

## **Make your home secure this autumn**

Autumn is here and the clocks will be going back at the end of the month. As the afternoons grow darker Hertfordshire Constabulary is reminding residents to keep their homes secure and report suspicious behaviour.

Burglaries are currently down around 30 per cent compared to the same period last year however, during the autumn and winter months burglaries tend to increase. Homes that are left unlit during the dark afternoons act as a signal to burglars that a home is empty, so residents are being urged to follow home security advice in the months leading up to Christmas.

Local Safer Neighbourhood teams will be holding crime prevention events across the county, offering tips on keeping homes and valuables safe.

Residents are also being advised to consider installing some of the affordable security devices which are currently available. There's a variety of inexpensive security lights and Wi-Fi-enabled doorbell and interior cameras, fitted with motion sensors, which enable you to monitor your home remotely using your phone. These kinds of devices can be easily installed for minimal expense and have helped to deter burglaries and in some cases led to offenders being arrested.

Hertfordshire's Police and Crime Commissioner, David Lloyd, said: "Burglary is a particularly intrusive crime that is distressing for all its victims. Hertfordshire has relatively few home burglaries, compared to other parts of the country, but I will ensure that responding to and investigating them remains a high priority for the Constabulary.

"By following this simple advice, you can reduce the likelihood of being targeted. Please also keep an eye out on behalf of your neighbours and report any suspicious activity to the police by calling 101, or 999 if a crime is in progress."

Inspector Nicki Dean from Hertfordshire Constabulary's Crime Reduction Unit said: "Burglaries have been decreasing over the last couple of years in Hertfordshire, but there always seems to be an increase once the clocks go back. This year may be a bit different as more people are likely to be at home during the daytime due to Covid-19 restrictions, but criminals look for unoccupied homes and can tell if a home is empty if there are no lights on once it gets dark. If you give your home a lived-in look by using a timer switch to turn on a light, radio or TV when it gets dark then criminals are more likely to avoid your home.

"Keeping your home lit and remembering to secure windows and double-lock PVCu doors by lifting the handle and turning the key to engage all the safety features are easy ways to secure your home. There are some great affordable home security devices on the market such as security cameras and lighting that can help to make your home even safer."

Residents can make their homes more secure by following some basic crime prevention advice such as:

- Lock all doors and windows and ensure any PVCu doors are locked properly by lifting the handle and using the key to double-lock them
- Consider installing a door bell camera, internal camera and/or monitored burglar alarm
- Install 'dusk to dawn' external lighting and use timer switches in your home to control internal lights, radios and a simulated TV
- Keep keys and valuables secure and out of sight

- Ensure boundary fences are secure with side gates locked. Keep tools and ladders in a locked shed
- Secure bins at night and put garden furniture away for the winter as these can be used by burglars as climbing aids to gain access to upper floor windows
- Ensure your vehicle is locked and remove all valuables as burglars often check to see if doors are left unlocked
- Join Hertfordshire's Neighbourhood Watch for alerts and advice: [www.owl.co.uk](http://www.owl.co.uk)
- Visit [www.owlprotect.uk](http://www.owlprotect.uk) for discounts on security products

For more crime prevention advice is available at [www.herts.police.uk/protectyourhome](http://www.herts.police.uk/protectyourhome) and [www.hertscitizensacademy.org](http://www.hertscitizensacademy.org).

You can report suspicious activity in your area or information online at [herts.police.uk/report](http://herts.police.uk/report), speak to an operator in our Force Communications Room via our online web chat at [herts.police.uk/contact](http://herts.police.uk/contact) or call the non-emergency number 101, quoting crime reference

Alternatively, you can stay 100% anonymous by contacting the independent charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or via their untraceable online form at [crimestoppers-uk.org](http://crimestoppers-uk.org).

You can use our community voice platform 'echo' to let us know what you think we should be prioritising in your area. Your feedback will help towards shaping our local policing priorities, initiatives and campaigns. Visit [bit.ly/herts-echo](http://bit.ly/herts-echo) and tell us your thoughts.