Police advice

With the rise in vehicle crime across the county, follow these simple steps to protect your vehicle from thieves.

1. Lock your vehicle - Locking your vehicle, even when filling up or parked on your drive, greatly reduces the possibility of it being targeted by an opportunist thief.

2. Keep the keys safe - Keep your keys out of view when at home, and away from your front door. Cars with keyless entry unlock automatically when the key comes within a short distance of the car. This can be from inside a pocket or bag. If you have to push a button on your car key to open your car, you don't have keyless entry. Keyless car theft is when a device is used to fool the car into thinking they key is close by. This unlocks the car and starts the ignition. Thieves only need to be within a few metres of your car key to capture the signal, even if it's inside your home.

How to protect your keyless entry car –

· When at home keep your car key (and the spare) well away from the car

· Put the keys in a screened or signal-blocking pouch, such as a Faraday Bag

· Reprogram your keys if you buy a second-hand car

· Turn off wireless signals on your fob when it’s not being used

3. Park responsibly – Avoid parking in dark and secluded areas. If possible always try to park in illuminated and staffed car parks.

4. Double check electronic locking – Electronic devices can be used to jam the electronic signal from your key fob to lock your vehicle. Always manually check your vehicle has locked before walking away. If unsure, lock it manually, then scan the immediate area for anyone hanging around. If a potential thief who’s watching feels they’ve been spotted, they’ll probably move off.

5. Before owning, check for cloning - Changing the identify of a vehicle, known as vehicle cloning, can be as simple as adding stolen number plates. When buying a vehicle, always check the DVLA V5 document and make sure the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) on the vehicle is the same as on the document.

If you see any suspicious behaviour call 999 or you have any information contact us on 101