

Elderly residents targeted.

If you are elderly and reading this for yourself, if you have elderly relatives or neighbours or care for an elderly person then please read on.

This communication is not intended to cause undue alarm or concern. It is intended to provoke thought and encourage people to take action.

The elderly have long been targets of criminals, taking advantage of their naturally trusting nature and frailty. The rules of common decent respect for the elderly do not apply. They can't fight back, they are simply easy prey.

Criminals will enter their homes whether posing as an official or by force if they need to. They want cash and jewellery and will ransack a house to find it or force occupants to give up the code to a safe or other secret place. They will travel to commit their crimes, often stealing high powered vehicles such as Audi's or Volkswagon's to evade capture. The ordeal can be horrific and life changing.

What to do...

Deposit cash in a safe place such as banks and other financial institution. Not in the house. Just keep what is needed for weekly needs.

Suspicious vehicles parked in the street or persons knocking at doors offering spurious work or trying to locate a lost dog, child or ball. Make a note of the vehicles and descriptions, and anything distinctive about that vehicle or person. Report it to the police.

Keep an eye on your neighbour, particularly if you see strangers calling at their door.

If you have security lights or CCTV, check they are working.

Be confident to talk to the caller through your door or front window.

Always use a security chain if you have one and get one fitted if you are able.

Before answering the front door, make sure the back door is locked.

Always ask for identification before letting anyone in to your home. If they don't have identification, ask them to come back with some, and don't be fobbed off. Check their identification and ring the organisation they purport to represent. Close the door whilst you check. Legitimate representatives will not mind waiting outside.

Contact your service providers and check what security measures they take before sending a representative to your home. This may be passwords or written confirmation of pre-arranged appointments for example. Make a note of the arrangement in place and keep it by the door (keep passwords elsewhere in a safe place).