

# Staying safe



Stay safe at home, out and about and when you're online

# Information written with you in mind.

This information guide has been produced with the help of older people, carers and expert peer reviewers.

Published: **October 2019**

Next review due: **July 2021**

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## What this guide is about

**We all want to be safe, especially when we're in our own homes or going about our day-to-day lives. Unfortunately, as we get older we can feel a little less safe, due to mobility issues, illness or because we feel more vulnerable to crime and scammers.**

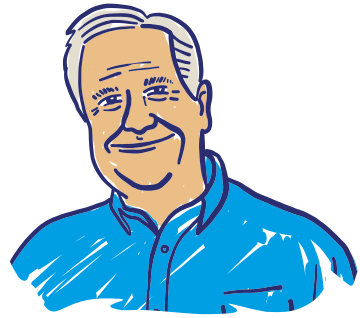
However, there are plenty of things you can do to feel safer and put your mind at ease. We cover all the bases in this guide – we'll outline ways to help you feel safer around your home, when you're out and about and when you're online.



This symbol indicates where information differs for Wales and Northern Ireland. As far as possible, the information in this guide is applicable across the UK.

**“A friend of mine recommended someone who came round to help me secure my windows and doors.”**

Lee, 69



There's lots of information in this guide. It might be an idea to read it section by section. But, we've also put a handy 'Security checklist' on page 54 which covers some of the most important things to think about.

## **Good to know**



Some of the suggestions in this guide, especially those around the house, might mean you need a helping hand, and knowing where to turn and who to trust can be tricky.

If you want to find a reliable tradesperson, you can use the Government-run TrustMark scheme to find local tradespeople who comply with Government-endorsed standards (page 64).

You could also see if your local Age UK runs a 'Trusted Trader' or handyperson scheme that can recommend someone. In Wales, contact Age Cymru or Care & Repair Cymru.

It's also worth checking if your local Home Improvement Agency (HIA) offers services for free, such as fitting locks etc.



## Staying safe at home

They say there's no place like home. It's where we should feel safest, but that's not always the case. There are many reasons why you may start to feel a little uneasy at home, but there are things you can do to feel more confident and safe around the house.

### Preventing falls

As we get older we may start to feel a bit more unsteady on our feet and worry about falling. Maybe you've had a fall or two in the past and you're worried about another. There are lots of simple things that can help avoid a fall.

#### Look out for trip hazards

- Clear away clutter. We're all guilty of it, but items lying around the home or on the stairs can cause a trip.
- Coil up cords and wires or tape them close to the wall to keep them out of the way.
- Arrange your furniture to make it easier to move around your home. If you need a hand with this, is there someone you could ask?
- Replace worn-out or fraying carpets and loose rugs. You can use double-sided carpet tape to help prevent them slipping.

## Wearing the right shoes

A good pair of shoes can make such a difference. Worn-out or badly-fitting shoes and slippers can increase the likelihood of a fall.

## Get help with small repairs

Some local Age UKs offer a handyman scheme for older people who meet certain criteria, to assist with those small repairs and help identify hazards at home (page 56). There may also be a Home Improvement Agency (HIA) in your area offering similar help. You can contact Foundations, the national body for HIAs, or your local council (page 59).



In Wales, contact your local Age Cymru to find out if there's a handyman scheme in your area (page 56) or contact Care & Repair Cymru (page 59). In Northern Ireland check with Age NI for local availability of handyman schemes (page 56).

## Slipping in the bathroom

You may want to think about getting a handrail, non-slip bathmat or a bath seat. These can help you feel more confident getting in and out of the bath. You can get a non-slip rubber mat or use self-stick strips to make sure it doesn't slide about.

If you find getting in and out of the bath or having a shower difficult contact the local council and ask for a care needs assessment. This can help you work out what adaptations might be right for you and may even help cover the cost.

**“I don't feel as steady on my feet as I used to.”**

Terry, 82





### Think about lighting

Is your house lit properly? It's important the stairs are well lit – you can have two-way light switches fitted, so switches at the top and bottom of the stairs control the same light. You could also think about night lights or having a lamp or torch by the bed in case you need to get up in the night. And it may seem obvious, but are your bulbs as bright as they could be? Bulbs are now measured in lumens rather than watts (1,500 lumens is the same as about 100 watts).



To see if there's a HIA in the area that can improve your lighting contact Foundations (page 59) or Care & Repair Cymru in Wales (page 59) for more information about HIAs.

### Next steps

Contact the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) for further advice on lighting in the home (page 63).



## Check the stairs

The stairs tend to become harder to navigate the older we get. Make sure there's no clutter on the stairs, they're well lit and have suitable handrails and bannisters. You can also get non-slip tape to mark the edges of any steps – inside or out. But make sure it's stuck down properly so it doesn't become a hazard in itself.

## Keep an eye on pets

We all love our pets, but they can get in the way sometimes. You'll know best how they behave, but it's always a good idea to be aware of where they are – especially at feeding time when they tend to move that bit quicker!

## Consider a personal alarm

If you don't feel entirely confident at home, a personal alarm could be the answer. If you fall, a personal alarm lets you contact a 24-hour response centre at the touch of a button. Many councils run personal alarm schemes. You can go online at [www.gov.uk/apply-for-community-alarm](http://www.gov.uk/apply-for-community-alarm) or contact your local council to find out what's available in your area.

## Next steps



For more information about preventing falls, see our information guide **Staying steady**. If you need help with small home adaptations, contact your local Age UK to see if there's a handyman scheme in your area (page 56). Our guide **Adapting your home** and factsheet **Home improvements and repairs** have more information. In Wales, contact your local Age Cymru.



## Fire prevention

Fires can start quickly and be devastating, causing a lot of worry. But there are some simple things you can do in your home to prevent them.

### Get a smoke alarm and check that it works

It's vital to have at least one smoke alarm on every floor of your home. Alarms should bear the British Standard number BS 5446 and the Kitemark. Test them monthly and keep them free from dust. Use a step ladder or get someone to help you when fitting, testing or cleaning your alarms.

You should change the battery at least once a year or you can get a long-life alarm that lasts between seven and 10 years.

There are specialist smoke alarms if you have hearing or vision difficulties.

Private landlords in England must fit smoke alarms on every floor where there's proper living space. If you live in private rented accommodation, check with your landlord to make sure this has been done.



In Wales, private landlords who self-manage their properties, or letting agents who have been appointed on their behalf, must have a licence from the Rent Smart Wales scheme and follow a Rent Smart Wales Code of Practice. This recommends that landlords should fit at least one smoke alarm on each floor of the property.

### **Plan a fire escape route**

Think about how you'd escape if there was a fire, especially if you live in a flat. You can ask the management company for a copy of your building's fire risk assessment.

### **Arrange a Home Fire Risk Check**

Some fire and rescue services offer a Home Fire Risk Check where they can visit to help you install smoke alarms, plan escape routes and assess other hazards. Contact your local fire department to find out more.

## **Good to know**



Action on Hearing Loss have products for people that are deaf and hard of hearing, including smoke alarms (page 57).

## In the kitchen

When you're cooking, make sure pan handles don't jut out because it's easy to knock them, especially if you're not too steady on your feet. You could also use a timer to help remind you that there's something cooking.

If a pan does catch fire then don't move it and never throw water on it. The best thing to do is turn the heat off if you can, shut the door, leave the property and call 999.

