Protecting yourself



West Mercia POLICE

www.westmercia.police.uk

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Being a victim of any crime can be extremely distressing and difficult to process.

This leaflet will give you a range of information designed to inform you about what to look out for.

You will also find advice and guidance on what you can do if the worst should happen.

> People never think they will be a victim of crime until it happens to them.



Help and advice guides

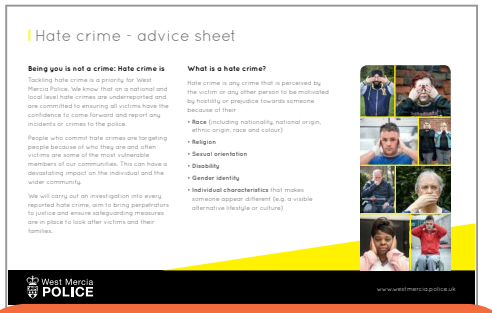
The following help and advice sheets are available to download at www.westmercia.police.uk/maketherightcall



Cyberbullying and online harassment - adult



Cyberbullying and online harassment - young person



Hate crime - adult



Hate crime - young person



Assault



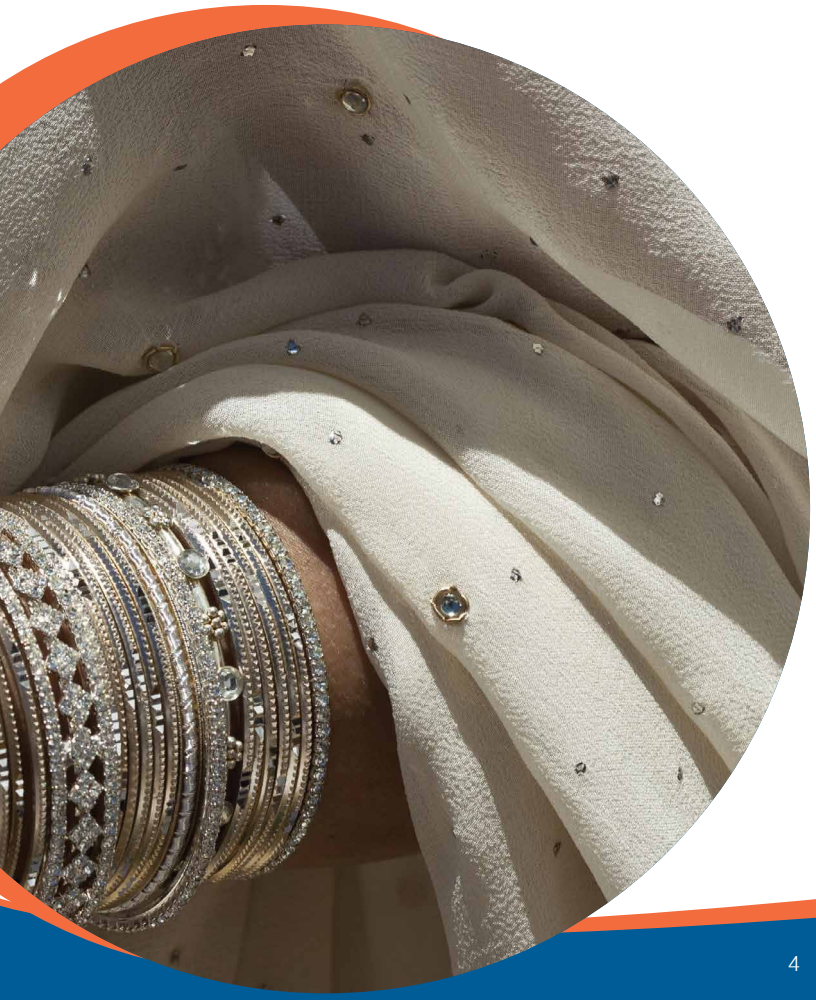
Missing person

Alternative languages are available for cyberbullying and online harassment www.westmercia.police.uk/article/43934/Alternative-languages

Personal safety

Violent crimes committed by strangers in public places account for a very low proportion of recorded crime, but nevertheless there are still measures that will dramatically reduce these crimes even further.

Most people already take simple precautions as part of their everyday lives, without realising it. Staying safe is all about anticipating potential problems by listening and being aware of what and who's around you, and knowing what action to take to stay out of danger.



