



# Doorstep Crime and Bogus Callers

Crime prevention after bereavement

## **We are sorry to hear of your recent bereavement.**

Unfortunately some criminals may take advantage of the situation.

This guidance is aimed at those providing a supportive role to older adults left alone following a bereavement. It offers some simple steps to ensure that the older person is and feels more secure in their own home.

Older adults, living on their own following a bereavement are more vulnerable and may even be targeted by some criminals. It is vital therefore that extra steps are taken to protect them.

## What can be done immediately

- ✓ Do not keep large sums of money at home.
- ✓ Fit good quality locks to doors and windows.
- ✓ Fit a door chain.
- ✓ Consider fitting an entry phone or a door viewer with a microphone.
- ✓ Ensure any garage and shed can be locked with proper locks.
- ✓ Make sure any ladders are locked to secure fittings with a good padlock or heavy-duty chain.
- ✓ Make sure the older person knows how to use the burglar alarm (if fitted).
- ✓ Fit extra security (e.g. dusk till dawn) lighting above the front and the rear of the property.
- ✓ Obtain contact details for a neighbour or friend who lives close by.
- ✓ Inform trustworthy neighbours (or neighbourhood watch coordinator) if the property is to be empty for any period of time and ask that they remove any mail or other items left on view.
- ✓ Keep up the house and garden maintenance.

**If you require further advice on crime prevention then you should contact your local police.**

## Bogus callers

Some criminals make their living by preying on older and vulnerable adults. They may say they are from the water or gas companies or pretend to be a builder and tell the householder that urgent work is required on the property.



It is important that older and vulnerable people are prepared for such callers. There are a number of things that can be done.

- ✓ Only deal with callers by appointment.
- ✓ Genuine callers from the utilities/council etc. will have identity cards, and will be happy to wait on the doorstep while the householder telephones to confirm they are who they say they are or ask to call back later when somebody else can be present.
- ✓ Never do business with doorstep callers (especially building and property repairs).
- ✓ If you are a friend or relative, give the older person your contact number so that they can ring you if they have a caller at the door they are uncertain about.
- ✓ Make arrangements for somebody to keep in touch regularly.
- ✓ Do not be afraid to report a suspicious caller to the police or trading standards.

## Dealing with cold callers on the doorstep

Cold callers are people who knock at the door uninvited and in doing so place the householder at a significant disadvantage. Callers are highly trained in delivering a “hard sell” and may even target the recently bereaved.

**Always say no to  
doorstep sellers.**

Some callers may have a genuine reason for their visit such as, Gas or Electricity meter readers. However, criminals do on occasions pose as officials to gain access. Genuine callers will be happy for you to check them out by telephoning the company, contacting a friend or neighbour or asking them to come back at a later date when you can have somebody with you.

**If in doubt -  
Keep them out.**

# Doorstep Sellers – Your Rights

If you buy, or agree to buy goods or services costing more than £35, then generally you will have 7 days to cancel, without penalty.

The seller must give you written details of these cancellation rights.



# Protecting yourself against doorstep crime

**Always say no to  
doorstep sellers.**

<b>LOCK</b>	Keep your front door and back doors locked
<b>If someone calls:</b>	
<b>STOP</b>	Are you expecting anybody? Do they have an appointment?
<b>CHAIN</b>	Secure the door bar or chain before opening the door
<b>CHECK</b>	Ask for and check the caller's ID

For further advice or to report any suspicious callers telephone Croydon Trading Standards.


These are practical ways of protecting yourself and reducing the risk of being a victim of crime. The local police will usually be able to put you in touch with free advice on crime prevention.



If there is a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in your area, under which people look out for each other's safety and share crime prevention ideas, you may want to join it.

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For further advice or to report any suspicious callers telephone telephone Trading Standards via the Consumer Direct reporting line on:

 **08454 04 05 06**