## Cigarettes and candles

Make sure any cigarettes or candles are completely out when you've finished with them. This goes for any incense or oil burners too.

## Use a fire guard and sweep the chimney

If you have an open fire you should have fire guards and make sure you keep your chimney and flues swept (ideally at least once a year) to prevent fire and carbon monoxide build up. You can find an approved chimney sweep through HETAS (Heating Equipment Testing and Approval Scheme) (page 60).

## If you do have a fire

Don't panic. Remember the fire service advice: Get out, stay out and call 999.

## Next steps



Talk to your local fire and rescue service for more advice on fire safety or see if they can give your home a fire risk check. Visit the UK Fire Service website at [www.fireservice.co.uk](http://www.fireservice.co.uk) to find your local fire and rescue service (page 64). In Northern Ireland, Age NI can make a referral for you for a free home fire safety check.



## Gas and solid fuel safety

Gas and solid fuel problems can go unnoticed but some straightforward checks will make your home safer and reduce the risk of an accident.

### Organise a yearly gas appliance check

It's good to have an annual check to make sure your appliances are working safely. Make sure the check and any repairs are done by a Gas Safe registered engineer (page 59). Never try to repair or service a gas appliance yourself, or let a friend or relative try – even if they say they know what they're doing!

If you own your home and receive a means-tested benefit, such as Pension Credit, you may be entitled to a free annual gas safety check from your energy supplier. You should ask them about this and any other priority services you might be eligible for (see page 17 for more information). If you're not eligible for a free check then shop around as costs can vary.

If you rent, your landlord is legally required to arrange a safety check with a registered Gas Safe engineer at least once a year for any gas appliances they've provided. The landlord must then give you a copy of the inspection record within 28 days of the check and fix any problems reported by the engineer.

## Service any solid fuel appliances

Solid-fuel appliances – for example, heaters or cookers that burn wood or coal – also need a regular service. For more information contact HETAS as they have a directory of registered installers and servicers that you can search online (page 60).

## Check the pilot light on your boiler

If you have a gas boiler with a pilot light, check regularly to make sure it's burning. If it's gone out, there should be instructions on the boiler on how to relight it. If you can't do it yourself, call out a heating engineer who's Gas Safe registered.

## Allow air flow and ventilation

Is there enough ventilation for gas or solid fuel appliances to burn? Keep air vents and chimneys clear and unblocked.

## Good to know



If you smell gas or suspect a gas leak, open all doors and windows, turn off the gas supply and call the 24-hour National Gas Emergency Service on **0800 111 999**. Do not use a phone near the gas leak, as this could cause a spark that might ignite the gas. Use a mobile phone outside your property, or a neighbour's phone. Don't turn any electrical switches or appliances on or off.

Contact the Gas Safe Register (page 59) for more information on gas safety or to find a registered engineer.

## Be aware of carbon monoxide

Carbon monoxide is unnervingly known as a ‘silent killer’ because you can’t see, taste or smell it. Even low exposure to carbon monoxide can cause long-term health problems, while high exposure can cause poisoning.

Heaters, boilers or other appliances that burn gas, coal, oil or wood can give off carbon monoxide if they aren’t working properly. Look out for yellow or brown staining, a lazy yellow or orange-coloured gas flame rather than a sharp blue flame, or too much moisture in the room.

Symptoms of carbon-monoxide poisoning can include headaches, feeling sick, a sore throat and a dry cough – similar to a cold or flu. If you’re worried that you might have carbon-monoxide poisoning call 999 straight away.

You can install a simple carbon monoxide detector to help prevent poisoning – make sure it bears the Kitemark and European Standard number BS EN 50291.



If you live in private rented accommodation in England, your landlord must fit an alarm in each room containing a gas or solid fuel appliance. In Wales, a landlord must fit a carbon monoxide alarm if a new solid fuel burning appliance is installed. The Rent Smart Wales Code of Practice for landlords recommends that carbon monoxide alarms should be provided in all rooms where a gas, oil or solid fuel appliance is present.

# Electrical safety

Most homes have lots of things plugged in. Making sure everything's being used safely can prevent a fire.

## Check the condition of your electrics

Keep an eye out for any fraying or exposed wires and any damaged appliances and sockets as they could be a fire hazard. Don't ignore warning signs such as burning smells, buzzing or crackling sounds, or fuses blowing.

## Don't overload sockets

Be careful not to overload sockets as this could start a fire. If you don't have enough sockets, you can use a bar adapter on a lead rather than a block adapter. But make sure you only put one plug in each socket for appliances that use a lot of power, such as a fridge or washing machine.

## Keep appliances out of the bathroom

Appliances such as hairdryers, heaters (unless fitted with a cord pull) and mains-powered radios shouldn't be used in the bathroom.

## Electric blankets

We all love to wrap up, especially over the winter, but electric blankets can be a hazard. You should check whether yours can definitely be left on overnight and look for any danger signs, such as fraying fabric or scorch marks. Never switch it on if you, or it, are wet and don't use it with a hot water bottle – however cold it is!

Get your electric blanket tested by an expert at least every three years and replace it every 10 years. The shop where you bought the blanket or your local Trading Standards office may be able to test it (page 63). Your local Age UK may also have a handyperson scheme that can help (page 56). In Wales, contact your local Age Cymru.



## Be careful with portable heaters

Avoid leaving your heater unattended and don't use it while you're sleeping. Keep your heater away from paper, furniture, clothing and curtains.



### If you have a power cut

Call **105** free of charge. You will be put through to your local electricity network operator who can give you help and advice. In Northern Ireland contact Northern Ireland electricity on **03457 643 643**.

## Sign up for priority services

Energy suppliers and distribution network operators have Priority Services Registers for people who need some extra help. This could be because you're over State Pension age or living with a long-term health condition or disability. You might need support temporarily after an injury or illness. If you sign up for priority services you may get extra support if there's a power cut.

Your distribution network operator is the company in charge of the electricity supply to your area. You can contact the Energy Networks Association (page 59) to find out who your network operator is.

To make sure you get as many of these services as possible, join both your supplier's register and your distribution network operator's register, as they may offer different things.

## Next steps



Contact Electrical Safety First (page 59) for more information on electrical safety or to find a registered electrician. Visit their website to download **Electrical safety in the home: A guide for older people and their relatives**.



## Securing your doors and windows

Some simple, and often inexpensive, precautions can really reduce the risk of your home being burgled and help you feel safe at home.

Fitting your doors and windows with good locks can really deter burglars – and even if they did try to break in, would make it much less likely they'd get in. If you live in rented accommodation, you can ask your landlord if they can help make your doors and windows more secure.

## Doors

- Make sure you have a lock that can only be unlocked with a key, even from the inside. Typically, this is a five-lever mortice deadlock with Kitemark BS 3621. You should get one of these on any back doors too.
- An automatic rim latch lock (sometimes called a night latch) can also be fitted to add an extra level of protection – these can be opened from the inside without a key.
- To make the doors more secure you can add locks such as hinge bolts.
- Many people also have a door chain fitted so they can see who's at the door without completely opening the door. It's a good idea not to leave the chain on all the time though if there's a chance carers, family members or emergency services may need to get in.
- Patio doors and french doors can sometimes be less secure, depending on their age and what they're made from, so get advice from a locksmith about what would work best.
- A peephole might be a good idea as it allows you to see who's on the doorstep before you open up.
- Are your door frames and hinges sturdy? This can really add to the overall strength of the door.
- Don't leave keys under doormats or in plant pots by the front door – burglars know where to look.
- You might want to fit a letter-box cage which can stop thieves tampering with locks through the letter box.
- If you have glass in your door, you could have this replaced with laminated glass or fit a film on the inside of the glass.