Don't be frightened to trust your instincts. If something doesn't feel right, take action to avoid it:

- Prepare - think about how you're going to get there and back and remember to tell someone where you're going, who you're going with and when you expect to return.
- Look confident - remember your body language - stand tall and look like you know where you're going.
- Carry a personal safety alarm and learn how to use it.
- Carry emergency phone numbers (including the numbers to cancel your credit cards), some change, a phone card and your keys in a safe pocket.
- Avoid risks and be aware - keep looking and listening to what's happening around you.
- Try not to change plans at the last minute, but if you have to, tell someone.
- Never take safety for granted - don't say to yourself 'it only happens to other people' or 'it's only a short journey' or 'they look honest'.
- Trust your instincts - if you feel that something is wrong, it makes sense to avoid it.
- Avoid short cuts through dark places - keep away from odd and out-of-the-way places whenever you can.

- Cross the road if you see people you don't feel comfortable about and be aware of who's around you when you're out and about.
- Walk in the middle of the pavement facing the traffic, so that cars can't follow you.
- Mobile phones, MP3 players and laptops are attractive to thieves, so be careful where you use them and be aware of what's happening around you if you are using them.
- Cover up expensive looking jewellery and wear your bag across your body, so that it opens on the side facing you.
- In winter, wear your coat over your bag to hide it - you're any easy target if you leave your bag facing backwards over your shoulder or carry it over one shoulder.
- If you use a wheelchair or motorised scooter, keep your handbag in front of you, rather than hanging it on the back of the chair where thieves can steal it.
- If somebody does try to take your bag, let it go and don't fight to keep it - you're less likely to be hurt.

For further information visit www.westmercia.police.uk/Personalsafety



Keeping your valuables safe

Purse snatch leaflet

www.westmercia.police.uk/media/2123/Purse-Snatch-leaflet/pdf/Purse_Snatch_leaflet-cropped.pdf

Keep your valuables safe leaflet

https://www.westmercia.police.uk/media/2122/Protect-your-valuables/pdf/protect_your_valuables-cropped.pdf

Cash machine fraud

Things to remember when using a cash machine.

- Be aware of your surroundings - if someone is crowding or watching you, cancel the transaction and go to another machine.
- If there is anything unusual about the cash machine or signs of tampering, do not use the machine and report it to the bank immediately.
- If you suspect that a skimming device has been attached to a cash machine, inform staff within the bank or if this is not possible, inform the police - put your personal safety first and do not attempt to remove it yourself.
- Do not accept help from seemingly well-meaning strangers and never allow yourself to be distracted.
- Stand close to the cash machine and always shield the keypad to avoid anyone seeing you enter your PIN.
- Once you have completed a transaction, discreetly put your money and card away before leaving the cash machine.
- If the cash machine does not return your card, report its loss immediately to your bank.
- Tear up or preferably shred your cash machine receipt, mini-statement or balance enquiry when you dispose of them.

For further information visit www.westmercia.police.uk/article/5569/ATM-fraud

Cyber security

Top tips to stay safe online.

- No bank or card issuer will contact you by email and ask you to enter all your personal and financial details online - if you receive a message like this, report it to your bank, then delete it.
- If you get an email from an unknown source, do not open it and do not click on any attachments.
- Make sure that your anti-virus software is up to date.
- Never follow the messages from anti-virus software you encounter whilst on the internet - only follow the anti-virus instructions from the software you have installed on your computer.
- Install an anti-spyware package.
- Always use a firewall.
- Ensure that your software is up to date.

For further information visit www.westmercia.police.uk/article/8065/Cyber-security



Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is a serious and complex issue. It is a crime that remains largely hidden behind closed doors, leaving victims feeling trapped, powerless and isolated - afraid to say anything in case it makes a bad situation worse.



However, abuse is rarely a one-off event. For example, on average a victim will endure 30-35 assaults before seeking help. The level of abuse is likely to increase over time and could even result in murder.

Experience suggests that friends, families and neighbours are often aware or suspect that something is happening but, for one reason or another, are reluctant to get involved - this is a mistake.

Domestic abuse ruins family life and has long term, serious consequences for everyone concerned.

