

The county of Suffolk has always been a low crime area and a safe and beautiful place to live and work. Suffolk Constabulary is committed to ensuring it stays that way. Unfortunately over the past couple of months the Western area has suffered a significant increase in burglary dwelling offences.

Since the 1st January this year, there have been 66 burglaries across both the Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts.

Offences are occurring during both the daytime and the evening, and jewellery is the main item stolen. It is believed offenders are becoming more risky when committing offences and there may be times when local residents have seen the offender(s) in the area.

Suffolk Police would like to remind local residents that if they see any people or vehicles that look out of place or which raise suspicions please telephone on 101 with any information such as time, location, clothing or registration details. Always 999 however if an offence is taking place.

Taking just a few steps can make a big difference in keeping your home safe from burglary:

- Lock your doors and windows every time you leave the house, even when you've just popped out to the neighbours, or are working in the garden, remembering to double-lock UPVC doors (lift handle and turn the key).
- Consider upgrading locks if they do not reach current British Standards or Kite Marked approved, and fit window locks with keys to all downstairs windows and those upstairs that are easy to reach from flat roofs etc.
- Remove all keys from view, including car keys, and keep them out of sight but nearby should you need them for safety or fire risks.
- Install an intruder alarm in the property, with a visual external box to deter offenders before they even try to set foot on the property. Look on www.nsi.org.uk or www.ssaib.org for police approved alarm companies that operate in your local area.
- Install good outside lighting such as 'dusk till dawn' lights at the front door(s) and on your garages and sheds. Leave radios or lights in your house on a timer to make the property appear occupied.
- Remove valuables from view and store any jewellery in a properly secured safe bolted to the wall and floor. At the very least, place jewellery in an obscure location in the house that wouldn't be found by an offender.
- Keep ladders, tools and loose bricks locked away; don't leave them outside where they could be used to break into your home.
- Ensure side gates are locked to prevent access to the rear of the property.
- Mark your property with your postcode and house number in a UV pen and register your property for free with www.immobilise.com (UV pens can be purchased for £1 from Sudbury, Hadleigh, Stowmarket, Elmswell, Eye, Needham Market and Debenham Police Stations).
- Alternatively a forensic property marking solution such as www.smartwater.com could be purchased.
- Consider joining or forming a Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) scheme. Please call your local NHW Officer on 101 if you'd like more information.
- The Master Locksmith (MLA) has a list of approved locksmiths for your area, just visit www.locksmiths.co.uk/ to find yours.