

# 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.

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The excitement of the first visit to the estate agent, sorting through property details, anticipating whether your offer will be accepted, and worrying about getting the mortgage finalised. The stress, the thrill and the 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, bag of chips in the other, thinking about your plans for the future.

*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?*



# 01.

## Burglary and the new home

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Unless prompted, home security is often one of the least considered aspects when we're 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 than 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!

### Burglary trends and statistics

The patterns of burglary and theft from the home aren't random. Incidents 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.

Also, your age, your marital status and your employment status all make a difference.



An estimated 573,000 burglaries took place in England and Wales during 2013/14, which is a burglary rate of about 20 in 1,000 households.

Notice in the table below how the burglary rates change with the different risk factors and better security measures:

Risk Factor**	Burglary Rate per 1000 households*
Homes with poor home security	48
Homes where the occupiers have been resident for less than a year	38
Homes located in urban areas	23
The 'average' home burglary rate	20
Homes located in rural areas	9
Homes with alarms and enhanced security	5

\* Author's estimate using Crime in England and Wales 2011/12 and 2013/14 figures.

\*\*Although the volume of burglaries per 1,000 dwellings differs in Scotland and Northern Ireland, the differences between the risk factors are similar.



## 02. Looking for a new home?

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### **Do your research**

Before you move into your new home, take the time to find out more about crime in your local area.

You can do this in a couple of ways. Visit **www.police.uk** or **www.ukcrimestats.com** to get a general picture of crime in your area (you'll need a postcode for the area you're interested in).

For privacy reasons the crimes you'll see on the maps aren't accurately plotted. Knowing that two burglaries occurred in January in a street that has 250 houses isn't going to tell you a great deal, but these sites are still useful for gaining a general idea of the crime types and trends – and for comparing one neighbourhood with another.

### **Take a look around**

While the estate agent can be a very helpful source of local information, you can't beat visiting the local area and discovering 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 questions

Ask yourself the following questions, and don't be afraid to talk to the local residents:

*How do I feel walking around here?*

*How does the place feel after dark?*

*How good is the street lighting?*

*Is the local area well maintained?*

*Are there signs of antisocial behaviour?*

*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?*



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

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During a visit to your new home, check the security arrangements and take some notes. Carry out a home security survey at [www.thecrimepreventionwebsite.com](http://www.thecrimepreventionwebsite.com) so you'll have ideas of what to do when you move in.

### **Protect your possessions**

Be aware that burglars sometimes use the 'sold' sign outside your house to target homes and belongings of those they know are moving, so take particular care of your possessions as they make their way from one location to another.

They should be moved directly from the removal vehicle into your new home so they're not left in the footway or front garden – and there should be someone in attendance with the removal vehicle at all times when your possessions aren't locked inside.



### Consider your keys

You'll never know for certain who held copies of your new 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 day you move.

Think about getting a restricted key system, which only the locksmith can supply. 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're having work done to your new home before you move in, and you have to leave your key with tradesmen, make sure someone you trust checks the house at the end of the day to make sure it's locked properly. It's also recommended that you change your locks after the tradesmen have completed their work.





### **Learn to operate your new alarm system**

If you've been fortunate enough to inherit a security alarm, make sure you get the code number and the operation manual from the seller so you can operate it and then change the PIN. Contact the alarm company to arrange transfer of ownership or rental agreement. When you do this, it's also a good idea to mention any additional people who may hold keys to your house, such as parents, children and neighbours.

### **Contents insurance**

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

### **Look right at home**

Hide the fact that you've just moved in as best as you can. Hang curtains or blinds straightaway, and close them at night so that any would-be thieves can't see builders' tools or empty rooms.

If you've bought expensive items then don't leave packaging outside the bins in open view. Introduce yourself to the neighbours as soon as you can – and get to know your Neighbourhood Watch team.



## 04. Things to do after you've moved in

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### **Get your house alarm up and running**

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) then tell the alarm company from the outset.

### **Perceptions make a difference**

Try to make your property look occupied when it's 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).



### Replacing doors and windows

If you're thinking about replacing the doors and windows the police recommend you purchase those that are certificated to the enhanced security standard of PAS 024: 2012\*. These types of doors and windows have been designed to keep out burglars as well as the bad weather!

*\*A new replacement standard 'PAS024 2012' for both enhanced security doors and windows has now been published, so look out for this new standard.*



## 05. Things to remember on your checklist:

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- ✓ 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've moved – gas, electric, water, phone, broadband, etc.
- ✓ Notify banks, DVLA, schools, employers, friends and family of your new address
- ✓ Let your new neighbours know when you're moving in, as this will help to avoid any issues with moving vehicles



This leaflet has been written with **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 online, please visit **[www.thecrimepreventionwebsite.com](http://www.thecrimepreventionwebsite.com)**

