

The personal crime and burglary risks of living in private renting households, and households of multiple occupation (HMOs).

Executive Summary

Background

Burglary and other crime has dropped significantly from 1993 to recent years. However, the drop has now plateaued, in part as victim profiles change. Students have been, and continue to be, generally more vulnerable to victimisation by property and personal crime. The majority of students live in households of three or more adults (Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)) housed in private rented accommodation. Both attributes are risk factors of crime victimisation, especially in the last 10-13 years, as demonstrated in studies analysing data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales ¹.

Key Findings

The research shows the following patterns in relation to victimisation risk and number of crimes experienced within a year:

- Households with 3 or more adults experience:
 - around 15% more property crimes than (otherwise identical) two adult households ² and
 - their members are victims of 51% more personal crimes ³;
- Private renters face:
 - 63% higher burglary risk ¹ and
 - 36% more personal crimes compared to (otherwise identical) owner-occupiers ³;
- Crucially, 3 or more adult and private renting households are particularly targeted by burglars since 2005/06 and 2008/09, respectively ¹;
- Going to pubs three or more times a week may increase the number of personal crimes by 58% ³; and
- Males going clubbing weekly experience 119% more personal crimes than people never going to clubs ³.

Additional research is required to determine the factors underpinning these patterns but they may be due to:

- A general increase in the number of households living in privately rented accommodation ¹.
- Potential offenders identifying private renting households/HMOs occupied by students and/or young professionals as likely to contain a large quantity of valuables and gadgets, such as laptops and mobile phones, that are of high value and easy to carry ¹.
- Members of a HMO failing to lock doors/windows, assuming other members of the household will do so ¹.

Recommended Actions

For students, if you are living in privately rented and/or shared accommodation, try to ensure the following:

- Ensure your household has the following cost-effective security measures (known as **WIDE**): **W**indow locks, **I**nterior lights with timers, **D**ouble or deadlocks, **E**xterior lights with sensors ¹.
- Ask your landlord to install additional security measures, especially if any of those in WIDE are missing.
- Be responsible and ensure your windows and doors are securely locked, especially before you go out.
- Encourage your housemates to also be responsible in securing your home.
- If you go out clubbing every week and/or to the pub at least three times a week choose licensed premises that attract a balanced across ages and genders patronage ⁴.
- When going out with valuables (e.g. mobile phone, laptop) make sure they are out of sight and minimise their usage in public and/or risky circumstances, e.g. out on the street or in crowded licensed premises ¹.

Conclusion

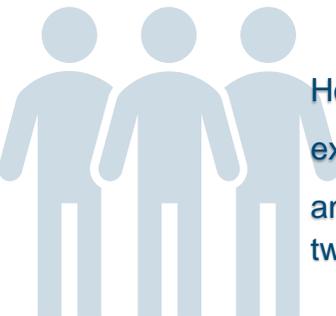
These findings show that potential offenders have shifted their focus to private renters and/or shared households (HMOs) - the types of households that most students live in. While crime has dropped overall in the past twenty years, not everyone benefits from the drop. The plateau of burglary trends that has recently occurred may be due in part to increasing numbers of potential victims with characteristics like those identified here.

References ¹ TSELONI, A., THOMPSON, R. and TILLEY, N. 2018. *Reducing Burglary*. Social Sciences/Criminology. NY: Springer ISBN 978-3-319-99941-8. ² TSELONI, A., 2006. *Multilevel modelling of the number of property crimes: household and area effects*. Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series A (Statistics in Society), 169(2), pp.205-233. ³ TSELONI, A. and PEASE, K. 2015. Area and individual differences in personal crime victimization incidence: The role of individual, lifestyle/routine activities and contextual predictors. International review of victimology, 21(1), pp.3-29. ⁴ GARIUS, L.L. 2016. Opportunities for physical assault in the night-time economy in England and Wales, 1981-2011/12. Available at: <https://dspace.lboro.ac.uk/dspace-jspui/handle/2134/20427>.

Student Renting Privately? Living with two or more other students? You could face an increased risk in burglary, household theft and personal crime.

Why are you at risk?

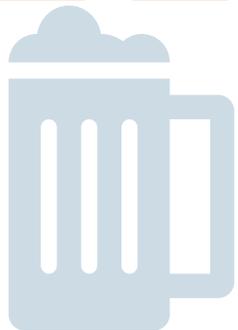
- Private rented houses are increasingly common in the UK.
- Students and young professionals are desirable targets for potential criminals.
- Items such as laptops, mobile phones and other gadgets are desirable items for theft or burglary due to size and portability.



Households of **3 or more adults** experience **15%** more **property crimes**, and **51%** more **personal crimes** than two-adult households.



Private renting households have **63%** higher **burglary risk**, and their members experience **36%** more **personal crimes** compared to owner-occupiers.



Going to **pubs** three or more times a week may **increase** the number of **personal crimes** by **58%**, and for **males** going **clubbing** on a weekly basis the number of **personal crimes** **increases** by **119%**.

Personal Crimes

- Common Assault
- Wounding
- Robbery
- Theft from Person
- 'Other Theft from Person'

Property Crimes

- Household Theft
- Burglary
- Theft from or of Vehicle
- Arson
- Criminal Damage

What can you do?

- Make sure the household has **WIDE** security: Window Locks, Interior lights you can put on a timer, Double or Deadlocks on doors, and External Lights on a sensor.
- Ensure windows and doors are securely locked, especially when going out – don't rely on others to do it for you!
- Encourage housemates to also be responsible for securing your home.
- Store valuables securely (e.g. in a safe), or well-hidden otherwise.
- Keep valuables you are carrying with you out of sight when going out.

SOURCES:

TSELONI, A., 2006. *Multilevel modelling of the number of property crimes: household and area effects.* Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series A (Statistics in Society), 169(2), pp.205-233.

TSELONI, A. and PEASE, K., 2015. *Area and individual differences in personal crime victimization incidence: The role of individual, lifestyle/routine activities and contextual predictors.* International review of victimology, 21(1), pp.3-29.

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