



## **MAKE SURE THE ONLY PERSON WHO VISITS YOU THIS CHRISTMAS IS SANTA**

In the lead up to Christmas the Police of Halton are offering the communities of Widnes and Runcorn some crime prevention advice to help ensure that the only visitor who sneaks around your home is bringing goodies in his sack and not taking them away!

Most burglaries are through a rear door or rear window. Making your home look occupied, whether you are in or out can help deter the thief. Phil Buckley, the Crime Reduction Advisor for Halton gives the following advice: - *'People could take a few simple steps to make their homes look as though they are occupied. This could be done by using timer switches for table and standard lamps, radios and other appliances to switch them on when you're out.'* These are available from DIY shops.

Residents should also be aware of 'Hook and Cane' type burglary's - this is where the thief puts a pole with a hook on the end through an open window or letter box and removes keys either to your home or car. The thief can then enter your home or steal your car. To avoid becoming a victim, keys should be kept out of sight and out of reach, also if you are in the home but cannot see your front or rear doors then please ensure they are locked to prevent offenders from just walking in.

If you have UPVC doors ensure that even when you are in the house that you lock them with the keys to apply the side locking bolts this will help prevent an offender from forcing the door.

Rear doors and windows should have additional security added to them. For example, rear doors should have dead locks fitted to make it difficult for a criminal to leave the premises via that route.

Adding additional key operated window locks will make it more difficult for a criminal to gain entry. Patio doors should have top and bottom locks or bolts added and don't leave keys in the doors. Particularly at this time of year thieves look for 'easy to steal' goods. A fine example is Christmas presents stored under the Christmas tree. All presents should be hidden away within the house and only put under the tree on Christmas Eve. When discarding the packaging that your presents were in take them to the local waste tip, don't leave them outside your home in the wheelie bin it gives clues to what you got for Christmas.

Thieves like portable, light, high value, easily saleable goods like TV's, electrical items computers, cameras, jewellery, silverware and antiques. These items can be security marked with your house number and postcode. You can get inexpensive kits to do this from DIY stores and stationers. Property should be marked in such a way that the marking can be clearly seen - this may deter the criminal from taking the property as it will make it harder for the criminal to sell it on to prospective purchasers.

By applying a few simple crime prevention measures to your home, you can avoid the misery of becoming a victim to the opportunist thief this Christmas. Meanwhile, should you require any further advice on crime prevention matters, Phil can be contacted at Runcorn police station on 01244-61-3971.

Have a safe, secure and happy Christmas!