



Operation Acorn

Burglary Prevention for the Vulnerable

In the past year, many Islington residents have found themselves at home for longer periods of time and for many this may have made them feel less secure in their home or more vulnerable to burglary.

Although being isolated can induce feelings of insecurity or anxiety, in reality the likelihood of being burgled is very low and, across the borough, burglaries have in fact fallen this year by 20%.

It is important to remember that most burglaries are committed by opportunists who pick a house

that looks unoccupied and has little or no obvious security.

Taking simple steps to improve your home security can reduce your risk of burglary considerably, so we encourage you to assess your home and identify what improvements you might make.

To help you with this we have provided a checklist of some of the key areas in which small changes can have a big impact on your security.

Lighting

- Good lighting is essential, it makes it easier to identify people and also makes it safer for people coming and going after dark.
- Passive Infra-Red lights that switch on automatically when they detect movement are not always the best option - animals and the weather can cause false activations leading to unnecessary alarm and possible neighbour nuisance.
- Install a dusk till dawn light, this will provide a constant low-level white light to illuminate any doorway during darkness. Be careful to ensure the fall of light does not annoy your neighbours.
- Use an automatic plug-in timer switch to operate an internal lamp or light at pre-set times when you are away.



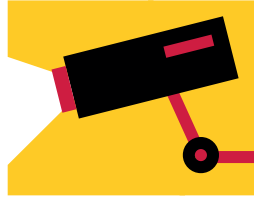
Buildings

- A door viewer is a good way to identify unknown visitors, and a door chain can also help.
- A letterbox guard fitted to the rear of the door will prevent someone from reaching through to open the door from the inside or fishing for items to steal. Keep keys and valuables away from external doors.
- Key operated locks are good for all window types. Sash windows can also be fitted with sash stops to prevent anyone opening the window wide enough to climb through.
- Modern windows can have restrictors fitted to allow for ventilation, whilst preventing further opening from outside.
- If you live in a flat, it is essential that the communal front door is properly locked and secured. Contact your landlord or letting agent if you believe the locking mechanism is defective.



CCTV

- Challenge anyone who tries to tailgate you through a communal door.
- CCTV can be a valuable tool and may deter some burglars, but it does not stop a crime from occurring.
- CCTV cannot replace the requirement for good quality physical security.
- Any footage should be able to capture the head and face of a person so they can be recognised and identified. Cameras should be positioned so that they can obtain such footage but also be out of reach to prevent tampering.



- Signage is required - if practical - to show that CCTV is in use
- Get into a habit of completing a set procedure when you lock up your home - this ensures you don't forget anything. Simply locking doors and windows can deter opportunistic burglars.

Unknown callers

- Always check the identity of any caller - use your door viewer to see who is there and keep the door chain on.
- Ask for ID and check it with the relevant company before letting in somebody you don't know.



Operation Acorn

Residents, charities, and services working with vulnerable older people in Tollington may also be interested to know about a pilot project called Operation Acorn.

Operation Acorn is a partnership project between Islington Council and the Metropolitan Police Service. The project aims to identify the borough's most vulnerable older residents, offering crime prevention advice, and arranging for small works to be carried out to improve the security of homes, at no cost to residents.

The project is aimed at residents aged over 65 years old and will also prioritise residents who are on a low income with health concerns, physical disabilities or mental health concerns.

Services such as Help on Your Doorstep, Age Uk and Islington Service for Ageing and Mental Health can complete a very brief assessment which will be in the form of a yes/no questionnaire looking at age, physical health, mental health, disability and whether a resident is a repeat victim of (or deemed to be at risk of) burglary to assess eligibility.

Following this if the resident is accepted, they will be contacted to arrange a phone assessment or socially distant face to face assessment in their home, in order to make a full inventory of any repairs or improvements that can be recommended to improve security.

Examples of what may be offered to a resident includes:

- Door chains with artifice burglary prevention notices
- Window locks
- Light repairs
- Door locks
- Panic alarms connected to police lines
- Smart Water (officers will assist with application to ensure correct procedure is followed)
- London Fire Brigade visits
- Temporary/permanent alarm systems in some circumstances
- Helpful information and advice
- loan of call blocker if resident is concerned about nuisance phone calls

Once these have been discussed and agreed Operation Acorn will take steps to secure funding for the improvements with no cost to the resident.

This will be facilitated through agreements that are already in place with Islington Housing, Partners for Islington and some Social Landlords; through negotiation by environmental health with private landlords or on a case-by-case basis with leaseholders and freeholders.

To discuss this further please contact us at Operationacorn@Islington.gov.uk –we would be happy to send a referral form and further information or to deliver presentations to your team if you are in contact with older residents and would like to be able to signpost to this service.