

Following calls from residents concerned about cold callers selling burglar alarms the police and District Council's advice is, **if you are concerned about your security and considering fitting a burglar alarm, contact your local police Crime Prevention Tactical Advisor (crime prevention officer) or Council Community Safety Officer who will give you free advice and put you in touch with regulated alarm installation companies in your area.**

Residents throughout the county have reported receiving unsolicited telephone calls from companies who say that crime is on the increase in their area and that they are at risk. They offer to install a free or very cheap burglar alarm and claim they are working with agencies such as the Home Office, District Council or the police. ***This is not true.***

Crime Prevention Assistant, Tony Ellis and the District Council's Community Safety Officer, Paul Gardener pointed out that most people who have been contacted by these companies have had the good sense not to allow them to visit their home but on the odd occasion, when work has been carried out, the cost to the customer has been exorbitant. One man was charged £3,000 in installation and monitoring costs.

The callers may block their own telephone number so they can't be called back. However, if any interest is shown in their product they will persistently call and badger the homeowner to agree to a visit particularly if they find out they are elderly.

**Our advice is not to buy a security alarm from a cold caller over the telephone or at the door and don't agree to a visit.**

If you do feel that you have been a victim of malicious cold calling regarding home security then contact Trading Standards.

As crime prevention tacticians we always welcome calls from people who want advice to keep themselves and their property secure whether it is installing an appropriate security alarm or something as simple as having proper locks fitted to your home.

If you live within the Epping Forest District and would like some free and impartial advice on this issue you can contact your local Crime Prevention Tactical Advisor via 101. Or you can call the Council's Community Safety Officer on 01992 564608.