## Windows

- Fit window locks with keys to all downstairs windows and any others that are easy to reach, such as those above a flat roof or near a drain pipe.
- Keep window keys in a safe place, out of sight and reach to anyone peering in, but somewhere easy to get to in case of an emergency.

If you're having new windows fitted, make sure they come with good locks as it can be tricky to add better ones later.

Many burglaries are carried out by opportunists who see an open or unsecured window or door – so make sure you keep things locked when you pop out, even if it's just down the road. And if you have a carer, ask them to make sure they lock any windows and doors they've unlocked as they leave.

If you're out for the evening, leave a front or upstairs room light on and maybe leave the radio on so burglars think there's someone in.

## Next steps

If you need locks fitted or changed use a qualified locksmith. You can also check whether a locksmith is a member of the Master Locksmiths Association (MLA) by using their website or calling them to find a qualified locksmith (page 61).

For more advice and tips on keeping your home secure, contact your local Safer Neighbourhood Team (page 63) or check to see whether your regional police force has security tips on its website. In Northern Ireland, contact the Police Service of Northern Ireland (page 62).

# Safety at the door

Unexpected knocks at the door can be unsettling, especially if it ends up being someone you don't know.

Adding a peephole or chain to your door can help you stay in control. It's a good idea to make sure windows and back doors are locked when answering unexpected knocks at the door.

## Bogus callers

Bogus callers try and trick their way in to your home by pretending to be someone they aren't. They may pretend to be a meter reader, police officer, council or benefits official, or a person needing help. They may try to distract you or trick you into believing that they urgently need to come into your home. Any genuine person will have ID they won't mind showing you.

## Password schemes

Gas, electricity and water companies are all required to keep registers of customers who need extra support, such as older and disabled people. These are known as Priority Services Registers. If you join a register, you'll be offered special services such as a unique password you can use to verify the identity of a caller claiming to be from the company. This will give you peace of mind, knowing that they are genuine. A genuine caller should also show you an identification card.

## Ask the caller to come back another time

You can always ask someone to come back another time if you feel uneasy. You could ask them to get in touch to arrange a more convenient time. A genuine caller won't have a problem with you taking these precautions. You should be particularly careful if there's more than one person at the door.

If you're worried about a doorstep caller, call the police, your housing officer, the manager of your sheltered housing scheme or someone you trust. **Not sure? Don't open the door.**

## Rogue traders

Doorstep traders aren't always genuine or honest salespeople and can be quite pushy. Rogue traders may try to push you into agreeing to unnecessary home repairs or improvements, often at inflated prices.

It can feel difficult to get rid of doorstep traders unless you agree to sign up for whatever they're selling. But it's your doorstep and you're in control. Don't agree to anything, sign a contract or pay money until you have talked to someone else and never let anyone persuade you to go to your bank and withdraw cash. Above all, don't be afraid to ask a salesperson to leave. If they refuse, call the police.

Some areas operate a 'no cold-calling zone' where signs and stickers are put up around the area to show cold callers they aren't welcome. To find out about setting one up in your area contact your local Trading Standards Service (page 64).



In Northern Ireland, the Police Service has a Quick Check scheme with a freephone number to check whether a doorstep caller is authentic and to get support (page 62).

## Next steps



See our guide **Avoiding scams** for more information about the different types of common scams, including doorstep scams. If you think you've been a victim of a scam, contact Action Fraud for information and advice (page 57).

## Contact numbers

Write down the phone numbers of your local services in the space below so that they're handy if you need to check the identity of a doorstep caller. Find their details on a utility bill or online.

Electricity: .....

Gas: .....

Water: .....

Local council: .....

Local police station: 101 (if it's not urgent)

If you're suspicious, dial 999 and ask for the police.

Contact your utility companies and ask to join their Priority Services Register. Tell them what support you need, including a doorstep password scheme if you think this would be helpful – they should provide services that suit you.

**“I've put a sticker in the porch window to stop people knocking at the door trying to sell me things.”**

Liza, 70



# Boosting security around your home

As well as securing doors and windows, there are other measures you can take around your property to feel safer at home.

## Burglar alarm

A burglar alarm can warn you, and/or the police, if someone breaks in. There are lots of alarm types with different features, and costs vary.

What to consider if you're thinking about installing a burglar alarm:

- Ask the Safer Neighbourhood Team, or the Crime Prevention Officer, (page 63) at your nearest police station for advice before you buy an alarm. The Safer Neighbourhood team works with local people to make the area safer.
- Get at least three quotes and specialist advice from alarm companies before you have one installed.
- Ask your insurance company if it recommends any alarm companies or how an alarm needs to be maintained. Some companies offer a discount on your home contents insurance if you have an approved alarm installed.
- Get professional help to install the alarm and check they are approved by the National Security Inspectorate (NSI) (page 61) or the Security Systems and Alarms Inspection Board (SSAIB) (page 63).





## Lights

Outdoor lights make it easier for you to get to the front door and find your keys when it's dark. They also act as a deterrent to any would-be-burglar. If you decide to get a motion-activated light, make sure you position it with your neighbours in mind.

## Next steps

Visit the Secured by Design website for more information on home security and licensed security products (page 63).

Make sure you also secure any garages, sheds and passageways outside your home.

- Garages and sheds can be full of expensive tools, some of which a burglar could then use to break into your home. Make sure that garage doors are solid and fitted with good locks.
- Fit a strong, lockable gate to any passageways at the side and back of your home. If you share a passageway with a neighbour, discuss it with them first.
- Metal side and driveway gates are helpful as they allow intruders to be seen.
- Put up a strong fence or plant a prickly hedge to make sure thieves can't get into your garden.
- Fix trellising or anti-climb tops to any fences, gates or walls to make it harder for burglars to climb over.
- Consider gravel driveways and paths, which can make it harder for burglars to approach silently.

There may be a Home Improvement Agency (HIA) in your area that could help with costs or organising the work (page 59), so it's definitely worth checking. If you're disabled, you might be eligible for a Disabled Facilities Grant, which is offered by local councils to help fund changes to your home – give them a call to find out.



In Wales, contact Care & Repair Cymru. In Northern Ireland, you may be able to apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant by contacting the Occupational Therapy Department at your local Health and Social Care Trust.

# Neighbourhood Watch

Neighbourhood Watch schemes are voluntary groups of local people that work in partnership with the police, local councils and other agencies that help keep the community safe.

They can offer valuable neighbourly help and advice and give you peace of mind. Members of Neighbourhood Watch might:

- watch out for neighbours who are older or vulnerable
- keep an eye on neighbours' homes when they're away
- receive local police updates and information
- share crime-prevention advice in the community.

**“It’s nice knowing the community are looking out for each other.”**

Tina, 68



## Next steps



Read **Neighbourhood Watch’s Members’ Guide** for more tips and advice about preventing crime and keeping safe. Ask your local Safer Neighbourhood Team or look on the Neighbourhood Watch website to see if there’s a scheme in your area (pages 62 and 63). If there isn’t, why not help to set one up? In Northern Ireland, contact your local neighbourhood police by calling 101.



## Insurance

Good insurance cover helps put your mind at ease. If the worst happens and anything's stolen or damaged, you won't need to fork out to replace it.

