



YOUR COMMUNITY NEEDS YOU

Crime Prevention Advice



sponsors of Bexley Borough
Neighbourhood Watch



Home Security Advice

The best way to approach a home security survey is to start from the boundaries and work your way into the centre, treating each area as a layer, until you reach the targeted property. This is known as the 'onion peeling principle'. Although the layers differ for each household, generally they can be broken down into: **Boundary; Outbuildings; Building and Property.**

Insecure house

"What opportunities do burglars look for?"



- 1 High front boundary
- 2 Low side and rear boundaries
- 3 Recessed, insecure side gate
- 4 Wheelie bin in front of side gate
- 5 Insecure garage door
- 6 Insecure shed door and window
- 7 Paved driveway and path
- 8 No intruder alarm system

- 9 No security light
- 10 Insecure front door
- 11 Open insecure windows
- 12 Valuables not protected

Front, side and rear boundaries

- Front boundaries should not exceed 1m in height, unless they are metal railings which allow natural vision through.
- Side and rear boundaries should be a minimum of 1.8m in height. If the height of the boundary exceeds 2m in height, planning permission may be required. An additional diamond style trellis topping is difficult to climb and provides an ideal framework for spiky defensive planting, such as climbing roses or Pyracantha.
- Side and driveway gates should be the same height as the side and rear boundaries and, where possible, be level with the front building line, to eliminate recessed areas which exceed 600mm
- Metal side and driveway gates allow good natural surveillance, but need careful design to reduce climbing points, particularly at the locking and hinge points. An anti-climb topping such as a decorative spearhead design, will make the gates difficult to climb over.
- Wooden side and driveway gates should be secured on the inside with two substantial hasps and staples with closed shackle padlocks, one towards the top and one towards the bottom, to reduce leverage.
- Barbed wire, carpet gripper or broken glass are not advisable, as they may cause serious injury, which the occupier could be legally responsible for. There are alternative preventative anti-climb toppings, such as safe plastic strips with rows of pointed cones on top, which make it difficult to grip the top of fences or walls, but will not cause injury. A warning sign may be required.
- Gravel driveways and paths prevent a silent approach.
- Wheelie bins should be stored behind secure side gates until collection day, to prevent them being used as climbing aids.

Front, side and rear boundary security

“Remove the opportunities for burglary”



Low front hedge and gate



High side and rear boundaries with diamond style trellis



Locked side gate, not recessed



Safe plastic anti-climb topping



Spiky defensive planting



Wheelie bin behind locked side gate



Hasps and staples with closed shackle padlocks



Gravel driveways and paths

Garages and sheds

- Metal up-and-over garage doors can be secured with additional purpose made locks fitted to either side, approximately 300mm up from the floor, to reduce the leverage points.
- An external floor mounted, solid steel locking 'T' bar with a closed shackle padlock, will offer a good visual deterrent and make it difficult to force the door open.
- Wooden garage doors can be secured with two substantial hasps and staples and closed shackle padlocks, one towards the top and one towards the bottom.
- Garage side or rear doors can be secured with British Standard 5-lever mortice locks and two internal mortice rack bolts, one towards the top and one towards the bottom, to reduce the leverage points.
- Shed doors can be secured with two substantial hasps and staples and two closed shackle padlocks on the outside, one towards the top and one towards the bottom. External hinge screws should be replaced with one-way clutch head screws to prevent them being removed and access gained this way.
- Garage and shed windows can be secured with internal diamond mesh grilles, which provide a good visual deterrent to opportunistic burglaries.
- Garden tools and ladders should be secured by wrapping a substantial chain around them and padlocking them to an eyebolt which has been secured to the floor or wall. This will prevent them being stolen or used to break into the house.
- Tools and garden implements should be visibly property marked with the postcode and house name or number, to deter theft and assist police with identifying the rightful owner. These items can also be marked with SmartWater.



