

# PROTECTING YOUR BELONGINGS

This guide has been prepared with the assistance of the Metropolitan Police on West Area BCU to help you assist them in recovering your belongings in the unfortunate event of you suffering a burglary.

## **HOW DO I RECORD DETAILS OF MY BELONGINGS?**

There are several ways in which you can record details of your belongings which will maximise the chances of items being returned to you if they are later recovered:

- Record the serial numbers of any items – this is true for watches, flat screen TVs, electric drills, literally anything that has a unique number.
- For items that do not have a serial number, such as jewellery, take a good, clear image of each piece.
  - Make sure that there is a ruler in each picture to show the exact dimensions.
  - For chains, also measure the chain length and write that on a piece of paper in the same photo
  - If there is a Hallmark, take a close-up – a mark can be unique in the position on the piece and the angle at which it is stamped.
  - Remember to take a photo of the back of each piece, and the side if there is detail there.
  - Record any other markings such as initials, dates and so on, and of course photograph the serial number as well if applicable.
- For all items, record these in a spreadsheet. If you number each item in the spreadsheet you can renumber the digital image name to match each item.
- As well as a photograph, make sure that you add a DESCRIPTION in your spreadsheet for each item – keep it simple and include good search words, starting with the item type, for example:
  - Rolex Watch, Serial Number 12435, gold, white dial, red hands, brown leather strap
- If your items are marked with UV pen, Smartwater, Selecta DNA etc, record where this has been done for each item. Police Teams carry UV torches to routinely check for these UV marks.
- The best place to store this information is by creating a FREE private and secure portfolio of all your personal property using the Immobilise website at <https://www.immobilise.com>.
- Also make a backup copy on USB or DVD and store that with a trusted friend or relative, remembering NOT to label it with your surname or address.
- A good tip is to take a photograph of each room from two opposite corners, plus the hallway and landing, and add those to your digital records. In the event of being burgled these are excellent memory joggers to help you to list what has been stolen.
- Keep your records up to date – review them once a year.

## **WHAT DO I DO IF I AM BURGLED?**

In the unfortunate event of a burglary taking place and items being stolen, make sure that the Police are told that you have detailed information on the items stolen; also describe in detail *any pillowcase or bag that has also been stolen at the time*. Make sure that you know who the Officer In Case (OIC) is for your burglary, and ask for their email address. An OIC may not be allocated immediately, and you can call 101 to find out who the OIC is. Always use your Crime Number in the subject line when communicating with them by email.

Note that the Police do not routinely ask for a DVD of digital imagery of your stolen items and have no means of storing these in a searchable way - it is more effective for them to take your spreadsheet which contains your descriptions, which can then be entered into the Crime Report on the Police Crime Report Information System (CRIS), which is the online record that is searched whenever an item is recovered – it is easier for the Police to search for a description to find good matches than it is to go through thousands of images, and this is why serial numbers and good descriptions are so important. If a match is found then your digital images can be produced by you to confirm a visible match to the officer against the recovered item. Your digital images are of course also beneficial in any negotiations with your insurer.