If you already have home insurance, make sure it completely covers your needs. If you're looking for a new policy, compare quotes from different companies to make sure you're getting the best deal possible. You can compare quotes online. If you're not online, is there a friend or relative that could help you check? They may even find they could save money themselves.

Lots of insurance companies offer lower premiums to people with good home security, for example if you have a burglar alarm or locks on your windows. You may also get a discount if you're a member of a Neighbourhood Watch scheme (page 62).

## Next steps

The Money Advice Service (page 61) provides information and advice about getting the best insurance deal. Some companies tailor their products for older people.

## Marking possessions

If your things are stolen, the police are more likely to find and return them if you've marked them with your postcode and the number of your house or flat, or the first two letters of its name.

There are different ways to mark possessions. You can use a permanent marker or a more subtle security pen that can only be read under ultraviolet (UV) light. This works well for things such as electronics, but speak to an expert before marking any items that are particularly valuable such as antiques or specialist items.

You can also take pictures of valuable items and write down the serial numbers of any electrical equipment so, in the event it's stolen, this information can help police return any recovered items to you.

You can also register any valuable possessions online for free on the Immobilise Property Register (page 60). This website helps police identify owners of lost or stolen property.

### Next steps



Ask your local Neighbourhood Watch group or Safer Neighbourhood Team (pages 62 and 63) for more information on marking possessions.



## Staying safe when you're out and about

As we get older we tend to feel a little more vulnerable when we're out and about. Though crimes in public are rare, the thought can leave us feeling worried and put us off doing things.

### Out of the house

Going out can feel daunting, whether it be worrying about your valuables, getting around or it all just feeling a bit much sometimes.

The tips on the following pages should help you feel more confident when you're out of the house.

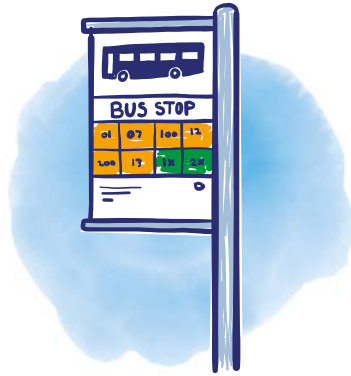
## In the street

- Keep valuables, such as a mobile phone, out of sight.
- Don't carry around large sums of money. If your pension is paid straight into your bank or Post Office card account, you don't have to withdraw it all in one go.
- Before you use a cash machine, check that no one's hovering behind you. Some people are more comfortable using a cash machine that's inside a bank. Always safeguard your Personal Identification Number (PIN).
- Keep your handbag in sight all the time.
- If someone tries to snatch your bag, it may be best to let them take it rather than trying to fight back.
- If you use a wheelchair, you could keep your belongings beside you rather than hanging them on the back of the chair.
- Consider planning your route before you leave home and stick to busy, well-lit areas.
- If you think you're being followed, keep moving and head for a busy area or go into the nearest shop. Tell someone what's happening or call the police.
- If there's an emergency, shout loudly to get someone's attention. You could also think about carrying a personal attack alarm.

**“I always go into the bank to get money out. I don't like doing it on the street.”**

Mick, 74





### On public transport

- If someone makes you feel uncomfortable, move away.
- Try to wait for public transport in busy, well-lit areas.
- You may feel safer if you sit near other people. If you're on the bus or train and there aren't many people about, sit near the driver. Try to be near the bell or emergency alarm.

### In taxis

- Keep the number of a reliable, licensed taxi company handy. Find a company you trust and feel comfortable with.
- Book a taxi before you go out. When it arrives, check it's the one you ordered before you get in. If you're in any doubt, ask the driver to tell you the name of the person who booked it.
- Sit behind the driver on the back seat and if you feel uneasy, ask to be dropped off somewhere you know that's busy and well lit.

**"I always use the same taxi firm. They know me now and usually send the same driver to take me to the doctor's."**

Helen, 83





## When you're driving

- Before setting off, plan your route and make sure that you have enough petrol. You could tell someone where you're going and how long you expect the journey to take.
- Think about what you would do if you broke down. For example, do you carry a mobile phone you could use in an emergency? If it's cold, it's a good idea to have a blanket and some warm clothes in case you have to wait for help to come.
- Try to park in busy, well-lit areas. If you park in the daylight, think about what the area will be like after dark.
- When you're driving, keep valuables and personal possessions out of sight and doors locked. When you leave the car, make sure you remove any valuables and lock the doors.
- Consider joining a roadside assistance scheme for extra peace of mind, should you break down. Prices vary, so shop around to find the best deal. Call different companies for quotes, check their prices online or try looking at price comparison websites.



## Mobile phones

If you have a mobile phone, it's worth taking steps to prevent it from being stolen and to protect yourself if it does.

- Add a passcode or PIN. This can be done in your phone security settings and means if someone does get hold of your phone then they won't be able to get into it.
- It's a good idea to make sure your phone is charged when you go out and about or drive somewhere, just in case there's a problem.
- Avoid using your phone in crowded places or when walking down the street and try not to leave it in your back pocket or an unzipped section of your bag.
- If your phone is stolen, get in touch with your network as soon as possible so they can block it. Then report it to the police too.
- Ask your mobile phone provider for your registration number (IMEI). You can also get it by typing in `*#06#` on your mobile phone keypad – your IMEI number will appear on your screen. It's worth taking a note of it, along with your mobile phone number, so if your phone is stolen you can pass these details on to your network and the police.
- Register your phone for free on the Immobilise Property Register (page 60).

## Going on holiday

To a burglar, milk bottles on the doorstep or a newspaper sticking out of the letter box are invitations to break in. Here are some tips to help you enjoy your holiday without worrying.

- Is there someone you trust to could keep an eye on things while you're away? Perhaps they could also collect your post, draw your curtains, water your plants and switch lights on and off.
- Cancel milk, newspapers and other regular deliveries.
- Don't completely close curtains or blinds as they are a giveaway during the day.
- Plug a lamp into a timed switch so it turns on in the evenings while you're away. However, try not to leave it in a room that passers-by can see into when the light is on.
- Don't display your home address on the outside of your luggage and don't leave your luggage in view in the car or at home.
- If you have a garden and are going to be away a while, it might be worth mowing the lawn before you go.
- Check your building and home contents insurance is up to date and current while you're away.
- If you know you're going to be away for some time or there's not someone that can pick up your post, you can register with the Royal Mail Keepsafe service (page 63). Your letters and parcels are safely stored at your local delivery office for up to two months and are then delivered to you when you're back.
- Try not to mention the specifics of your holiday on social networking sites before you go. You don't want everyone knowing when your house will be empty.



## Staying safe online

The internet can make our lives easier, and these days it seems you can do anything online. However, it can seem like a bit of a minefield at times, and you may be worried about keeping your details safe while you're browsing online.

If you'd like to get online but you don't know where to start, you should contact your local Age UK or Online Centres Network (page 62) to see what help's available locally.

### Good to know



You might come across some new terms in this section. If you're not sure what they mean see our glossary on pages 50-52.

# How to recognise dodgy emails

We've all been there, wondering if an email's safe to open, whether the sender is genuine and feeling the panic set in when you think you may have been caught out.