The definition of domestic violence and abuse is: Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

Getting help

If you or somebody you know needs confidential help or advice, call:

- **West Mercia Women's Aid domestic abuse helpline:**

  Herefordshire and Shropshire
  0800 783 1359

  Worcestershire
  0800 980 3331

  Help is also available from the following organisations which can be accessed via the below links:

- **National Centre for Domestic Violence (NCDV)** - providing legal assistance to obtain civil orders/injunctions.
  www.ncdv.org.uk
- **GALOP** - supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people experiencing domestic violence and abuse.
  www.galop.org.uk/domesticabuse
- **Mankind** - supporting male victims of domestic violence and abuse.
  www.mankind.org.uk
- **Karma Nirvana** - aiming to stop forced marriage and honour based violence -
  www.karmanirvana.org.uk
- **Refuge** - a national domestic violence charity which provides specialist support to women and children who experience domestic violence.
  www.refuge.org.uk

Worried your partner could be abusive?

The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clares Law) gives you the right to ask the police if your partner has a history of domestic abuse. No one should feel unsafe in a relationship.

The following leaflet is for you if you are in a relationship and you are worried that your partner may have been abusive in the past. Or if you're concerned about a friend or relative in a relationship, or you're concerned about starting a new relationship.

Click to find advice and guidance on the scheme and how to make a report.

For further information visit
www.westmercia.police.uk/article/8168/Clares-Law---Domestic-violence-disclosure-scheme



Are you a victim of crime

In an emergency please call 999. You can contact the police on 101 to report the crime, visit a police station. For advice and reassurance please follow the below link to identify your safer neighbourhood team where their contact details are available.

www.westmercia.police.uk/myarea



Theft from person

Before contacting the police to report a theft it would be useful if you had any makes, models and serial numbers for any of the items that have been stolen.

If you are able to provide any makes, models and serial numbers it means that we can search our systems to see if any of the items have been handed in.

Having specific information about property that has been stolen means we can detail the stolen property onto the crime report. If your items are found at a later stage, we can search the crime report database and trace the items back to you.

What happens next?

Once you have reported an incident of theft to the police, you will be given a crime reference number which you may need for insurance purposes.

What else can I do?

If the item that has been stolen from you is a mobile phone, a laptop a games console, a bike or a camera then you can register your property as stolen on www.immobilise.com which is the UK National Property Register. However, you would need specific serial numbers for your items before you can register them on the website.

Alternatively, if the item that has been stolen is one of the following items then you should also contact the relevant authorities/ organisations to let them know:

- **A bank card -** Contact the bank or building society to get the bank card cancelled and also to find out whether there have been any transactions on your card after it has been stolen. If the bank provides you with details of transactions that were made after your card was stolen, then please ensure you obtain the following information so that we can investigate the card usages: the date, time, amount and location of the transaction.
- **A driving licence -** Contact the DVLA to advise them that your driving licence has been stolen, this can be done by following the link www.dvla-contact-number.co.uk/replace-a-lost-driving-licence/
- **A passport -** Contact the Passport Office or alternatively visit www.gov.uk/report-a-lost-or-stolen-passport. If a passport is found and handed in to a police station, it will have to be sent back to the Passport Office and cannot be returned back directly to the person who it belongs to.
- **A mobile phone -** Contact your service provider to get the phone barred to ensure that no one can make calls from it.

For further information visit www.westmercia.police.uk/article/46240/Theft-from-person

Assault

When you or someone you care about is assaulted, it is a very traumatic event. There are different levels of violence and assault and these are categorised in law by the level of injury.

The police response may be different based on the circumstances of the offence and the type of assault. Police may attend immediately or come and see you at a later time.

Reporting an incident to police

When a report of an assault is made to the police control room the operator will consider the circumstances including the following factors:

- If there is a threat to life or limb.
- If the incident is in progress or likely to occur or be resumed.
- If there is a suspect at the scene or an early arrest is likely.
- Violence is being used or threatened, or
- A 999 call is abandoned, or the operator thinks a police officer needs to attend immediately.

Depending on the circumstances it may be more appropriate for the victim to receive medical attention before speaking with police - this will be assessed on a case by case basis.

In this case, what can you do before the police attend?

- Obtain medical attention if required.
- Keep any clothing or items relevant to the offence (if there is blood or forensic evidence).
- Write down any witnesses.
- Take photos of the injuries.

