



CRIME AND DISORDER COMMITTEE

7 November 2012

REPORT

Subject Heading:

Prevention of Older People becoming
Victims of Crime.

CMT Lead:

Ian Burns

Report Author and contact details:

Diane Egan
Diane.egan@haverling.gov.uk

01708 730083

Policy context:

Crime and Disorder Reduction

SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of the recent Havering Community Safety Partnership work programme to prevent older people becoming victims of crime in Havering

RECOMMENDATIONS

That members note the contents of the report

REPORT DETAIL

Statistics

The information used for this report is for all crimes from 1st September 2011 to 31st August 2012.

It discounts victims that are non-resident in the borough and clearly only uses those who have their dates of birth or age recorded.

When ages are compared to the census data (2011) the only over-represented ages of those 50+ in relation to the demographics is the 50 -54 where we have 7.0% victim with a demographics of 6.96% but as can be seen this is marginal. All persons older than this are less than the boroughs demographics.

Age Range	Percentage of victims	Census	Victim Age Range Higher Than Demographics?
50 - 54	7.0%	6.96%	Yes
55 - 59	4.9%	5.78%	No
60 - 64	4.2%	6.16%	No
65 - 69	3.5%	4.68%	No
70 - 74	2.0%	4.01%	No
75 - 79	1.9%	3.67%	No
80 - 84	1.3%	2.91%	No
85 - 89	0.7%	1.77%	No
90 & over	0.3%	0.80%	No

When the crime types are looked at 31.5% of those victims are victims of burglary with theft from motor vehicle (11.9%) being the next most prevalent. The third is 'other theft' (10.6%).

During the year there were 32 distraction burglaries victims of which 23 were female (72%). The methods of gaining entry are many as shown below.

Bank Worker
Council Worker
Gardener
Help
Money
Police Officer

Crime and Disorder Committee – 7 November 2012

Post Office Worker
Use Toilet
Water Board
Water Problems
Workman

The most prevalent is related to water issues (16%).

Of the 32 London boroughs Havering is the 12th safest for this type of crime with seven boroughs in London all in excess of 50 crimes of this nature – all are north of the Thames and three situated in the North-East.

Projects and Initiatives to protect Older Residents

A number of initiatives have been developed by the HCSP to prevent older residents becoming victims of crime.

1. Older People's Safety Events

In March 2007 the HCSP held an Older Persons Safety Event at the Queens Theatre in Hornchurch. The aim of the event was to raise awareness of distraction burglary and over 400 residents attended on the day. A drama production "Ma Kelly's Doorstep" focussed on bogus callers, and presentations were given by Havering Police, Community Safety, Trading Standards, London Fire Brigade and Neighbourhood Watch.

A further event was held at the Queens theatre in February 2008 which was attended by over 400 older people. Two events were also held in Harold Hill in December 2008 for Older People where 200 people attended,

2. Crime Prevention Road Shows

The Community Safety Service conducts regular road shows across the Borough to raise awareness of crime trends and to distribute crime prevention advice and merchandise such as purse chains, personal alarms, and property marking kits. Over 50 road shows were held in 2011-12.

3. Drama productions

In 2009 Havering Community Safety Team commissioned a piece of new drama with ARC theatre titled "By Appointment". The drama focused on distraction burglary with a target audience of older residents. The drama was designed to be performed in Luncheon Clubs and other meeting places for older people in the borough.

The drama highlighted the importance of:

- Never answering the door to callers who have not booked an appointment.
- Using the nominated neighbour scheme and notice to inform callers of a responsible neighbour to call to identify themselves
- Showing the yellow card at the window, but not leaving it in the window.
- Locking doors and windows properly, particularly UVPC windows.
- Removing keys from locks and keeping them away from letterboxes and out of burglar's sight.

Crime and Disorder Committee – 7 November 2012

- Installing a door chain.
- When out, making the house look like someone is at home.
- If away use timers to switch on lights and radios.
- Cancelling milk or deliveries when away.
- Ensuring a neighbour or friend ensures that all mail is pushed right through the letterbox and perhaps open and shut curtains.
- Availability of free home security checks through the Safer Homes scheme.

The Drama was launched at a Community Safety Conference in February 2010 and then toured around luncheon clubs in the Borough delivering a further 10 performances.