These tips will help you know what to look out for:

- Does the email have errors in its spelling or grammar, or is it written in an unusual style?
- Even if an email address looks official, from the bank or HMRC, it may not be genuine. If you have a funny feeling it's not, then contact the organisation and check. Don't use the contact details in the email you've been sent.
- Does it use your proper name, or does it start with a general greeting like 'Dear customer'?
- Is there a sense of urgency, threatening that unless you act now a deal will expire or your account closed?
- Be aware that you can be taken to a fake website even if the link appears to be correct. It's probably best to just avoid the link and search the website for yourself so you know it's OK.
- Is the sender requesting personal information, such as your username, password or bank details?
- Does the email ask for money, for someone in need or claiming you've won a cash prize?
- Is there something to open with either no message or text saying 'Check this out' or 'See what I found' without explanation?

To confuse things more, these emails may even come from an email address that you recognise, such as a friend or family member. This can happen when someone's account is hacked. If you receive something and it seems suspicious or out of character, give the person a ring just to see if they sent it.

# Spam

Spam, or junk mail, is usually from a person or organisation trying to sell something – usually something you have no interest in and have not signed up to receive information about.

Common types of spam include:

- advertisements from a company
- an email telling you about a scheme to make you rich
- an email warning you of a virus
- an email encouraging you to send the email onto more people.

Most email providers have spam filters that block emails from untrustworthy sources automatically, so you don't have to worry about them too much but it's good to know what to look out for.

**“Some of these dodgy emails seem so real. My friend lost a lot of money. It's better to be safe than sorry.”**

Therese, 80



# What to do if you receive a suspicious email

- It's always better to be safe than sorry with these things, so if you're not sure just delete it without opening it.
- If an email contains a link or attachment then don't open it unless you're certain it's safe.
- Don't reply to spam or suspicious emails, even just to say 'no', as this shows the sender your email address is active and they'll probably be in touch again.
- Your bank and any other financial institutions won't ever ask for personal information or your PIN over email. If you receive an email claiming to be from the bank, contact your bank directly by phoning them or typing their web address into your browser (not by following the link in the email).
- If it's about account information, phone the organisation directly to ask about the email, using the phone number found on their official website.
- Don't panic if there's a sense of urgency in the email, this is exactly what the sender wants you to do. Take time to properly check the email first.
- Report any suspicious emails to Action Fraud (page 57).

## Next steps

Visit the 'Protecting Yourself' section on the Get Safe Online website for more information and tips on email scams (page 60). Learn My Way also offer free online courses, including email basics and how to identify email scams (page 61).



## Online shopping and banking

Being able to do the shopping and keep an eye on your money from the comfort and safety of your own home is really handy. More and more of us are doing it, and it's particularly helpful if you find it difficult to get out and about.

However, as with anything when you're transferring money over the internet, it comes with certain risks. But using a website that's secure when entering card information ensures your information can't be read by anyone else.

### What's a secure website?

The website address should begin with 'https://'. The 's' stands for 'secure'.

If the address bar – the bit that contains the website that runs across the top of your browser – is green, this is an extra sign that you're using a safe website.

You should also look out for a padlock symbol in the browser next to the website address – but don't be fooled by a padlock on the actual webpage. Websites that offer secure payments and other financial transactions, such as banking, need a security certificate. To view it, you can click on the padlock symbol in the address bar to check they are who they say there are. The certificate should be up to date and registered to the right address. However, the padlock isn't an absolute guarantee of safety, so be cautious if you still have any doubts.



## Tips for shopping and banking online safely

- If a deal looks too good to be true, it probably is. Be cautious of anything offered in an email you didn't ask for.
- Use a strong password (see page 44 for more information).
- You'll never be asked for your card PIN (Person Identification Number) but you'll probably be asked for the security number for your debit or credit card, referred to as 'CVV', 'CVC' or 'CVV2' (Card Verification Value). This is the three digits on the back of your card (if you have an American Express card, the CVV is 4 digits and is on the front of your card).
- If you get a pop-up message warning you about a website's security certificate, it's likely a scam. If you click on it, you'll likely be redirected to a fake website, designed to let somebody else read the information you are sending.
- Stick with online retailers that have a good reputation, either as high street shops or as established online stores. Plenty of online retailers have reviews from previous customers you can read before buying anything.
- Check where the seller is located. Just because the web address has 'uk' in it, it doesn't mean they're based in the UK. If you buy from a seller or company based outside the EU, it can be more difficult to enforce your rights and harder to sort any problems. By law the seller must provide their full contact details.
- Watch out for added or hidden costs, such as VAT or additional postage for overseas transactions. To find more information on buying from sellers based in other EU countries visit the UK European Consumer Centre website (page 64).

- Using a credit card for internet transactions adds additional protection. You can also check to see if your debit card provider offers any protection. If your purchase costs more than £100 and you use a credit card, the seller and your card company are equally responsible if anything goes wrong. Be aware that there is sometimes a card handling fee when you pay with your credit card so check how much this is.
- Check if your bank offers free anti-virus software or browser security products.
- Always make sure you log out from any accounts so no one that uses the computer after you can access any of your information.



## Next steps

See our guide **Avoiding scams** for information on how to protect yourself.

Learn My Way offers free online courses, including getting started with online shopping, online payment methods and consumer rights (page 61).

# Social networking

Social networking websites are online communities where you can create a profile describing yourself, exchange public and private messages and join groups that interest you.

They're a great way to keep in touch with family and friends, make new friends, share your photos, play games, find out about events and much more. Facebook ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)) and Twitter ([www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)) are among the most popular.

These guidelines can help you stay safe:

- Think about who you want to see your profile. By default, your profile is likely to be public, meaning anyone can see it, but you can usually change your settings to make it private.
- It's usually best to avoid posting personal information such as phone numbers, your home address or date of birth as this is usually how scammers can get in touch with you.
- If possible, pick a username that doesn't include any personal information. For example, avoid using 'annajones1947'.
- Use a strong password that is different from the passwords you use for other accounts (see page 45).
- Be cautious if people you've just met online ask you to reveal personal information or who want to meet you very quickly.
- Be on your guard against phishing scams.

## Next steps

Visit the Get Safe Online website (page 60) for more information about using social networking sites securely.

# Passwords

Setting up strong passwords is probably the simplest, most effective thing you can do to stay safe when you're on the internet.

## Avoid weak passwords

Weak passwords are made up of common words, numbers or keyboard patterns. Some examples of weak passwords that are used a lot include:

- password
- 123456
- qwerty
- password1

## Choose a strong password

A strong password should:

- be at least 8 characters long (preferably 12)
- include a combination of upper and lower case letters
- include some numbers and keyboard symbols such as & or !
- not include personal information, such as your name, date of birth or any family member's details.
- not include common words like 'password'
- not be too difficult to remember.

If passwords with numbers and symbols are too hard to remember, using three random words together can make a stronger password, as long as those words don't contain your personal information.

## Choose different passwords

Use different passwords for different websites or accounts. It can be tricky to remember lots of different ones, but having one password for all accounts isn't a great idea because if a stranger gets access to (or hacks) your account on one site, they'll be able to log in to all your accounts.

## Be careful writing down your passwords

Never write down your password. If you need a written reminder, try to write a hint that only you'll understand, rather than the actual password.

If you do write anything down, keep that information somewhere safe and away from your computer.

## Password managers

Some internet browsers have built-in password managers. This is a tool that remembers your passwords for different sites and fills them in for you automatically when you need them.

When you log in to a website for the first time, the password manager will ask if you want it to remember the password. You have the choice if you want it to or not. It can save time to use this function, but it only works on your own computer.

