

Offer Lancashire Constabulary a helping hand this winter

Lancashire Constabulary is asking local people to lend officers a helping hand this winter, by taking simple steps to reduce their risk of becoming a victim of crime.

The *Helping Hand* campaign aims to encourage people across the county to do their bit in keeping our county safe, offering a helping hand to the Constabulary and their local communities by following simple, but effective, crime prevention advice.

This winter, to keep its communities safe, the Constabulary is:

- Increasing patrols, creating a visible presence throughout the county
- Hosting additional neighbourhood policing surgeries to offer crime prevention advice and answer any queries or questions
- Working with local businesses across Lancashire to help them reduce their risk of becoming victim to crime at one of the busiest times of the year for retailers
- Giving out crime prevention materials throughout the county, such as purse bells
- Cracking down on drink and drug drivers to increase safety on our roads during the winter months

You can support the Helping Hand campaign and Lancashire Constabulary by following these 12 tips of Christmas:

1. Avoid leaving/storing keys where they can be seen or reached through a letter box or window - some criminals use fishing rods and hooks to pick up keys and take them through the letter box
2. Consider using timer lights or leave a light on in a room and draw the curtains when you go out at night
3. Before you answer the door, stop and think if you are expecting anyone - not all burglars wear a balaclava
4. Avoid doorstep sales or offers, such as drainage clearance for cash up front. Bogus traders often offer too good to be true deals to con you into paying for services you'll never receive
5. Avoid getting stranded on a night out by booking a cab home in advance. Let your friends and family know your plans. Remember to ask for the drivers name and registration number to ensure you get into the right car
6. Love your mobile? It takes seconds to be snatched, so try to avoid using it unnecessarily in crowded places
7. Together, we've got security wrapped up - when out and about, look out for yourself and others, remain vigilant and report anything suspicious by ringing the Anti-Terrorist Hotline on 0800 789 321
8. Ensure that your car is prepared for the colder months - you wouldn't fly without the proper checks being carried out, so why drive without them?
9. There's no safe drink/drug drive limit. Both drink/drug driving costs lives
10. When buying or selling online, anyone can fall prey to cyber criminals. Always use secure sites - look out for the padlock symbol in the website address bar. It means that all banking details you put into the site at checkout are safe
11. Be wary of anyone calling saying they are from your bank. Also, avoid clicking on any links in emails that seem to be from your bank. Both phone calls and email are methods fraudsters use to try and gain access to your bank account. If in doubt speak directly to your bank
12. When defrosting your car, never leave it unattended while your key is in the ignition. It takes just a matter of seconds for you to become a target