Police officers attending will make contact with the person who has been assaulted and make sure all evidence is secured. This will include any evidence at the scene.

Photographic evidence of the injury assists the investigation and can be recorded by the victim or the officer attending, serious injuries will be photographed by a crime scene investigator.

The police will update you on progress with the investigation, letting you know of any arrests or suspects being charged.

You can agree with the police how often you would like to hear from them about the investigation.



Further support and prevention

Safe and Well Checks

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service want everyone across the West Mercia region to be safe from fire at home and know how to escape safely if a fire starts.

We have learnt that visiting people in their own homes to make sure they have working smoke alarms and a good level of fire safety awareness prevents fires and saves lives.

We provide advice to everyone and for the more vulnerable such as the elderly, people living alone and those with reduced mobility both Services offer a FREE of charge Safe and Well Check.

A Safe and Well Check is a Home Fire Safety visit that's tailored to an individual's needs. The visit will provide you with actions and advice to help make your home a safer place and protect you and your family from the risks of fire, it will also provide you with a fire escape plan to follow should the unthinkable happen. We may also fit smoke alarms and specialist equipment if required. A Safe and Well Visit will also identify any health and care needs that require signposting to local services to help ensure your safety and wellbeing. All of these services are provided free of charge.

If you require any further information regarding a Safe and Well Visit, of if you would like to see if you qualify for a visit, contact details below:

HEREFORD & WORCESTER HWFR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service

Community Risk Department

Tel: 0800 032 1155

Email: hfsc@hwfire.org.uk

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service

Prevention Department

Tel: 0808 168 9010

Email Homevisit@shropshirefire.gov.uk

Victim Support

Victim Support is an independent charity that help people affected by crime and traumatic events. They are not part of the police or any other criminal justice agency.

www.victimsupport.org.uk
T: 0808 168 9111



We Don't Buy Crime

'We Don't Buy Crime' takes an innovative approach to reducing and disrupting the market for stolen goods and protecting your home and possessions by making them less attractive to the would-be criminal. We want to prevent crime happening in the first place but if the worst should happen, we provide the victim with a tailored and quality service.

This includes providing victims of burglary dwelling with a free SmartWater home marking pack, included in their 'We Don't Buy Crime' victim pack.

To find out more visit: https://www.westmercia.police.uk/we-dont-buy-crime

This campaign has had great success in 'We Don't Buy Crime' towns and villages, where every residential property has the opportunity to mark their possessions with SmartWater free of charge. This offer is extended until 31 December 2018.

Please vist https://www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/WDBC-application-briefing.pdf?x19529 to see how you can become part of this and the success achieved so far.

We don't buy crime sticker

https://www.westmercia.police.uk/media/4587/We-Dont-Buy-Crime-window-sticker/pdf/Circle_Sticker.pdf

SmartWater

How SmartWater works

- SmartWater has a unique forensic code that, once applied, makes equipment traceable back to their owner
- SmartWater is easy to apply and only visible under UV light
- Each application is guaranteed to last 5-years
- Recognised by criminals - SmartWater THIEVES BEWARE® deterrent signage sends out a powerful warning to thieves
- When deployed by police, SmartWater has helped reduce burglary by up to 85%.

When you purchase SmartWater, please ensure you register your forensic code as per the instructions to ensure your property can be traced back to you.

Thanks to West Mercia and Warwickshire Police's 'We Don't Buy Crime' project, you can purchase SmartWater for your home at a special promotional price of £19.95* with no annual fees.

Please visit:
https://shop.smartwater.com/redeem/

Or call: 0333 320 7797
Use discount code: WDBCRIME25





Immobilise

Register your valuables to help reduce property crime and improve the chances of getting them back in the event of loss or theft.

https://www.immobilise.com/home#registration

Crimestoppers

An independent charity that gives you the power to speak up to stop crime, 100% anonymously.

Whoever you are, wherever you live, from communities to companies.

By phone and online, 24/7, 365 days a year.
https://www.crimestoppers-uk.org/

Counter Terrorism Policing

Report suspicious behaviour here:
https://act.campaign.gov.uk/

You can also report suspicious activity by contacting the police in confidence on 0800 789 321.

Action Fraud

Report online at:
https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/

Action Fraud is the UK's national fraud and cyber crime reporting centre.

West Mercia
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