Your login details will be available to anyone you share the computer with so make sure it's only shared with people you trust – and don't use the password manager anywhere public, like the library.

## Next steps



Visit the 'Protecting Yourself' section on the Get Safe Online website for more tips on choosing a strong password and keeping your passwords safe (page 60).

# Protect your computer

Everyone worries about getting a virus on their computer. But the tips below will help protect your computer from harmful types of malware and viruses.

## Install anti-virus software

Viruses are malicious programs that can spread from one computer to another by email or through websites. They can display unwanted pop-up messages, slow your computer down and even delete files.

Anti-virus software helps to find, stop and remove these malicious viruses. The type of software you'll need depends on your computer and whether it uses Windows or Apple software.

## Install anti-spyware software

Spyware is an unwanted program that runs on your computer. It allows unwanted adverts to pop up, tracks your online activities and can even scan your computer for private data such as credit card numbers. It can make your computer slow and unreliable and make you a target for online criminals. By installing anti-spyware software, you can reduce the chances of this happening.

**“I couldn't get my head round all of this. But I went on a local course and now I can use my computer to do all sorts.”**

Dev, 74



## Keep your operating system updated

The operating system is the main software program on your computer, it manages all the other programs on it – the most common systems are Microsoft Windows and Apple’s Mac OS. Whichever operating system you have, keep it updated to give yourself the best protection. You should receive notifications when new updates are available but you can also update your software manually.

## Protect your wireless network

If you use wireless internet at home, you will have a wireless router. You need to protect your wireless network (also known as Wi-Fi) so that people living nearby can’t access it. Read the instructions that come with your router to find out how to set up a ‘key’ – a type of password – so that no one else can access the internet through your router.

## Good to know



It may seem like you need a lot of software to protect yourself from online risks, but it’s actually very easy. You can buy a complete package that includes everything you need, or get effective free software such as AVG ([www.free.avg.com](http://www.free.avg.com)) or Avast ([www.avast.com](http://www.avast.com)). These work on both Windows computers and Apple computers.

Online threats change constantly so once your software is installed, keep it up to date to ensure you have the highest level of protection.

## Computer scams

Beware of a common scam. Fraudsters phone you claiming to be from a well-known IT firm, asking you to follow a few simple instructions to get rid of a virus, update your software or fix another issue with your computer. If you do as they ask, they will upload software called spyware onto your computer, which allows them to access any personal details you have stored on your computer.

Legitimate IT companies never contact customers in this way. Never respond to a phone call from someone claiming that your computer has a virus. If you get a call like this, hang up straight away.

## Report a computer scam

You can report a computer scam to Action Fraud (page 58).

See our guide **Avoiding scams** for more information on different types of scams and how to avoid them.

**“Dad’s memory isn’t the best and I’m really worried about him getting scammed online.”**

Bethan, 44



## Next steps



You can find step-by-step explanations and advice on protecting your computer on the Get Safe Online website (page 60).



# Protect your tablet and your mobile phone

You can check emails, shop and bank online or explore the internet on tablets (e.g. iPad) and smartphones so they need protecting too. Start by password-protecting any devices.

You can download anti-virus and anti-spyware protection for tablets and phones. These are often referred to as apps (applications), which is just another term for software. The best protection for your device depends on the type of phone or tablet you have, but you could pop into a phone or electronics shop or have a look online for more information. A lot of good anti-virus protection for phones and tablets is free.

Some highly rated anti-virus apps, which are free, are:

- Avast mobile security ([www.avast.com](http://www.avast.com))
- Kaspersky internet security ([www.kaspersky.co.uk](http://www.kaspersky.co.uk))
- Norton mobile security ([www.uk.norton.com/norton-mobile-security](http://www.uk.norton.com/norton-mobile-security))

These apps work on phones and tablets that use Windows, Android and Apple products but it's a good idea to keep them updated.

## Next steps

Visit Get Safe Online to find more information on protecting your smartphone or tablet (page 60). See our guide **Avoiding scams** for information on telephone scams, including text messages.

# Glossary

## Anti-spyware

Helps protect your computer against pop-ups, slow performance and security threats caused by spyware and other unwanted software.

## Anti-virus

Software that detects and prevents known viruses from attacking your computer.

## Apps (applications)

A type of program that you can download for your computer, tablet or mobile phone. There are hundreds of different apps available, some for free. They do lots of different things, from playing games and puzzles, to helping you remember to take your medications, or allowing you to access your bank account.

## Attachment

Files, such as photos, documents or programs that are sent along with an email.



## **Browser**

The computer software or app you use to access the internet. Examples include Internet Explorer, Google Chrome and Safari.

## **Hack**

An attempt to gain unauthorised access to a computer or account.

## **Malware**

Malware is short for 'malicious software'. A general term used to refer to hostile or intrusive software.

## **Operating system**

The software that manages different programs on a computer.

## **Phishing**

An attempt at identity theft in which criminals direct users to a counterfeit website to trick them into disclosing private information, such as usernames or passwords.

## **Pop-up**

A small window that suddenly appears (or 'pops up') on a webpage, usually an advertisement or alert. Some are genuine, others aren't.

## **Profile**

A description that may include your personal details and is used to identify you on a social networking website. This can be set as public (viewed by everyone) or private (only viewed by certain people).

## **Router**

A device that connects your computer to a broadband-enabled telephone line and emits your home internet signal.

## **Smartphone**

A mobile phone which, as well as making calls and sending texts, can connect to the internet, send emails, and do a number of other functions like a computer.

## Social networking website

An online community where you can connect with friends, family and other people who share your interests.

## Spam

A commercial email that you did not request, also known as junk mail.

## Spyware

An unwanted program that runs on your computer, which can make it slow and unreliable or even make you a target for online criminals.

## Tablet

A larger handheld device with a touchscreen which can connect to the internet and be used as a portable computer. For example, an iPad.

## Viruses

Programs that spread from one computer to another by email or through malicious websites. They can slow your computer down, display unwanted pop-up messages and even delete files.

## Wireless network

Also known as Wi-Fi, this is a way for your computer to connect to the internet without using wires or cables.



# What to do if you're a victim of crime

Call the police as soon as you can. You can call 101 to report a crime if you don't need an emergency response.

- If you think you've been a victim of a fraud or a scam contact Action Fraud (page 57).
- If you think you've been burgled when you get home, don't go inside unless you're sure the intruder has gone. Call the police straight away.
- After the police have gone, make a list of missing items and contact your insurance company. If they ask you for the crime reference number, you should be able to get it from the police.
- If you lose a set of keys, get your locks changed.
- Cancel any stolen bank cards as soon as possible – the phone number should be on your bank statement or on any cash machine belonging to your bank.

## Good to know



The Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) compensates victims of crime who have been injured or traumatised – it doesn't replace stolen items (page 58).

Victim Support (page 64) can provide information about compensation schemes and explain your options. It also gives free practical and emotional support to people who have experienced crime and runs a witness service to help people who are going to court.



## Staying safe – a checklist

There's a lot of information in this guide, and while it will all help you stay safe, there are some key things that are a great place to start.

- Keep an eye out for clutter and trip hazards around the house to help make sure you don't have a fall.
- Get your smoke alarms and boiler/gas appliances checked to make sure they're all working safely.
- Keep all windows and doors locked and bolted (where possible) while you're out or overnight.
- If you have one, set your burglar alarm every time you go out. And if you don't have one, consider whether you should get one fitted?
- When you lock up at night, keep the keys to hand (but out of sight) so that you can get out easily if you need to.