Garage and shed security

“Garages and sheds are often the first places a burglar will target”



Garage door lock



Floor mounted locking T bar



Secure shed door



Secure shed door hinge with one-way clutch head screws



Internal diamond mesh grille over shed window



Secure garage side or rear door



Property marked and secured garden tools and ladders



Hasp and staple with closed shackle padlock

Intruder alarms and patio windows

- Intruder alarm systems are the best deterrent against burglary, as burglars don't want to be seen or heard; time and noise are their enemies.
- Preferably, an alarm company should be affiliated to an inspection body, i.e. 'NSI' or 'SSAIB'.
- DIY intruder alarm systems are available, but are not eligible for a police response.
- External active alarm bell boxes (which have sounders and flashing lights) are required at the front and rear of the building to maximise the visual deterrent of the system, no matter what direction a burglar approaches from and regardless of whether it's day-time or night-time.
- Security lights increase visibility and make burglars feel vulnerable and at risk of being seen.
- Patio doors should have a minimum of three locking points, with an anti-lift device to prevent them being lifted from their runners. Extra surface mounted patio locks can be fitted to provide additional security and reduce the leverage points.
- Externally beaded windows should be secured with security clips, security tape or sealant.
- All ground floor windows and any windows that are easily accessible above ground floor should have key operated window locks, unless they are being used as fire escape
- Windows handles should be multi-locking, with shoot bolts into the frame. If not, surface mounted, key operated window locks should be fitted to provide additional security and reduce the leverage points.
- Louvred window panes should be secured to prevent removal or replaced with a fixed glass panel.



Intruder alarms, patio doors and window security

“Intruder alarms are the best deterrent against burglary”



Intruder alarm speech dialer



Rear active alarm bell box and security light



Front active alarm bell box



Surface mounted key operated window lock



Patio door anti-lift device



Surface mounted patio door lock

Doors:

- UPVC and aluminium doors should have multi-locking systems. Additional mortice deadlocks and/or key operated throw bolts can be fitted to provide additional security and reduce the leverage points.
- Householders should be reminded to fit multi-locking handles and lock with a key, to prevent burglars reaching in through the letterbox to open the door. Internal letterbox shields also prevent car or house keys being fished through the letterbox.
- Wooden front doors should be solid timber, with a BS 5-lever mortice lock one third of the way up and an automatic deadlocking rim latch one third of the way down.
- Wooden back doors should be solid timber, with a BS5-lever mortice lock and two mortice rack bolts.
- Frames should be reinforced with metal strips called 'London' or 'Birmingham' bars.
- Hinge bolts should be fitted to outward opening doors.
- Glass panels in doors should be replaced with laminated glass or reinforced internally with security film or grilles.
- Door viewers provide good vision and door chains provide a barrier against unwanted callers.



PVCu/aluminium front door



PVCu/aluminium back door



Wooden front door



Wooden back door



Securing valuables:

- A safe which has been securely fixed to a solid wall/and or floor reduces the likelihood of important documents, valuables and sentimental items being stolen.
- Property marking (e.g. SmartWater) and photographing valuables and sentimental items will help to deter burglars and assist police to return them to their rightful owners if they are stolen.
- Timing switches linked to the lights and a radio will give the impression that a property is occupied.



Keep valuables in a safe



Property mark valuables



Photograph valuables



Light and radio plugged into a timing switch

SmartWater

SmartWater is a forensic coding system to protect your home and your possessions. With over a million users, SmartWater is protecting in excess of 20 million items of property in the UK alone. By subscribing to SmartWater's crime prevention network you are becoming an active member of the largest criminal deterrent programme in the UK.

SmartWater is available to Neighbourhood Watch members at a heavily discounted price. Please contact the Neighbourhood Watch Office to purchase yours.

How SmartWater Works

SmartWater is a colourless liquid solution that can be dabbed into the nooks and crannies of your personal possessions such as jewellery, ornaments and electrical items as well as your motor vehicles.

- Each bottle carries a unique chemical 'code' which is registered to your address
- It cannot be easily seen by the naked eye and is almost impossible to remove
- The liquid glows under ultraviolet light – allowing the Police to identify the true owner of the property and whether it has been stolen.
- More robust than DNA marking systems, SmartWater maintains a 100% conviction rate when used as evidence in court.