4. Banking protocol

Developed by the Havering Community Safety Partnership in conjunction with our local banks, the Metropolitan Police, Community Police Consultative Group and Age Concern, the scheme has a strong focus on prevention and early intervention. It provides a route for bank staff to tactfully intervene when older and vulnerable customers seek to withdraw unusually large sums of cash. Therefore, not only does it focus on preventing our residents from being a victim of crime but also identifies vulnerable residents who might be living with dementia, so we can intervene and provide access to vital support services.

The initial idea for the scheme emerged after several reported incidents in Havering of older and vulnerable people being accompanied to banks, building societies and post offices by unscrupulous conmen to withdraw large sums of cash as payment for supposed 'building work'. Following discussions at the Community Safety Serious Acquisitive Crime Group a working group was established and project plan was developed. Funding was secured from the Community Safety Service and the CPCG.

The banks have been keen to adopt the scheme. Bank staffs use a prompt card with set questions to tactfully enquire about the purpose of any cash withdrawal over £500. They will explain the dangers of carrying large sums of cash and suggest an alternative, and safer, method of payment such as a cheque or bank transfer. If the cashier is suspicious in any way about the intent of the withdrawal or the vulnerability of the customer, he/she will notify their supervisor immediately and a call will be placed to the appropriate agency for assistance. This might be Trading Standards and/or the Police if they suspect the customer a victim of crime; or Adults Social Care and/or Age Concern if they feel the customer is confused in any way. The simple act of asking a few questions allows bank staff to delay the withdrawal of large sums of cash to give the referral agency time to respond.

Currently 19 banks have signed up to the scheme across the Borough. The scheme will be rolled out in Harold Wood and Collier Row this autumn / winter.

A Bogus Callers Group has been established to continue to progress work in this area.

5. Nominated neighbour

The scheme was launched in November 2004 to protect vulnerable members of the community from bogus callers. The Nominated Neighbour scheme allows vulnerable individuals to direct any unexpected callers to a nominated person – a family member, friend or trusted neighbour living close by.

The Nominated Neighbour will then check the identification of the caller and remain with him or her while they conduct their business. Packs containing a yellow plastic card, which can be shown to unexpected visitors, indicating who the nominated neighbour is, and guidance notes are distributed by the community safety service or through Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

Most bogus callers rely on gaining the confidence of a resident to get into their property. By encouraging older people not to talk to unexpected callers and instead direct them to a third party it increases the chances of a bogus caller being caught. Most victims of distraction burglary are of pensionable age and in many cases as well as facing financial loss, they are left traumatised and upset.

Research suggests that areas which show visible signs of a caring and supportive society, such as Neighbourhood Watch are less likely to be targeted by distraction burglars.

6. Havering Safe at Home Service

The Council have funded the Havering Safe at Home service for residents over the age of 60 years. This was extended in 2008 to include all victims of domestic burglary.

In 2011-12 there were 2527 referrals to the scheme which included target hardening, minor adaptations without delay (MAWD) and minor repairs.

Target hardening can include the fitting of door and window locks, door viewers and chains and key safes. The scheme also offers a full fire safety check and fitting of smoke and Carbon monoxide alarms.

The scheme is funded to March 2013 and we are currently working with Age UK to secure funding from March 2013 onwards.

7. Buy with Confidence

The Council's Trading Standards service delivers the Buy with Confidence Scheme which allows you to find a reputable trader when looking for goods or services. All traders which are part of the scheme have been vetted by the Council's trading standards team and agreed to provide high standards of customer service. Any business can apply to join and the list of approved traders includes everything from builders to wine merchants and from chauffeurs to upholsterers. Before becoming an approved business, all traders must:

- Comply with relevant consumer protection legislation
- Ensure that staff are properly trained for their work
- Respond promptly and correctly to customer complaints
- Get CRB checks for all staff who carry out work in people's homes

If any business stops complying with the requirements of the scheme, they will be removed. A national website supports the scheme and is where you can search for which ever business you require by area.

Visit www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

*There is a **corporate** requirement to set out the implications and risks of the decision sought, in the following areas*

Financial implications and risks:

MOPAC have not yet confirmed the funding process for 2013-14. A further reduction in funding will impact on the Councils ability to address Crime and Disorder.

Legal implications and risks: The Council has a responsibility under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to address crime and disorder within the borough.

Human Resources implications and risks: No Human Resource implications

Equalities implications and risks: An equalities impact assessment has been conducted on the 3 year Community Safety plan

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers