



Sanderstead Local Policing Team
New Addington Police Station
Addington Village Road
Croydon
CR0 5AQ

Tel - 0208 721 2470 or 101

Email - sanderstead.snt@met.pnn.police.uk

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Dear Sanderstead Resident,

Staying Safe When Selling a Vehicle Privately

Whilst the ward of Sanderstead has some of the lowest crime statistics in the borough, residents still need to take steps to reduce the chances of being made victims of motor vehicle crime.

On 31st December 2016, a Sanderstead resident was contacted by a male who responded to a classified advert for the sale of their car. When the male arrived, he started to ask apparently legitimate questions you would expect someone to ask when interested in buying a car. The male asked to look under the bonnet and checked the oil level. He then put the bonnet down and asked the car owner if he could start the car. Once the keys were given to the male, he got in the car, started the engine and simply drove off.

On 1st January 2017, a resident in West London had their car stolen under very similar circumstances. Again their car was advertised online and the male drove off once the engine was started. Our colleagues in Surrey Police are also investigating a similar incident on the same day in bordering Tandridge beat.

Officers from the Metropolitan Police and Surrey Police are still investigating these three incidents and exploring whether they are linked to the same suspect.

Although the buying or selling of a vehicle is usually straightforward, both buyers and sellers can leave themselves open to becoming the victim of crime. Do not let the excitement of buying or selling a vehicle compromise your safety or that of your money. This is one of the most expensive transactions most people ever undertake.

In light of these recent incidents, we advise the following:

- Do not let the potential buyer test drive the car alone, even if they leave their own car keys as security (these might be stolen keys!)
- Do not leave the keys in the ignition when swapping seats.
- Do not leave the engine running without being in the car yourself.
- When you do take them out for a test drive, check they buyer has adequate insurance cover, otherwise you could be liable for any accidents they may have.

The Vehicle Safe Trading Advisory Group (VSTAG) was set up as the result of the Metropolitan Police having a significant number of fraud allegations reported to them by people buying and selling cars.

For more information on how to prevent yourself from this type of crime, please visit the VSTAG website at <http://www.vstag.co.uk> or speak to the Sanderstead Local Policing Team on **0208 721 2470** or email sanderstead.snt@met.pnn.police.uk.

Yours sincerely,

PC Stephen Wilson
Sanderstead Local Policing Team

