

READING

Britain's burglary black spots

A list of the worst areas for burglaries in the UK has been published recently and it makes interesting reading.

A

The survey was carried out by insurance companies. They didn't look at the number of burglaries reported to the police. They calculated the total number of insurance claims made by victims of burglaries. Of course, if people don't have much to steal, they may not bother with insurance. Even if they do have insurance, it might not be worth reporting a small loss. However, using police statistics may also be misleading. Some communities are less likely to trust the police than others and more likely to take the law into their own hands, especially when the criminals are known to them. So, while the survey isn't perfect, it is probably as good as it could be.

B

Although the survey found high levels of burglaries in many areas, the highest burglary rates are found in major cities. In fact, twelve out of the twenty are in London. However, the highest level of burglaries was found in Chorlton in Manchester. Chorlton is home to a mixture of people. There are young, well-off professionals living in modern flats but there are also some poor areas with high levels of unemployment and poverty. Unfortunately, there is no information about whether the burglaries affect one group more than the other or whether both rich and poor suffer equally.

C

As Chorlton shows, some of the areas on the list are attractive places to live. In fact, it is often a sign that an area is well-off. After all, burglars usually target houses where there is a chance of finding something worth stealing. In addition, Chorlton is an example of a place where there is a lack of a fixed community. People move in and out quite frequently and often don't get to know their neighbours. Therefore, people are less likely to call the police if they hear strange noises from houses nearby.

D

As said before, the survey was carried out by insurance companies. As these companies have to pay victims for their lost belongings, it is in their interest that the number of burglaries should fall. Therefore, as well as saying where the worst places for burglaries are, the report also suggested ways of preventing such crimes. These included obvious tips such as locking doors and windows but also warned people about things like not leaving valuables out where they can be seen through windows.

Finally, the good news. The total number of burglaries has fallen by almost 70,000 since last year and there are several rural areas where not one burglary was reported at all during the year.

1 Match the headings (1–5) to the paragraphs (A–D). There is one heading that you don't need. (_ / 4)

- 1 The accuracy of the figures
- 2 Problems of policing in these areas
- 3 The worst areas for burglaries
- 4 Making your home safer
- 5 Why some areas are worse affected than others

2 Find words in the text which mean: (_ / 5)

- 1 make an effort (paragraph A)
- 2 choose a particular place to do something (paragraph C)
- 3 absence (paragraph C)
- 4 possessions (paragraph D)
- 5 advice (paragraph D)

3 Answer the questions in your own words. (__ / 8)

1 Why may police statistics about burglaries be unreliable?

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2 Why might Chorlton have so many burglaries?

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3 Why do insurance companies want to prevent burglary?

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4 What advice do insurance companies give?

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4 Say whether these statements are true or false. Quote from the text to justify your answer. (__ / 3)

1 People who don't have many valuable possessions might not have insurance.

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2 The report says that burglaries don't affect rich people more than poor people.

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3 If you know your neighbours, you are more likely to call the police if you notice something suspicious.

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