- If you're not sure who's at the door or feel uneasy then don't feel pressured to open it. Never let a stranger into your home unless you're confident you know what they want and are who they say they are.
- Cancel milk and regular deliveries before going away.
- Leave some lights on when you go out at night or set a timer switch, if you have one.
- Speak to your local Safer Neighbourhood team or Neighbourhood Watch group about any worries.
- Be careful of your valuables and your surroundings when you're out.
- Set strong passwords for any online accounts.
- Look out for the signs an email might not be genuine and always be careful opening any links or attachments (it's usually best not to).
- Install anti-virus and anti-spyware software on your computer and electronic devices.
- Don't give out personal details when using the internet.

**“No one should feel unsafe in their own home. Small changes can make a big difference.”**

Gillian, 84



# Useful organisations

## Age UK

We provide advice and information for people in later life through our Age UK Advice line, publications and online.

**Age UK Advice: 0800 169 65 65**

Lines are open seven days a week from 8am to 7pm.

**[www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)**

Call Age UK Advice to find out whether there is a local Age UK near you, and to order free copies of our information guides and factsheets.

In Wales, contact Age Cymru: **0800 022 3444**

**[www.agecymru.org.uk](http://www.agecymru.org.uk)**

In Northern Ireland, contact Age NI: **0808 808 7575**

**[www.ageni.org](http://www.ageni.org)**

In Scotland, contact Age Scotland: **0800 124 4222**

**[www.agescotland.org.uk](http://www.agescotland.org.uk)**



## Action Fraud

National reporting centre for fraud and internet crime. Call the helpline for advice on preventing fraud and what to do if you fall victim to it, or use the online fraud reporting service.

Tel: **0300 123 2040**

Textphone: **0300 123 2050**

**[www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk)**

## Action on Hearing Loss

Provides advice and support for people who are deaf or hard of hearing through an information line, tinnitus helpline and range of factsheets.

Tel: **0808 808 0123**

Textphone: **0808 808 9000**

**[www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk](http://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk)**

## Citizens Advice

National network of advice centres offering free, confidential and independent advice, face to face or by telephone.

In Wales there is a national phone service on **0344 477 2020**.

It is available in some parts of England on **0344 411 1444**.

For online information and to find details of your nearest Citizens Advice in:

England: **[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)**

Wales: **[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales)**

## **Citizens Advice Consumer Service**

Provides information and advice on consumer issues by telephone and online. Offers tips on recognising email scams.

Tel: **0345 404 0506**

(**0345 404 0505** for a Welsh-speaking adviser)

**[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer)**

In Northern Ireland, contact Consumerline

Tel: **0300 123 6262**

**[www.nidirect.gov.uk/consumerline](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/consumerline)**

## **Compensation Services**

Supports the victims of violent crime in Northern Ireland by providing compensation.

Tel: **0300 200 7887**

**[www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/justice-and-law/compensation-services](http://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/justice-and-law/compensation-services)**

## **Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA)**

Can compensate people who have been physically or mentally injured by a violent crime in England, Scotland or Wales.

Tel: **0300 003 3601**

**[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/criminal-injuries-compensation-authority](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/criminal-injuries-compensation-authority)**

## **Digital Unite**

Helps older people learn about computers and the internet. It has a network of tutors across the UK who offer one-to-one tuition for a fee. There are also useful step-by-step instructions for using the internet and computer on its website.

Tel: **0800 228 9272**

**[www.digitalunite.com](http://www.digitalunite.com)**

## **Disabled Living Foundation**

Provides impartial advice on products and equipment that help with daily living.

Tel: **0300 999 0004**

**[www.dlf.org.uk](http://www.dlf.org.uk)**

## Electrical Safety First

Provides free guides and advice on electrical safety in the home and garden.

Tel: **020 3463 5100**

**[www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk](http://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk)**

## Energy Networks Association

Contact them to find out who your network operator is.

Tel: **020 7706 5100**

**[www.energynetworks.org](http://www.energynetworks.org)**

## Foundations

National body for Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs), with a website you can use to find your nearest one in England. Home improvement agencies provide support for vulnerable homeowners and tenants to help them undertake adaptations, repairs and improvements to their home.

Tel: **0300 124 0315**

**[www.foundations.uk.com](http://www.foundations.uk.com)**

In Wales, contact Care & Repair Cymru

Tel: **0300 111 3333**

**[www.careandrepair.org.uk](http://www.careandrepair.org.uk)**

## Gas Safe Register

Provides help and advice on gas safety. They maintain the register of individuals and businesses who meet strict health and safety standards to install or repair gas appliances. You can check if an engineer is on the register by visiting the website or by calling the free consumer helpline. All registered engineers carry an official photo ID card which displays their engineer's licence number and qualifications.

Tel: **0800 408 5500**

Textphone: **0800 408 0606**

**[www.gassaferegister.co.uk](http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk)**

## Get Safe Online

Free advice about using the internet safely.

[www.getsafeonline.org](http://www.getsafeonline.org)

## GOV.UK

Government website offering practical information and advice to the public.

[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

In Wales, visit GOV.Wales at [www.gov.wales](http://www.gov.wales)

In Northern Ireland, visit NI Direct at [www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk)

## Handyperson scheme

Over 70 local Age UKs operate handyperson services across much of the country. These services offer older people extra help with small practical jobs – from putting up curtain rails to installing energy efficient light bulbs or putting on a door chain. These are usually charged-for services, and the cost will depend on the nature of the work required. To find out details of your local Age UK, please call Age UK Advice on **0800 169 65 65**.

## Heating Equipment Testing and Approval Scheme (HETAS)

The official body for approving solid fuel appliances has a register of installers, chimney sweeps and servicers.

Tel: **01684 278 170**

[www.hetas.co.uk](http://www.hetas.co.uk)

## Immobilise

Online tool for consumers and businesses to register their possessions. The Police use it to trace lost and stolen items.

[www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com)

## Information Commissioner's Office

Provides information about data protection.

Tel: **0303 123 1113**

[www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)

## **Learn My Way**

A website of free online courses for beginners on using a computer, browsing the internet, sending an email and finding work online.

**[www.learnmyway.com](http://www.learnmyway.com)**

## **Master Locksmiths Association (MLA)**

The professional body of locksmiths. Produces a list of members, available free of charge.

Tel: **01327 262 255**

**[www.locksmiths.co.uk](http://www.locksmiths.co.uk)**

## **Money Advice Service**

Gives impartial information about financial products and services and offers tips on everyday money management.

Tel: **0800 138 7777**

**[www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk](http://www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk)**

## **National Association for Professional Inspectors and Testers (NAPIT)**

Can provide details of qualified electricians and installers.

Tel: **0345 543 0330**

**[www.napit.org.uk](http://www.napit.org.uk)**

## **National Grid Gas Emergency Number**

If you smell gas, call the 24-hour gas emergency number.

Tel: **0800 111 999**

Textphone: **0800 371 787**

## **National Security Inspectorate (NSI)**

The certification body for the security and fire protection sectors in the UK.

Tel: **02890 243133**

**[www.nsi.org.uk](http://www.nsi.org.uk)**

## Neighbourhood Watch

Neighbourhood Watch schemes are self-help groups that work in partnership with the police, local councils and other agencies involved in community safety to prevent crime. They can offer help and advice.

