

**A guide for carers & care professionals**

# **Keep an eye open for bogus callers**

**offer reassurance** encourage  
**good doorstep behaviour** assist the  
**police** protect the elderly & the  
**vulnerable** empower them to  
**deal with doorstep callers**  
promote independence **prevent**  
**bogus caller crimes** keep  
**money & valuables safe** **be vigilant**  
keep your eyes and ears open **reduce**  
**fear of crime**

  
Home Office

**In your role you are the person in regular contact with the person you care for. Whether you are a care professional, a care worker or a carer (i.e. friend, relative or neighbour) you are in a unique position to help prevent that person from becoming a victim of bogus callers, by passing on some common sense tips.**

## **What can you do?**

### **Offer reassurance**

How you deal with the person you care for will vary depending on their circumstances (for example mobility, memory, vulnerability, finances and choice). You will know the best approach.

Reassure the person you care for that most callers to the home will be genuine but that there are instances where they might have to deal with bogus callers.

Talk to them about the risks of bogus callers without frightening them unnecessarily. Make them aware they can do a lot to prevent themselves from becoming victims.

The person you care for may feel it is rude to refuse entry to someone, but tell them it is their doorstep and therefore, their decision. They might feel better if they had an excuse to get someone to leave, such as "I do not see anyone without an appointment". Tell them to phone the police if the caller refuses to leave.

You can empower them to deal with doorstep callers if they practice good doorstep behaviour. This will help protect them and enable them to live independently, safely and securely in their own homes.

You too should always practice good doorstep behaviour when calling at the house of the person you care for. Where possible, pre-arrange an appointment and if you are a professional carer, you should always present your identity card.

## Practice good doorstep behaviour

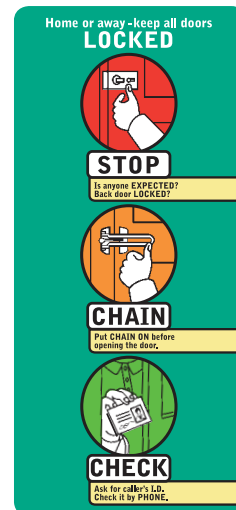
Remind the person you care for never to leave the door unlocked and not to leave keys in unsafe places such as under the door mat or plant pot for you to gain access to their property.

Make arrangements for the keys to be available to you either by installing a wall mounted key safe or getting spare keys cut. Do not put the name and address of the person you care for on the keys.

Encourage the person you care for to always follow the good doorstep procedure below to help beat bogus callers.

### If a caller knocks on their door they should:

- 1 keep front and back doors locked (with keys taken out), even when at home
- 2 stop and think if anyone is expected
- 3 look through a spy hole or window to identify the caller
- 4 put the door chain or door bar on first before opening the door, and keep it on whilst talking to the caller \*
- 5 check their identity card carefully even if the caller has a pre-arranged appointment (close the door whilst doing this)
- 6 look up the phone number of who the caller represents in the phone directory; ring to verify the caller's identity and do not use a phone number on the identity card, as this may be fake.



\*Normally when the door is shut and locked, the bar or chain can be left off to get out in an emergency.

Genuine callers will not mind waiting whilst their identities are being verified. If the caller is from the utility company or the council, and the person you care for belongs to a password scheme, the caller should be able to quote the password to prove that they are genuine. Further information about password schemes can be obtained by contacting individual companies.

If the person you care for does not want to deal with the caller face-to-face you can suggest they get an intercom system installed or ask the caller to return when someone can be with them.

**If still in any doubt, keep the caller out!**



## Keep money & valuables safe

Encourage the person you care for not to keep large sums of money at home and not to keep a cheque book and cheque card together. If they do not already have one, suggest they open a bank account and remind them to withdraw only the minimum amount of cash required.

Suggest that valuables or items of great sentimental value are not left where they could easily be taken. A small safe might be appropriate.

It is good practice to mark property, and ideally keep photographic and detailed records of valuables.

Advise that all documents containing personal details such as bank statements, passport and utility bills are kept out of sight. These items enable criminals to steal someone's identity. Any documents containing personal details which are no longer needed should be carefully disposed of and preferably shredded.





## Useful telephone numbers

Suggest that a list of useful numbers is kept by the telephone. If their telephone has the facility, pre-programme numbers in for quick dialling.

### Examples of useful telephone numbers might include:

- **ICE contact or next of kin (ICE = In case of emergency)**
- **nominated neighbour (i.e. friend, relative or carer)**
- **local Neighbourhood Watch**
- **local police station**
- **local council**
- **local Trading Standards**
- **Consumer Direct 0845 4040506**
- **Crimestoppers 0800 555 111**
- **utility companies – gas, electric, water & telephone**
- **out of hours carer contact number**

## Develop good relationships

If you are a care professional, you can make a very positive contribution towards reducing and detecting these offences through your contact and relationship with the person you care for. You can discuss issues such as personal safety, home security and fire safety.

Engage the person you care for in conversation. Ask if they have had any unknown callers or if there have been any unusual events since your last visit. This should be asked in a way that does not cause unnecessary alarm.

This will be an opportunity for the person you care for to voice any concerns they might have or for you to establish that something out of the ordinary has happened. It will also help ensure any suspected crimes are reported promptly.

Sometimes bogus callers target the same victims over period of time, your actions can help break the cycle. It is therefore important that you report anything suspicious that they tell you.

Please bear in mind, before reporting a crime you need to ensure that you have the permission of the person you care for. Better still you should encourage the person you care for to report it themselves.



## Assist the police

This is a great opportunity for passing information on to the police. Informing the police may help them catch the bogus caller and help prevent the same from happening to others.

You may notice people loitering or unfamiliar vehicles parked in the area. Note the registration numbers of the vehicles. Tell the police if you come across suspicious people, vehicles or activities however insignificant they may seem.

Contact an officer at your local police station if you wish to report a crime. Or dial **999** if it is an emergency.

If you or the person you care for is concerned about passing information on, call Crimestoppers **(0800 555 111)**.

This is a way of passing on information whilst remaining anonymous.





## IF IN DOUBT KEEP THE CALLER OUT!

- **Encourage** the person you care for to have a list of useful telephone numbers available close to the telephone, or pre-programme the numbers using quick dial.
- **Ask** if anything unusual has happened since your last visit (e.g. unsolicited calls). You can do this during a general conversation. Encourage the person you care for to report anything suspicious to the police.
- **Assist** the police by keeping an eye out and reporting any suspicious people, activities or vehicles in the area.

**REMOVE THIS CARD AND KEEP IT  
WITH YOU FOR QUICK REFERENCE**

**For more detailed information, visit:  
[www.crimereduction.gov.uk/boguscaller/boguscaller1.htm](http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/boguscaller/boguscaller1.htm)**

# IF IN DOUBT KEEP THE CALLER OUT!

## Top tips for carers & care professionals

- **Reassure** the person you care for that they are less at risk than they might imagine particularly if they follow common sense advice.
- **Remind** the person you care for to practice good doorstep behaviour. Keep the back door locked then put the door chain/door bar on the front door before answering it.
- **Advise** the person you care for to keep money, credit or debit cards, cheque books, savings books and any other valuables in a safe place.

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