

Distraction burglary also known as "Bogus Caller" crime has a terrible effect upon its victims, often the older and most vulnerable in our communities. The method of gaining entry to a house is usually by telling the resident a story. This is usually done by claiming to be from the Water Board, other utility provider, police or other official agency. They can also pose as canvassers or door to door sales people. The offenders can be male and female and sometimes children are used to distract the occupant whilst an accomplice enters the premises.

It is unlikely that older people will actually become victims, but the fear of this crime remains high within that age group.

We must be determined to do everything we can to make this section of our community feel safer.

A study found that 77% of victims were female, 23% were male, 74% lived alone, 12% lived in sheltered accommodation. The average age of a victim was 77 years of age.

The following advice is given to everyone reading this newsletter and it is hoped that you will report any incidents where you suspect that a distraction burglary may have happened or been attempted. Residents can also help by keeping their eye on any elderly residents in their area who might become the victim of these thieves.

ADVICE

If someone claiming to be an official comes to the door, do not let them in unless they have a pre-arranged appointment. If an appointment has been made, check their Identification card and do not let them in unless you are fully satisfied that they are genuine. Always take the identification and check it carefully. NEVER let anyone into your home who cannot provide Identification. If you have not arranged an appointment for the visit, ask them to contact you by letter to arrange a suitable time and date so you can have a friend or relative present when the visit is made.

There may be people who come to the door asking for help in an emergency or they have lost a ball in your garden. Please remember that you do not have to help and to refuse will not be seen as being rude. If the person is persistent and wants to come into the house, close the door and ring 999. NEVER let anyone in who you have not made a previous arrangement to see or who cannot produce identification which you are satisfied is genuine. IF IN DOUBT - KEEP THEM OUT.

Always place a door chain, door bar or similar device across the door before opening it when someone knocks.

If you do have a strange caller always inform someone, police, neighbourhood watch co-ordinator, next door neighbour. This enables the police to warn other residents in the area of the possibility of having bogus callers in the area. If you are at all suspicious of the person who called, please let the police know about the caller and if you can give some type of description even better.