Street robbery and personal safety:

- Prepare - think about how you're going to get there and back and remember to tell someone where you're going, who you are going with and when you expect to return.
- Look confident - remember your body language - stand tall and look like you know where you're going. Carry a personal safety alarm and learn how to use it. Also carry emergency phone numbers (including the numbers to cancel your credit cards), some change, a phone card and your keys in a safe pocket.
- Avoid risks and be aware - keep looking and listening to what's happening around you. Try not to change plans at the last minute, but if you have to, tell someone.
- Never take safety for granted - don't say to yourself "it only happens to other people", "it's only a short journey" or "they look honest". Trust your instincts - if you feel that something is wrong, it makes sense to avoid it.
- Avoid short cuts through dark places. Keep away from odd and out-of-the-way places whenever you can.
- Cross the road if you see people you don't feel comfortable about and be aware of who's around you when you're out and about.
- Walk in the middle of the pavement facing the traffic, so that cars can't follow you.
- Mobile phones, MP3 players and laptops are attractive to thieves, so be careful where you use them and be aware of what's happening around you when you are using them.
- Cover up expensive looking jewellery and wear your bag across your body, so that it opens on the side facing you. In Winter, wear your coat over your bag to hide it. You're an easy target if you leave your bag facing backwards over your shoulder or carry it over one shoulder.
- If you use a wheelchair or motorised scooter, keep your handbag in front of you, rather than hanging it on the back of the chair where thieves can steal it.
- If somebody does try to take your bag, let it go and don't fight to keep it, you're less likely to be hurt.



Distraction burglary:

- Beware of anyone who says they are in a hurry. If in doubt, call a neighbour or friend.
- Sometimes bogus callers pose as someone needing help, perhaps asking for a glass of water or access to a telephone. Put yourself first. Do not feel you are rude or uncaring by saying 'no'. Your own safety is more important.
- Check to see who is at the door by using your door viewer or looking through the front window.
- Always put the chain on before you open the door as this is a barrier against unwanted callers.
- There are two checks that you can easily put in place to help verify that a caller claiming to work for one of the utility companies is genuine. All of the utility companies operate password schemes. Contact the customer services department and set up a password with them. Choose passwords that are unique and easily remembered. Keep passwords out of sight and accessible.
- Also, make a note of your customer number, which can be found at the top of the utility bill and keep it handy. This number is unique to your household.
- As added proof of identity, genuine tradespeople should carry an identification card with their photograph on. Check this carefully, as authentic ones can be reproduced on a computer and keep the chain on.
- If the caller does have an identification card examine the expiry date (is it still valid?) Does the photograph on the card match the person at the door? Is the photograph the original or has anything been stuck over it?
- When an unexpected caller claims they work for one of the utility companies, they must be able to quote your password and unique customer number and produce an identity card.
- If you're unsure about a caller's identity, telephone the company the caller claims to represent, but don't rely on them giving you the number as it may be false.
- Genuine callers won't mind waiting.
- If you're still unsure, ask the caller to come back later so that you can arrange for a friend or relative to be present.
- Join Bexley Borough Neighbourhood Watch's very own 'Nominated Neighbour' scheme. A display card directs the unexpected caller to your 'Nominated Neighbour', asking them to return with them to verify that the caller is genuine. Contact BBNWA on 020 8284 5537 or email bexwatch-office@beconnect.com for further details on how to register.

Your passwords

Use this page to write the contact details and passwords for your electricity, gas and water companies below.

