

Ways to keep yourself safer

The Internal Audit Team asked Greater Manchester Police to share some tips to keep us all safer. Jo Shaw from the Manchester City Centre Neighbourhood Team worked with us and service users at Creative Together in Manchester, to help us compile these useful tips. She encouraged us to think of personal safety from a criminal's point of view, to find ways to keep ourselves safer when we are out and about.

| What might a criminal look for? | How can we make ourselves safer? |
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| People who are distracted or not listening are easy to target. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't wear headphones or earphones in the street – you can't hear someone approaching. • As well as leaving your headphones off when you're walking about, look around you, don't be distracted. |
| Thieves might try to snatch your phone out of your hand if you walk about with it. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't walk around reading things on your phone. • Make time ten minutes before you leave the house, to read any messages or email. Sit and be safe. • When you go out, keep your phone in a zip-up pocket or bag. |
| You are more likely to be a victim of crime on unlit streets, where there is no cctv. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stick to well-lit streets. • Don't be tempted to take short cuts through unlit areas; it is safer to walk the longer way around. |
| Thieves are more likely to target people who are alone. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel together in pairs or groups where possible. Make sure no-one in your group gets left to go home on their own. • Check in with each other after a night out, to make sure you all got home safely. • Look into free apps which allow you to track when people in your group have got home. One example is Life360 – it sends a message to the group when each person gets home. • If you are in city centre Manchester and you are worried, you can use the Ask Angela Scheme. Go to the counter and ask "Is Angela working today?" This is a code which alerts the staff there that you feel unsafe and need help. |
| Using your phone as a torch in the dark means it is easy for an attacker to see exactly where your phone is, and snatch it. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't use your phone as a torch. • Get a small torch from your local poundshop. • Look online for other safety items such as light up bracelets. |
| Pickpockets could help themselves to your purse/wallet if you keep it in a bag with the flap facing outwards. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you use a bag with a flap, walk with the flap facing inwards towards you. |

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| Phone thieves will change the SIM in stolen phones, but each handset has a unique number called an IMEI number. You should know yours. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To find your phone's IMEI number, type the following into your phone: *#06# Make a note of your phone's IMEI number and keep it safe. You can give this number to the police and your mobile phone provider if your phone is ever stolen and the handset can then be blocked and tagged as stolen. |
| Thieves have been known to cut open a backpack to steal a purse/wallet, without the victim even noticing. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look online for "anti-theft" backpacks, which are harder to cut open. |
| Pickpockets are more likely to target you if your bag is left open or unattended. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that your bag is always zipped closed and make sure you never leave your bag unattended. |
| Thieves sometimes wait around cash machines. They might watch as people put in their PIN, or distract people as the money is dispensed by asking a question. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go inside the bank to withdraw or deposit large amounts of money. Use the bank counter to withdraw any money where possible. |
| Thieves can use your bank card if you write the PIN on it, or keep the PIN with it. You will not be insured for any loss if you keep the PIN on or with the card. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Never write your PIN on the card or keep them together. If you really can't remember your PIN, keep it separately from your card at all times. |
| Fraudsters sometimes get rid of fake notes by asking someone to change them for coins. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don't change notes for strangers – remain polite and tell them you don't have any change. |
| Sometimes thieves might ask to borrow your phone by pretending there is an emergency and they need to phone their loved ones – they can then steal your phone. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If a stranger asks to borrow your phone, remain polite and tell them you don't have it on you. A free phone is available for use at the police station for genuine emergencies. |
| Fraudsters can sometimes use your personal information to open bank accounts. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure you only put a limited amount of identifiable information online; consider using a pseudonym instead of your real name. Ensure details such as date of birth, address and location are not shown on your public profile i.e. Facebook |

It is important to remember that you are still unlikely to be a victim of crime. But using the tips above could decrease your chances further.