

Distraction burglary (including bogus callers) - how you can be aware and help prevent this devious and often devastating crime.



Distraction burglary is any crime where a falsehood, trick or distraction is used to gain access to someone's property to commit burglary.

Victims of distraction burglary can suffer terribly both emotionally and physically as this callous crime undermines the very basic feelings of safety and security in a place where we all should feel most secure – our own homes!

Although we can all be seen as potential victims to these unscrupulous individuals, it is often older people, those who are isolated or those who are seen as the most vulnerable to “distraction” techniques that are most frequently targeted – often the most vulnerable in our community.

One of the main issues around doorstep or distraction crime is that it often goes unreported, meaning that the police are not always aware of the full extent of the problem or that bogus callers may be operating in a particular area and they are therefore unable to apprehend the culprits before they move on to their next victim

But we can all help; we can be a “good neighbour”, we can look out for those neighbours who may be at greater risk, we can educate ourselves about the risks, we can pass on this wisdom to a vulnerable person next door, in your building on your street or within your wider community.

An awareness of the issues and how to protect yourself and others is an important first step to staying safe. We should of course also report any suspicious behaviors, unusual activity or concerns around bogus callers to the police as soon as possible (999 in an emergency or 101 for all other concerns) so they too can act to protect your neighborhood and community.

If you also have concerns about a neighbour's ability to protect themselves from harm or exploitation or for example you have concerns about an older person who you feel may benefit from some additional support, you can also contact the **Safeguarding Adults Team at Harrow Council** on **020 8424 9453** who can provide help with advice support or further referrals.

Remember, be vigilant, distraction crime is something we can all work together to eliminate by following these simple steps.

'Lock, Stop, Chain and Check'

- **Lock** – **Keep your front and back doors locked, even when at home**
- **Stop** – **Are you expecting anyone?**
- **Chain** – **If you decide to open the door, put the door chain on first**
- **Check** – **Ask for the caller's ID and check it by phone**