My water supplier:

Contact number:

Doorstep password:

My gas supplier:

Contact number:

Doorstep password:

My electricity supplier:

Contact number:

Doorstep password:



Bogus traders:

- Don't be forced into making a quick decision on the doorstep.
- Get at least three quotes from local reputable companies who have reputations to maintain, and if possible seek recommendations.
- Only deal with firms with genuine verifiable telephone numbers and addresses. Beware of companies that only use mobile phone numbers and accommodation addresses.
- Anyone who signs a contract on the door step following a visit that is not arranged (unsolicited) has 7 days in which to cancel it by law. All cancellation rights must be provided in writing to the customer at the time the contract is agreed, (usually on the door step). It is an offence not to do so.
- If you don't want to speak to a trader don't open your door to them. It can be hard to distinguish the good traders from the cowboys; it might be easier to keep the door closed. Do not allow uninvited callers into your home.
- Refuse to be taken to the bank to withdraw money. If you ever feel intimidated by them, close the door and call the Police.
- If unsure contact Trading Standards on 020 3045 5610 to verify the trader/company's name.

Motor vehicle security:

- Most vehicle crime is preventable. It can take as little as 10 seconds for a thief to steal something from your car.
- Thatcham approved alarms and immobilisers are an excellent deterrent.
- Don't leave anything on display - it's a prime invitation to passers-by. Even an old coat or plastic bag can tempt a thief. If items have to be left in the vehicle, put them out of sight at the start of the journey.
- Portable 'sat-nav' systems are often held in the cradle attached to the windscreen or dashboard on full view, so take it out of the vehicle and place the cradle out of sight in the boot. Remember to wipe your windscreen to remove the suction mark left by the cradle, as this is a giveaway to thieves that the 'sat nav' could be hidden in the vehicle.
- Property mark the 'sat nav' with your postcode and house name or number. Make a note of the make, model and serial number and register it free of charge on the National Property Register at www.immobilise.com.
- Get a music system that's removable or has a front panel that can be taken off.
- Driving documents and personal correspondence could help a thief to sell your vehicle or provide a cover story if stopped by the police - don't keep them in the vehicle.

- Some thieves break into houses to steal vehicle keys. Always keep the keys in a safe place. Don't leave them in the hallway or kitchen, as these are the obvious places a thief will look.
- Alloy wheels should be secured with locking wheel nuts, which have been tested to withstand attack and meet Category 4 Thatcham approval.
- Steering wheel locks, which have been tested to withstand attack and meet Category 3 Thatcham approval, should be applied every time you leave your vehicle.
- Number plates should be secured with one-way security screws, to prevent them being removed and used in crime.
- If you have a garage at home, use it. If you don't, try to park in a well lit open space.
- Look for public car parks that are part of the police approved 'Park Mark' Safer Parking Scheme.

Parkmark is awarded to car parks that have achieved the requirements of a risk assessment as conducted by the police.

These requirements mean the parking operator has put in place measures that help deter criminal activity and anti-social behaviour, thereby doing everything they can to prevent crime and reduce the fear of crime in their parking facility.

<http://www.parkmark.co.uk>

Driving Safety:

Maintenance

- Make sure that your car is kept in good running order
- Do not put yourself at risk by running out of oil, petrol or water
- Take the time to learn the basics of car maintenance and have your car serviced by a reputable garage
- Consider joining a breakdown organisation as added security

Keeping in Contact

- If you feel vulnerable travelling alone it is worth considering purchasing a mobile phone. Ensure the mobile is fully charged before setting off on long journeys
- Always let someone know where you are going
- Plan your route and take a map to avoid asking strangers for directions
- Take enough money with you for emergency phone calls and consider a phone card
- Take the details of your breakdown organisation and membership number



Pickpockets and handbag thieves:

- Be aware of who's around you when you're shopping. Pickpockets often operate in pairs and use distraction techniques to avert your attention whilst they steal from your bag.
- Wear your bag across your body, so that it opens on the side facing you. In Winter, wear your coat over your bag to hide it. You're an easy target if you leave your bag facing backwards over your shoulder or carry it over one shoulder.
- Never leave your bag unattended in a shopping trolley or basket or on the back of a pushchair, always keep it with you.
- Avoid carrying valuables in the outside pockets of rucksacks.
- If you use a wheelchair or motorised scooter, keep your valuables in front of you, rather than hanging them on the back of the chair where thieves can dip into them.
- Keep your bag or briefcase where you can see it or feel it - on your lap or touching your feet, not hung on the back of your chair when you're eating or having a drink.
- Keep your keys in a different pocket from anything that has your address on it.
- Don't keep the PIN number for your cash card with you. Keep the emergency number to cancel your credit cards with you so that you can phone immediately if you have to.

