

Doorstep Crime and Bogus Callers

Crime Prevention after Bereavement

Older adults living on their own following bereavement are more vulnerable and unfortunately some criminals may take advantage of this. This information sheet aims to offer guidance to older adults and their families to make sure they feel and are more secure in their own home.

Some criminals specifically target the recently bereaved and use information from obituary columns in newspapers to select potential victims.

To prevent this from happening when placing a bereavement notice in the newspaper never put the full address of the deceased and always make sure that someone is in the house whilst the funeral takes place.

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. Do not assume because the caller is wearing a uniform or has a logo on his clothing that he is genuine.

The main aim of these bogus callers is to distract the occupier, get into the home and steal from them. They may work alone, in pairs or teams and could be male, female or even children. This crime is called distraction burglary.

IF IN DOUBT KEEP THEM OUT

It is important that older and vulnerable adults 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
- Do not be afraid to report a suspicious caller to the Police or Trading Standards

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
- Make sure the older person knows how to use the burglar alarm (if fitted)
- Fit extra security lighting above the front and rear of the property
- Obtain contact details of a friend or neighbour who lives near by
- Inform trustworthy neighbours (or neighbourhood watch co-ordinator) 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.

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 specifically target the recently bereaved.

ALWAYS SAY NO TO DOORSTEP SELLERS

LOCK – keep back and front doors locked at all times.

If someone calls:

STOP – Are you expecting anybody?

CHAIN – Secure the door bar or chain before opening the door.

CHECK – Ask for and check the caller's ID.

For further advice or to report any suspicious callers telephone the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on 08454 040506.

If you require further advice on crime prevention please contact Derbyshire Police on 0345 123 3333

This leaflet is not an authoritative document on the law and is only intended for guidance. For further details or clarification contact Derbyshire Trading Standards at:

Chatsworth Hall
Chesterfield Road
Matlock
Derbyshire
DE4 3FW

If you are a **consumer**:

Telephone: Citizens Advice consumer helpline 08454 040506
Website: www.adviceguide.org.uk

If you are a **business**:

Telephone: Call Derbyshire 08 456 058 058
Fax: 01629 536197
Website: www.derbyshire.gov.uk/tradingstandards

We want everyone to be able to understand us. On request, we will arrange:

- Language interpreters, including for sign language
- Translation of written materials into other languages
- Materials in large print, on tape or in Braille.

Reputable builders and other workmen **DO NOT** have to go knocking on doors looking for work.



We can help you to find honest and reliable traders who promise to do a good job for a fair price.

All the businesses on our Trusted Trader register have been checked by our trading standards team.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> plumbers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> glazers
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> builders	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> drain cleaners
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> roofers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> electricians
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> garages	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> gardeners
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> decorators	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> retailers
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> joiners	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ...and many more.

Call Derbyshire* 08456 058 058
www.derbyshire.gov.uk/trustedtrader

* Call Derbyshire is open 8am to 8pm weekdays, 9.30am to 4pm Saturdays.
An average three-minute call costs 10p for BT customers. Charges from other suppliers may vary.

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http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/images/ft16_tcm9-128120.pdf
or telephone us on 01629 536166.

