

# Moving Home?

– are you really prepared?

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## **Home hunting and home moving are activities that trigger our emotions in all manner of ways.**

The excitement of the first visit to the estate agent and the sorting through of property details, the anticipation of whether your offer will be accepted, the worry about getting the mortgage finalised, the stress, thrill and adventure of making the move and the final sigh of relief when you sit down on the floor of your new home, glass of wine in one hand and a bag of chips in the other thinking about your plans.

**But did your plans include the security of your new home?**

**What are the crime levels like in the area?**

**How secure is your new home?**



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## Burglary and the new home

Unless prompted, home security is often one of the least considered aspects when we are looking for a new home. Yet findings of the British Crime Survey tell us that people who've been living in their new home for less than a year are almost twice as likely to be burgled as the average.

This strongly suggests that thinking about crime prevention for the home when you're looking for a new one is precisely the time to consider it!

The distribution of burglary and theft from the home is not random. They occur in geographical concentrations, because the opportunity for burglary and theft is different from place to place and some dwellings are more likely to get burgled than others. In addition, your age, your marital status and your employment status all make a difference.

An estimated 600,000 burglaries took place in England and Wales during 2010/11, a burglary rate of 26 per 1000 households.

Notice in the table below how the burglary rates change with the different risk factors

Risk Factor**	Burglary Rate per 1000 households*
Homes with poor home security	58
Homes where the occupiers have been resident for less than a year	46
Homes located in urban areas	28
The 'average' home's burglary rate	26
Homes located in rural areas	11
Homes with alarms and enhanced security	6

\*Data taken from the Government's Crime in England and Wales 2010/11: Findings from the British Crime Survey and police recorded crime (2nd Edition)

\*\*Although the volume of house breaking/burglary per 1000 dwellings differ in Scotland and Northern Ireland the differences between the risk factors are similar.



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## Looking for a new home?

Before moving to a new home, find out more about crime in the local area.

Visit [www.police.uk](http://www.police.uk) or [www.ukcrimestats.com](http://www.ukcrimestats.com) to establish the general picture of crime in the area (you'll need a postcode for the area your interested in). For privacy reasons the crimes you'll see on the maps are not accurately plotted. This means that the data is only useful for gaining a general idea of the crime types and trends. Knowing that two burglaries occurred in January in a street that has 250 houses is not going to tell you a great deal, but these sites are useful for comparing one neighbourhood with another.

Whilst the estate agent can be a very helpful source of local information, you can't beat visiting the local area and finding out things for yourself.

Speak with the sellers about their experiences of crime and, armed with your new found knowledge of crime (which can go up and down), take a stroll around the neighbourhood with your partner or friend to see how you feel about the place. If you have the opportunity, return for an after dark visit as well.

Ask yourself the questions shown below and don't be afraid to talk to the local residents.

**How do I feel walking around here?**

**Is the local area well maintained?**

**Are there signs of anti-social behaviour?**

**How does the place feel after dark?**

**How good is the street lighting?**

**Where are the bus stops and railway stations and how safe are the routes from them?**

**Is there a local shopping area?**

**What's the local pub like?**



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## Things to do just before and on the day of the move

During a visit to the new home check the security arrangements and take some notes. Carry out a home security survey at this link [www.thecrimepreventionwebsite.com](http://www.thecrimepreventionwebsite.com) to give you some idea of what you'll need to do when you move in.

You will never know for certain who has held copies of the house keys. Note the type of locks used in the doors and make arrangements for either you or a Master Locksmith to change them or their cylinders; preferably on the moving day. Consider a restricted key system, which only the locksmith can supply, and if there are several doors using similar locks you can ask the locksmith to key them alike to reduce the number of keys on your key ring. You can find a local locksmith at [www.locksmiths.co.uk](http://www.locksmiths.co.uk)



If you've been fortunate enough to inherit a security alarm make sure you get the code number and the operation manual from the sellers so you can operate it and then change the PIN. Contact the alarm company to arrange transfer of ownership or rental agreement, it is also good to mention any additional keyholders your property may have, i.e. parents, children, neighbors etc. to the alarm company as well.

Check your home contents insurance is effective and provides sufficient cover for your needs and make sure you can comply with their security conditions.

Your possessions should be moved directly from the removal vehicle into your home and should not be left on the footway or front garden. There should be someone in attendance with the removal vehicle at all times your possessions are not locked inside.

Hide the fact that you've just moved in as best as you can. Hang curtains or blinds straightaway, don't leave packing boxes in open view and introduce yourself to the neighbours as soon as you can.



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## Things to do after you've moved in

If your new home doesn't have an intruder alarm or it needs replacing seriously consider having one installed as soon as possible. Interviews with burglars strongly suggest that the presence of an alarm is a major deterrent. Use a company that is a member of the National Security Inspectorate (NSI) or Security Systems and Alarm Inspection Board (SSAIB). If you want police response (which is desirable) tell the alarm company from the outset.

- Try to make your property look occupied when it is not. Use timers and dusk to dawn sensors on some of your lights, leave a radio on and keep the blinds closed so potential thieves can't see what there is to steal or notice that you've just moved in.
- If you're thinking about replacing the doors and windows whether it be single glazed or double glazing the police recommend you purchase those that are certificated to the enhanced security standards of BS 7950 for windows and PAS 24:2007+A1:2009 for doors\* These types of doors and windows have been designed to keep out the burglars as well as the bad weather.



\*A new replacement standard 'PAS024 2012' for both enhanced security doors and windows is due for publication later this year

This leaflet has been prepared by Calvin Beckford, a recently retired police crime prevention specialist and author. For further friendly and detailed crime prevention advice for the home and to carry out a free home security survey on line please visit [www.thecrimepreventionwebsite.com](http://www.thecrimepreventionwebsite.com)



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## Things to remember on your checklist

- ✓ Check you have ALL keys for windows and doors in your new property.
- ✓ Notify your existing Alarm Company if applicable.
- ✓ Take new meter readings on moving day to pass to utility companies.
- ✓ Call your utility providers to let them know you have moved, Gas, Electric, Phone, Broadband etc.
- ✓ Notify Banks, DVLA, Schools, Employers, Friends and Family of your new address.
- ✓ Let your new neighbours know when you are moving in, this will help avoid any issues with moving vehicles etc.



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