Tel: **0116 402 6111**

**[www.ourwatch.org.uk](http://www.ourwatch.org.uk)**

## Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service

Offers free home fire-safety checks in Northern Ireland.

Tel: **028 9266 4221**

**[www.nifrs.org](http://www.nifrs.org)**

## Online Centres Network

Provides access to computers and the internet, and helps people gain basic digital skills. Use the 'find a centre' facility to locate your nearest Online Centre.

Tel: **0114 349 1666**

**[www.onlinecentresnetwork.org](http://www.onlinecentresnetwork.org)**

## Police.UK

For non-emergency information and advice in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.

Tel: **101**

**[www.police.uk](http://www.police.uk)**

## Police Service of Northern Ireland

Provides free online information about crime prevention. Also has a Quick Check helpline for those at risk to check whether a doorstep caller is authentic and to give advice and support.

Tel: **101** for general enquiries and non-emergencies

Quick Check: **0800 013 2290**

**[www.psni.police.uk](http://www.psni.police.uk)**

### **RNIB (Royal National Institute of Blind People)**

Has information on lighting in the home and advice about sight loss.

Tel: **0303 123 9999**

**[www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)**

### **RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents)**

Provides detailed advice on specific safety problems.

Tel: **0121 248 2000**

**[www.rospa.com](http://www.rospa.com)**

### **Royal Mail Keepsafe**

Tel: **03457 740 740**

Textphone: **03456 000 606**

**[www.royalmail.com/keepsafe](http://www.royalmail.com/keepsafe)**

### **Safer Neighbourhood Team**

Can provide free crime prevention advice and arrange to assess security in your home. Contact your local Safer Neighbourhood team at your nearest police station for more information.

**[www.police.uk](http://www.police.uk)**

### **Secured by Design**

Security products that are licensed by Secured by Design have passed police standards and tests.

**[www.securedbydesign.com](http://www.securedbydesign.com)**

### **Security Systems and Alarms Inspection Board (SSAIB)**

Responsible for certifying organisations who provide security systems, fire alarms and telecare services. An online search service allows you to search for a SSAIB-approved organisation in your local area.

**[www.ssaib.org/security-provider-search](http://www.ssaib.org/security-provider-search)**

## Trading Standards Institute

National consumer helpline for help and advice, or to make a complaint. Online search directory to find an approved trader.

Tel: **0345 404 0506**

**[www.tradingstandards.uk/consumers](http://www.tradingstandards.uk/consumers)**

In Wales, visit **[www.tradingstandardswales.org.uk](http://www.tradingstandardswales.org.uk)**

## TrustMark

Government-backed scheme to help you find reliable tradespeople.

Tel: **0333 555 1234**

**[www.trustmark.org.uk](http://www.trustmark.org.uk)**

## UK European Consumer Centre

The UK European Consumer Centre provides advice on sorting out problems with traders based in other EU countries.

Tel: **01268 886 690**

**[www.ukecc.net](http://www.ukecc.net)**

## UK Fire Service

Provides information on fire safety and the UK Fire and Rescue Service. The website contains a directory of all the fire and rescue services in the UK.

**[www.fireservice.co.uk](http://www.fireservice.co.uk)**

## Victim Support

Charity that provides free and confidential help to victims and witnesses of crime in England and Wales.

Tel: **0808 168 9111**

**[www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)**

In Northern Ireland, contact Victim Support NI

Tel: **028 9024 4039**

**[www.victimsupportni.co.uk](http://www.victimsupportni.co.uk)**





# Can you help Age UK?

If you would like to, please complete the donation form below with a gift and return to: **Freepost Age UK REPLY**. Alternatively, you can phone 0800 169 87 87 or visit [www.ageuk.org.uk/donate](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/donate). If you prefer, you can donate directly to one of our national or local partners. Thank you.

## Your details

AGUK0081 MxAQ-19CA05-C028

Title:  Forename:  Surname:

Home address:

Postcode:

We'd<sup>†</sup> like to let you know about the vital work we do for older people, our fundraising appeals and opportunities to support us, as well as the Age UK products and services you can buy. We will never sell your data and we promise to keep your details safe and secure.

I **do not** wish to receive communications by post.

You can change your mind at any time by phoning **0800 169 87 87** or writing to Supporter Services at the registered address below. For further details on how your data is used and stored: [www.ageuk.org.uk/help/privacy-policy](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/help/privacy-policy)

## Your gift

I would like to make a gift of £:

I enclose a cheque/postal order made payable to Age UK, **or**

**Card payment** I wish to pay by (please tick):

MasterCard  Visa  CAF CharityCard  Maestro

Card number  Expiry date

Signature

**Gift Aid declaration**  Yes, I want Age UK and its partner organisations\* to treat all donations I have made for the four years prior to this year, and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations. I am a UK tax payer and understand that if I pay less income tax and/or capital gains tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference. Today's date \* Age Cymru, Age Scotland and Age NI. **Please ensure you provide your full name and address**, and let us know if you wish to cancel your declaration, or if your tax status, name or address changes.

<sup>†</sup> We, includes the charity, its charitable and trading subsidiaries, and national charities (Age Cymru, Age Scotland and Age NI). Age UK is a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in England (registered charity number 1128267 and registered company number 6825798). The registered address is Tavis House, 1-6 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9NA. **Age UK provides a range of services and your gift will go wherever the need is the greatest.**

# Help us be there for someone else

We hope you found this guide helpful. When times are tough, it's so important to get some support. Did you know you could help us reach someone else who needs a little help? Here's how:

1

## Give your views on guides like this

Our Readers' Panel helps make sure the information we produce is right for older people and their families. We'd love you to join. Go to [www.ageuk.org.uk/publications/readers-panel](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/publications/readers-panel).

2

## Donate to us

Every donation we receive helps us be there for someone when they need us. To make a donation, call us on **0800 169 8787** or go to [www.ageuk.org.uk/donate](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/donate).

3

## Volunteer with us

Our volunteers make an incredible difference to people's lives. Get involved by contacting your local Age UK or at [www.ageuk.org.uk/volunteer](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/volunteer).

4

## Campaign with us

We campaign to make life better for older people, and rely on the help of our strong network of campaigners. Add your voice to our latest campaigns at [www.ageuk.org.uk/campaigns](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/campaigns).

5

## Remember us in your will

A gift to Age UK in your will is a very special way of helping older people get expert support in the years to come. Find out more by calling **020 3033 1421** or visit [www.ageuk.org.uk/legacy](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/legacy).

# What should I do now?

You may want to read some of our other relevant guides, such as:

- **Avoiding scams**
- **Adapting your home**
- **Getting help at home**

You can order any of our guides or factsheets by giving our Advice Line a ring for free on **0800 169 65 65** (8am-7pm, 365 days a year).

Our friendly advisers will also be able to help answer any questions you have about anything you've read.

All of our publications are available in large print and audio formats.

There's plenty of really useful information on our website, too. Visit [www.ageuk.org.uk/homesafety](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/homesafety) to get started.

If contact details for your local Age UK are not in the below box, call Age UK Advice free on **0800 169 65 65**.



**0800 169 65 65**  
**[www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)**



Age UK is a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales (registered charity number 1128267 and registered company number 6825798). Registered address: Tavis House, 1-6 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9NA. Age UK and its subsidiary companies and charities form the Age UK Group, dedicated to helping more people love later life. ID204285 10/19