

## **Domestic burglaries targeting high value jewellery and cash in North Kirklees**

The recent spate of such burglaries are rare in that a group of males will attend the residence and force their way into the property, sometimes after an occupant has opened the door to them. This type of crime requires specific measures to prevent:

**Report anything suspicious** to the police, dial 101, as and when you witness it– this could prevent such a crime. Whilst officers might not attend every such report the intelligence they provide is invaluable to us.

**Consider how you store your valuables** – large amounts of cash should not be left in a house, most insurance companies will only cover nominal amounts. A determined thief who believes you have valuables hidden will check all rooms including the loft and cellar. If you have cash in the house, even for a short time consider getting a **safe** and having it professionally fitted – a safe not secured will simply be removed and opened away from the house. All safes have insurance ratings stating the maximum amount of cash that would be insured in it, properly fitted. For more information on safes contact your local member of the Master Locksmiths Association, <http://www.locksmiths.co.uk/find-a-locksmith/>. West Yorkshire Police only recommend you use a locksmith who is a member of the MLA, remember you are entrusting your home security to a locksmith.

For valuables that may not be in use regularly, such as high value jewellery, you may wish to consider a **Safety Deposit Box**. Whilst high street banks rarely provide this service there are specialist companies providing safety deposit boxes in the region, a commercial deposit facility is available within West Yorkshire.

**Keep a record of your high value possession**. This is generally required for specific items when on household insurance but is also important, should they be lost or stolen, so that you can prove ownership should they be recovered and also makes it difficult for them to be sold on. Keep receipts and take close up photos, from different angles and with accurate measurements, maybe beside a ruler or measure. If you keep these records on your computer/ notepad make sure you have a backup should you lose your device.

**House Alarms** should be annually serviced and consider updating. Technology in home security has advanced in recent years making it relatively easy with wireless systems, WiFi connections etc. to upgrade. Options are available for panic buttons, links to CCTV cameras, links to mobile phones etc. to allow you to monitor security even when you are away from the house. For this sort of work we advise you contact specialist companies accredited by the SSAIB or National Security Inspectorate. Local firms who hold the accreditations can be contacted via <http://www.ssaib.org.uk> or <http://www.nsi.org.uk/directory/#topform> .

**Always keep all doors locked and never answer the door to a stranger** – old fashioned advice but still as relevant as it always has been. Make sure all members of the family have a key rather than leaving a door unlocked when they are expected – the price of cutting a new key is nothing compared to the cost of a burglary. Key Safes are not just for disabled people – they are useful to store a key for someone you trust who might attend when you are not there. We would recommend you look at the Secured By Design Website, <http://www.securedbydesign.com/> for keysafes that are accredited by this organisation and have been tested to high security standards. Any keysafe should be fitted in an inconspicuous position, preferably where it cannot be seen from the roadside or drive.

**Outside lighting** is important, it enables you to see who is outside from the inside and also lets your neighbours see too. Our recommendation is for dusk to dawn lighting which automatically stays on all the time it is dark without you needing to switch it on. Low energy bulbs make this cheap and effective. Around your front door you may want additional lighting, make sure it is set so that it does not glare and prevent you seeing anybody outside.

**If someone comes to the door** you do not recognise but you believe may have be a welcome visitor an **intercom** could be fitted to allow you to have a conversation to confirm their identity. This could be linked to a camera to allow you to identify them and to see their ID badge if applicable. If you do not have an intercom a simple spyhole in the door would enable you to identify a genuine caller without opening the door. Remember all utility companies, charity workers, council employees, health service workers etc. will always have an ID badge – but beware of false ID badges, contact the organisation if you have any doubt – the person outside (if genuine) will be happy to wait until you are satisfied they are who they say.

**CCTV** is a popular option and is not as expensive as it used to be. It can be linked to your alarm to alert you of anyone approaching the house or alert a handheld device should you be away from the property. Contact your local SSAIB or NSI contractor for further details. Whilst there is no legal requirement to place signage up for CCTV that covers just your own property we highly recommend you do since it is a deterrent. If you already have CCTV make sure the system is in good working order, the lenses are kept clean, the recordings are stored, and that they can be retrieved easily should you wish to review them. The camera fittings should be strong and out of reach to prevent them being tampered with. If fitting CCTV you should also review your lighting to ensure you get the best from your cameras. Dummy cameras have limited value, if your house is targeted burglars may “check out” the cameras beforehand to see if they work.

Many of the **UPVC doors** have inherent weaknesses, particularly as they age and panels can be easily broken, you should also review the locks on that door. You can strengthen the door with additional locks, bolts and security hinges, your MLA locksmith can give advice. If you are considering a new UPVC or composite door there are specific British Standards you should insist upon: the door and fittings should be to PAS 24-1, a UPVC multi locking system should be to BS3621 and the lock cylinder fitted should be TS007.

For a **wooden door** fit a 5-lever mortise lock plus a night latch or rim lock both tested to BS 3621. These are a minimum insurance requirement.

A **door chain** gives some degree of security when opening the door but generally are not strong enough to prevent someone intent on forcing their way through a door – do not rely upon them.

Consider **Neighbourhood Watch** for your street. This partnership between the police and the community ensures you get accurate information about what is happening in your area and an extra line of communication with the police. A Neighbourhood Watch is not a vigilante group but simply a group registered with the police giving us a single point of contact on the street to convey crime prevention news and advice and allowing you to contact someone with specific responsibility and knowledge of your area. It need not be time consuming, all you need is an email address. You may already have an informal neighbourhood watch in that neighbours “look out” for each other, a police Neighbourhood Watch simply publicises this fact with street signage and provides you with up to date information. National statistics suggest a Watch is a deterrent to criminal activity.

Libby Walker is the Crime Prevention Officer based in Dewsbury Police Station and is able to give home surveys to anyone who has concerns about their own home security. Contact her via [libby.walker@westyorkshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:libby.walker@westyorkshire.pnn.police.uk) or leave a message on 01924 431048.

The following website pages also have useful crime prevention advice:

<http://www.westyorkshire.police.uk/crimeprevention>

<http://www.locksmiths.co.uk/security-advice/>

<http://www.securedbydesign.com/crime-prevention-advice/secure-your-home/>