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| SMMT NEWS RELEASEStrictly embargoed to [00:01 – Thursday 8 September 2016](x-apple-data-detectors://3) | | | | |
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| **Over 40% of motorists have left car keys with a stranger,  as motor industry and police call for greater consumer vigilance** | | | | |
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| * New YouGov survey shows 43% of motorists have left their car keys with a stranger, compared with just 11% of Brits who have done the same with their house keys. * Just 11% of drivers believe security is the most important factor when looking for a car park. * Car theft has declined significantly, but following a recent rise in incidents a new initiative is encouraging drivers to remain vigilant of their vehicles and keys. | | | | |
| **Thursday 8 September, 2016** Two in five car owners don’t appear to think twice about leaving their car keys with a stranger, despite the potential security risk, according to the results of a YouGov consumer survey published today by the automotive industry, government, police and insurance bodies.  Car theft has fallen significantly since the mid 1990’s when, at its peak, up to 620,000 cars were stolen each year. Today that figure is below 80,000.1 However, responding to police figures showing reported incidents rose by 8% in the year to March 2016, the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT), Home Office, Metropolitan Police Service and Thatcham Research, the motor insurers’ automotive research centre, have joined forces to understand the nature of modern day car theft and develop solutions to tackle it.  Today, alongside the results of the survey, they are publishing a 10-point plan to help owners secure their cars to help beat the thieves.  The survey found that in the past 12 months, 43% of British drivers have left their car keys with someone they don’t know, with 71% of them not checking whether the company or individual was a member of an accredited code of practice or other professional standard. In comparison, just 11% said they have trusted their house keys to a stranger.    Meanwhile, just 11% of people said the first thing they look for in a car park is CCTV, gated entry or manned barriers. At home, respondents admitted to leaving their car keys in clear view or close to the front door on a hallway hook or sideboard, leaving them at risk of opportunistic thieves.  Cars are more secure than ever before, with manufacturers continually working on new security features. Investment in new technology means that all new cars sold in the UK now have an immobiliser and many are fitted with an alarm and double locking as standard.    Car owners can also play an important part in protecting their vehicles by taking simple preventative measures, including parking in well-lit and secure parking spaces, double checking your car is locked before walking away, and checking the credentials of any company with which you leave your keys.  **Sarah Newton, Minister for Safeguarding, Vulnerability and Countering Extremism,** said, “With thefts significantly lower than they were 20 years ago and manufacturers using the latest technology to make our cars safer than ever, the public would be forgiven for putting vehicle crime to the back of their minds. But the recent rise in the number of reported crimes is a reminder that determined thieves are still out there and we should remain vigilant.  “It is important that we all understand this increase, the changing nature of vehicle crime and the steps that can be taken to prevent further increases in these crimes. For many of us, leaving our car keys with a stranger is hard to avoid, but it is always worth checking whether they are a member of an accredited code of practice or other professional body.  “Following a key commitment in our Modern Crime Prevention Strategy the Government has been working with police and industry to look at the methods being used by criminals to steal vehicles and how to stop them. I welcome the advice being delivered as part of the SMMT’s initiative to inform vehicle owners about the hidden dangers and the steps they can take to secure their vehicles.”  **Mike Hawes, Chief Executive, SMMT,** said, “New cars have never been more secure and the latest technology has helped bring down vehicle theft dramatically. Manufacturers invest billions of pounds every year to stay one step ahead of the criminals, and the latest models include sophisticated immobilisers, smartphone-controlled tracking devices and random key codes to prevent cloning. Technology can only do so much, however, and while car makers, the police and government continue to work together to ensure that stealing cars is as difficult as possible, these latest figures show there’s more consumers can do to minimise risk.”  **DCI Sarah Staff of the Met's Organised Crime Command,** said, “Criminals are constantly seeking new ways to steal cars and organised criminals are using increasingly sophisticated methods. The Met's central Organised Vehicle Crime Unit works closely with the car industry in an attempt to reduce vehicle crime; we have conducted several successful investigations in this area and continue to do so. Vehicle owners should be reassured that car theft is at its lowest level for many years, but they should not be complacent, it's important to take sensible precautions and remain vigilant to avoid being a victim of car theft.”  **Andrew Miller, Chief Technical Officer at Thatcham Research,** said,“Thatcham Research has worked for many years with vehicle manufacturers to drive continuous improvement in security as well as in safety, and the most recent vehicle theft statistics reflect the high level of security technology now found on most cars. As well as choosing the best-performing cars, consumers should make sure they are aware of best practice procedures to keep their vehicles secure.”  In positive news, 93% of consumers responding to the survey said they always check their car is locked before walking away, whether by listening for the locking noise, watching for the lights to flash, waiting for the wing mirrors to fold in or simply pulling the door handle.  DEF540 SMMT Car anti-theft KEY graphic.jpg  **10 EASY WAYS TO SAFEGUARD YOUR CAR**  1. Think about who you leave your vehicle keys with. Treat them as you do your house keys – do you know the person you are leaving your keys with? Do you trust them?   2. Check who you are leaving your vehicle keys with. Where possible, check that a company you entrust your keys to is a member of an accredited code of practice or other professional standard such as Motor Codes (motorcodes.co.uk); the British Parking Association’s Park Mark scheme (parkmark.co.uk); or the Car Wash Advisory Service’s WashMark initiative (carwashadvisoryservice.co.uk).  