary to reduce repeat victimisation.

These initiatives employ qualified tradespeople to improve security to vulnerable houses. Schemes may be sponsored through local authorities, community safety partnerships or charities. They have been particularly effective where home security improvements may be unaffordable. Examples of schemes include South Gloucestershire council's [HandyVan service](#) and the [Wiltshire Bobby Van Trust](#).

When considering home security improvements, the acronym WIDEN (windows, internal lights, doors, external lights, neighbours) can inform decision making and priorities.

- [Neighbourhood Watch – Burglary prevention](#)

## Safer Streets Fund

The [Safer Streets Fund](#) allows forces and local authorities to develop local crime prevention initiatives.

- [Safer Streets Fund crime prevention toolkit \(2022\)](#)

## Neighbourhood Watch

Properly managed and supported schemes can act as a deterrent and provide useful local intelligence. Successful schemes receive regular information about crime in their area, with opportunities for the members to be tasked to report on specific issues relating to current intelligence.

Police forces should encourage victims of burglary to set up or join an existing scheme.

- [Neighbourhood Watch](#)

## Cocoon watch

Where Neighbourhood Watch schemes are impractical or where it is necessary to raise awareness about a specific crime trend, householders can be encouraged to develop a local cocoon watch. This is where neighbours watch out for one another.

When combined with tailored target hardening, this tactic can be effective in preventing crime and repeat victimisation. Consider burglary alert cards in the cocoon watch area.

## Other agencies

Relationships with other agencies can help to maximise street presence and opportunities for gathering intelligence. Also consider involving the voluntary sector, particularly when engaging hard-to-reach or vulnerable communities.

## Rural initiatives

The rural community – in particular game wardens and forestry commission officers – can support initiatives such as country watch or rural watch in rural areas. These initiatives can be provided with intelligence bulletins and encouraged to record and report suspicious vehicles or people they see during their daily duties.

Rural crime taskforce teams allow for proactive targeting of crime in the rural community, including burglary, often in remote properties where traditional initiatives would not be effective. Social media community pages can also be used to raise awareness of crimes in the area, highlight police activity and encourage reporting.

Strategic partners such as the National Farmers Union can also be used to raise awareness and support rural crime initiatives.

## Youth justice service

Research shows that truanting children and young people can be easily drawn into crime and anti-social behaviour.

To help combat this, the local education authority and police should work in partnership to organise coordinated truancy sweeps and diversion initiatives.

## Delivery organisations

Post Office employees, taxi drivers and those who deliver milk and newspapers are often working at times when burglary offences are committed. They can provide useful intelligence in relation to people acting suspiciously, or premises that are displaying outward signs of being unoccupied.

Relevant organisations should be encouraged to work closely with the police to provide community-based intelligence.

## Students

Forces with student populations should assess the level of residential burglary in student communities and consider the following initiatives.

### University liaison police officers

Liaison police officers located on the university campus offer a wide range of services to students in partnership with the university and student unions. These include advice surgeries, property marking, safe storage schemes and crime prevention advice. The officers provide safety awareness advice and visible reassurance to the students.

### Student property marking

Even if students mark their property effectively – for example, with a postcode – it can be difficult to trace them as they move frequently. It may be more effective to mark property with the two-letter code for their university plus their student registration number, which is stored for seven years.

## Tags

Neighbourhood policing   Crime reduction   Investigation