Mobile phone security:

- Register mobile phones free of charge at www.immobilise.com
- Keep phones out of sight in a pocket or handbag when not in use.
- Use the phone's security lock code if it has one.
- Report lost or stolen phones to the police immediately
- Always keep a record of your mobile phone's unique IMEI/serial number and keep it in a safe place separate from the phone. The 15 digit IMEI number is usually located on a strip behind the battery or can be obtained by pressing `*#06#` to display it on the handset screen. If the phone is lost or stolen, call your provider to ensure that it's blocked across every network immediately.
- Property mark the phone with a postcode and house number to help police identify stolen ones or mark it with SmartWater.

Identity fraud:

How to protect yourself against identity fraud:

- Always think before you give away your personal details. Ask yourself the following questions:
- Who exactly is asking for my details?
- What details are they asking for?
- Why do they need to know these details?
- Dispose of documents with any personal information on them securely. A shredder is one of the most effective methods. Even envelopes with your name and address on can be useful to an identity thief.

Protect yourself against opportunist fraud:

- Never put a piece of personal information in the bin without destroying it first. Fraudsters do search through rubbish bins to find useful documents.
- Shred everything that has personal information on - even envelopes with your name and address on can be of use to identity thieves.
- Always be aware of your surroundings as fraudsters are known for 'shoulder surfing'. Identity thieves employ tactics such as looking over your shoulder when you're filling out an application form in a shop, watching you as you enter your PIN number at an ATM machine and listening to your phone conversations when you're divulging your personal information in a public place.
- Be careful how you discard your debit or credit card receipts. They should all ideally be shredded. Many receipts show all or part of a card or account number and may even show your signature.

How to protect your PC

- Source good anti-virus software and a firewall.
- Keep your computer up-to-date i.e. run 'windows updates' automatically or other operating system updates.
- Block spam emails.
- Beware bogus emails and attachments.
- Use an up-to-date web browser.
- Back up your files regularly on discs or an external hard drive.
- Secure your WIFI - if you can access it without entering security data, so can someone else in the vicinity.
- Avoid online rip-offs.
- When you're shopping online, look for clear signs that you're buying from a reputable company and check for real-world contact details.
- On an online auction site, take time to research how it works and learn to pick good sellers.
- Use ways to pay that protect you, such as PayPal or credit cards.

- Use your common sense to avoid scams - if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Be wary of unsolicited emails requesting money for sick relatives/charities and if you haven't entered a lottery - you can't win it!

Take care of your online identity and privacy

- Avoid identity theft by using an up-to-date web browser and blocking bogus emails with a spam filter.
- Always use strong passwords - use characters, numbers, symbols, capitals and lower case.

Don't put personal information like mother's maiden name, date of birth or pet's name on social networking sites - this can be used by thieves to identify your security passwords etc.

MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

Be safe online

- Do not click on links in emails from senders you don't know. It could be a phishing attempt
- Forward suspected phishing emails to your bank and then delete them. You can also report phishing emails to www.banksafeonline.co.uk

Shopping and surfing safely

- When purchasing online, ensure that the address line reads `http://` to show it is secure.
- Be aware that sponsored links at the top or side of a search page pay to be there, these are not always reliable and can be used by criminals.
- Ensure the web address shown on the search matches that which appears on the bottom bar of your computer when you hover over the link - if it doesn't do not enter the site or you could be taken to a phishing site.

What can you do to protect yourself

- Don't use the same password for different websites.
- Protect your computer with anti-virus software available from many commercial vendors. Some products are subscription based, others offer free downloads.
- A number of internet security companies offer free download security software which gives advice on whether or not a website is safe and free from viruses.