3. Think about where you park your vehicle – is it in a safe place? Well-lit and well-populated areas or car parks with security features such as CCTV, manned barriers or gated entry will give you greater peace of mind.   4. Check that your vehicle is locked before leaving it. Listen for the locking noise, watch for the lights to flash or mirrors to fold, or simply pull the door handle.  5. Think about where you leave your spare key. Don’t leave it in your vehicle, and be mindful of how many spares you have and where they are kept.  6. Check that you haven't left valuables on display in your vehicle. We all know that this can attract opportunist thieves.  7. Check that the vehicle’s windows are closed, even if you are only leaving it for a few minutes. Open windows make it all the easier for thieves to gain access.  8. Think about where you keep your keys at home. Keep them well away from the door or windows and out of sight.  9. Check that your alarm or immobiliser is enabled when you leave your car. A simple check could save considerable expense and inconvenience later.  10. Check whether your vehicle has an alarm or immobiliser. If it doesn't, think about buying an aftermarket alarm, steering wheel lock or other locking device. These are proven to deter thieves. | | | | |
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| cid:1c085346-fe31-4376-bec4-e173b9f517ea@smmt.co.uk | | | | |
| ***\*Infographic information courtesy of Thatcham research*** | | | | |
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| **Notes to Editors**  **1** Source: ONS Crime Survey of England and Wales, January 2016  **Hi-res graphics and accompanying images available:**  [Click here to download](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/p5pfj9wfc71jri8/AADlAhVSdwV6ZphEUtsF9JnEa?dl=0)  Keyless car theft image two.jpgKeyless car theft image three.jpgKeyless Car theft image one.jpg  cid:1c085346-fe31-4376-bec4-e173b9f517ea@smmt.co.uk DEF540 SMMT Car anti-theft KEY graphic.jpg  ***\*****Infographic information courtesy of Thatcham Research*  **YouGov poll results** *All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2,028 adults of which 1,410 owned a car. Fieldwork was undertaken between 2nd and 3rd August 2016. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).*  **In which one, if any, of the following places do you tend to keep your car key at home? (Tick one)**   * In a drawer, cupboard or similar **13%** * In my bedroom/ by my bedside **10%** * On a hook near the entrance **10%** * On the kitchen counter/ table **11%** * In my handbag, briefcase or similar **10%** * On top of a table/ sideboard in the hallway **8%** * In my trouser/ jacket pocket **6%** * On a window ledge **1%** * Other **11%** * Prefer not to say **12%** * Not applicable – I don’t tend to keep my car key in any particular place (i.e. it varies) **7%**   **Thinking about the past 12 months, have you left your car key(s) with someone you didn’t know? (Tick all that apply)**   * Yes, at a garage (e.g. MOT/ service and repair workshop) **38%** * Yes, at a car wash/ valet service **6%** * Yes, with a car park attendant/ reception (e.g. offsite airport parking) **3%** * Yes, at a hotel or restaurant (e.g. with a receptionist) **1%** * Yes, someone else **1%** * No, I have not left my car key(s) with someone I didn’t know **54%** * Don’t know/ can’t recall **2%** * Prefer not to say **2%**   **Prior to leaving your car key(s), did you check whether the company or individual was a member of an accredited Code of Practice, Kitemark or Trustmark scheme or other recognised professional standard or association?**   * Yes, I did **24%** * No, I didn’t **71%** * Can’t recall **5%**   **Thinking about the past 12 months, have you left your house key(s) with someone you didn’t know? (Tick all that apply)**   * Yes, with a construction/ maintenance/ utilities service provider **6%** * Yes, with a cleaning service **2%** * Yes, with someone else **5%** * No, I have not left my house key(s) with someone I don’t know **85%** * Don’t know/ can’t recall **3%** * Prefer not to say **1%**   **When looking for a car park, which one of the following is/ would be most important to you? (Tick one)**   * Convenience/ proximity to destination of where I want to go **58%** * Lowest cost **23%** * Security (i.e. manned, barrier entry or gates, CCTV) **11%** * None of these  **4%** * Don’t know **4%**   **When leaving your car, which, if any, of the following do you always do to confirm, that it is locked? (Tick all that apply)**   * I listen for the locking noise or ‘bleep’ **55%** * I watch for the lights to flash **53%** * I pull the door handle **39%** * I watch for the wing mirrors to fold in **10%** * Other **3%** * Don’t know **1%** * There is no particular thing I always do to confirm that my car is locked **6%**   **About SMMT and the UK automotive industry**  The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) is one of the largest and most influential trade associations in the UK. It supports the interests of the UK automotive industry at home and abroad, promoting a united position to government, stakeholders and the media.  The automotive industry is a vital part of the UK economy accounting for more than **£71.6 billion turnover** and **£18.9 billion value added**. With some **169,000** people employed directly in manufacturing and **814,000** acrossthe wider automotive industry, it accounts for **12.0% of total UK export of goods** and invests **£2.5 billion** each year in automotive R&D. More than **30 manufacturers** build in excess of **70 models** of vehicle in the UK supported by **more than 2,000 component providers** and some of the world's most **skilled engineers**.  More detail on UK automotive available in SMMT's Motor Industry Facts 2016 publication at [www.smmt.co.uk/facts16](http://www.smmt.co.uk/facts16).  **Broadcasters: SMMT has an ISDN studio and access to expert spokespeople, case studies and regional representatives.**  **Media contacts:** | | | | |
| **Lucy Bielby** | 020 7344 1610 | [lbielby@smmt.co.uk](mailto:lbielby@smmt.co.uk) | |  |
| **Eleanor Fricker** | 020 7344 1667 | [efricker@smmt.co.uk](mailto:efricker@smmt.co.uk) | |  |
| **Keely Scanlan** | 020 7344 9222 | [kscanlan@smmt.co.uk](mailto:kscanlan@smmt.co.uk) | |  |
| **Emma Butcher** | 020 7344 9263 | [ebutcher@smmt.co.uk](mailto:ebutcher@smmt.co.uk) | |  |