

Verification with utility companies

Energy suppliers offer the Priority Service Register – you are able to set up a personal password system for gas and electricity staff to use every time they call at your home. This will confirm they are genuine. To join PSR, call the (freephone) Home Heat Helpline on **0800 33 66 99**, or contact your energy supplier directly.

You can check the authenticity of people purporting to be from our main water utility companies (who, if genuine, will be carrying a photographic identification) using the telephone numbers below:

Thames Water: **0845 9200 888** and select option 4.

Anglian Water: **0800 145145** (this telephone number will be shown on their identification).

Be aware of rogue traders

Rogue traders may call at your door and offer to do work on your home or garden that will either be unnecessary or vastly over-priced. They have no formal training to carry out the work and may have links with distraction burglars.

- Don't allow anyone to pressure you into agreeing to have work carried out and don't agree to any work or sign anything on the spot.
- If you ask them to leave and they don't, call the police dialling **999**.
- Don't ever go to a bank or cash point with a trader; legitimate traders would never do this.
- Discuss work you feel needs carrying out to your property with a relative or friend who can help you find a reputable trader.

Please report any suspicious activity you see in your neighbourhood straight away to your local neighbourhood team on **101** or if you believe a crime is in progress call **999**.

If you would like to pass on information but wish to remain anonymous call Crimestoppers on **0800-500-111**.

Distraction burglary

It happens rarely – so don't be concerned about this crime but remain vigilant



A recent crime survey carried out by the Aylesbury Vale Community Safety Partnership indicated that some respondents were worried about distraction burglary – mainly because of what they heard about crime locally and in the national media. The partnership wants to reassure people that instances of distraction burglary in Aylesbury Vale are extremely low. In the first six months of 2013, there have been no reported allegations of the offence being committed anywhere in the Vale.



Our message to residents is to be aware that these crimes can take place but they are rare - people should therefore not be concerned about distraction burglary but it is sensible to remain vigilant. It is advisable not to keep large quantities of cash at home; put it in the bank or post office where it is safe.

What is distraction burglary?

This is where criminals call at your house as bogus officials or asking for your help with something. They make up a story to get in to your home and generally target older people. They have just one intention: to steal.

How do these criminals operate?

- Some work alone, but often they work in groups – usually one person will knock at your door with a convincing excuse that seems genuine or urgent and persuade you to let them in your house.
- The talker will then keep you occupied whilst others sneak in (such as through your back door) and search your home to steal cash and valuables.
- They can be men, women or children and sometimes a combination, smartly or casually dressed.

Adopt this practice if someone knocks at your door or rings your doorbell

- Make sure your back door is locked.
- Don't open the front door – look through a window or door viewer to see who is there. Remember, you don't have to open your door to anyone!
- If you feel you need to speak to the caller and open the door, use a door chain. **If you do not have a door chain phone AVDC on 01296 585605 and we will fit one free.**
- Ask for proof of identity. Genuine tradesmen should carry an identification card with their photograph on – check this carefully. Close the door if you are in any way unhappy with the caller.
- If you suspect the person is a bogus caller, ring 999 straight away – the police are never too busy to attend even if it turns out to be a false alarm.
- A genuine caller will happily wait outside while you check on them (after first closing your front door) by calling their organisation and/or calling a family member or neighbour.

Distraction burglary is not common so don't be worried or concerned but remain vigilant