- Use a credit not debit card for online purchases, as this offers insurance on purchases - limitations may apply.
- Use one dedicated credit card for all online purchases. This way, if you are subject to fraud. It is easy to replace and will not impact on your day to day life. Alternatively, consider using a pre-pay credit card for online purchase.

In depth information can be obtained from the websites below:

www.getsafeonline.org

www.consumerdirect.gov.uk

www.banksafeonline.org.uk

www.actionfraud.org.uk

www.met.police.uk

Parents can get further information about child safety online by visiting www.ceop.gov.uk

Children's personal safety online

It's important your child realises that people online might not be who they say they are and could be dangerous. They should also beware that any personal information they give out can be used in financial scams or for bullying.

To keep your child safe you should tell them not to:

- Give out personal information to people they only know online - this includes name, home address, landline and mobile numbers, bank details, PIN numbers and passwords.
- Supply details for registration without asking for permission and help from you.
- Visit chat websites that aren't fully moderated/supervised.
- Arrange to meet an online friend in person without your knowledge or permission (if you agree to let them, you should always go along with them).
- Give any indication of their age or sex in a personal email address or screen name.
- Keep anything that worries or upsets them online secret from you.
- Respond to unwanted emails or other messages

You can monitor your child's internet use by checking the history folder on your browser as it contains a list previously visited websites.

If there's a problem

Hopefully the rules you put in place will mean your child is always able to use the internet safely. However, you should also:

- Contact your ISP if your child comes across inappropriate content or is subjected to any inappropriate contact while online.
- Install and regularly update filtering software to protect against inappropriate internet access.

If you are worried about illegal materials or suspicious online behaviour, contact the Child Exploitation Online Protections Centre (CEOP).

www.ceop.police.uk

0870 000 3344

CCTV:

Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) systems are an important weapon to fight against crime. CCTV can be used to protect your business or your home against robbery and theft.

If you use CCTV to protect your home or business premises you should always maintain your system.

There are a few simple steps you can follow to ensure that CCTV is in good working order:

- Change tapes daily
- Use them no more than 12 times
- Keep tapes for at least a month
- Use good quality tapes and check them by playing them on a different machine
- Ensure that the picture is clear - it needs to be clear enough to identify people and vehicles
- Check that the time and date displays are correct
- Check that the picture is covering that right area
- Make sure there is enough light for the camera to give a proper picture



Useful Contacts

Bexley Council Call Centre 020 8303 7777 or email bexley.gov.uk

For all problems concerning:-

Abandoned vehicles• Ant-social behaviour• dog collections• Environmental Heath• Fly tipping• Graffiti• Highway Maintenance• Noise complaints• Parking complaints• Pavement repair• Refuse collections• Street cleaning/lighting• Vandalism

Bexley Neighbourhood Services Team 020 8303 7777

Bexley Community Policing Engagement Group (BCPEG) 020 8311 0951

Crime Stoppers 0800 555 111 www.crimestoppers-uk.org

Anti-Terrorist Hotline 0800 789 321

Police non-emergency crime reporting number 101

Crime can also be reported online at www.met.police.uk

Bexleyheath Police Station Front Desk 020 8284 9125

Trading Standards 0203 045 5610

Age UK 020 8300 0883

Child Protection 020 3034 5440

SmartWater property marking www.smartwater.com

Bobby Van 020 8854 1113

Met Police Crime Mapping <http://maps.met.police.uk>

Neighbourhood Link www.neighbourhoodlink@met.police.uk

Trust Thamesmead 020 8320 4470

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime

National Antisocial behaviour action line 0870 220 2000

email Actiononline@bss.org

Parkmark www.parkmark.co.uk



Bexley Borough Neighbourhood Watch Office

Office hours Monday - Friday 09.00 - 12.00

Belvedere Police Station

2 Nuxley Road

Belvedere

Kent

DA17 5JF

Tel. No. 020 8284 5537

Email: bexwatch-office@btconnect.com

Website www.bexleywatch.org.uk