

Home Security - UK - September 2010

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What is this report about?

According to the British Crime Survey, there is a long-term decrease in crime levels in the UK, including a decline in breaking and entering. There are several factors behind this, including lower prices for new electronic goods, which makes stolen items worth less. But another factor is better and more obvious security, as homes that have more security items fitted tend to see reduced victimisation from burglars. This gives mixed messages to consumers. On the one hand, they may feel that the chance of a break-in is reducing and so take less care about securing their homes, but on the other hand, they may pick up the key point that better home security will deter burglars. So how do consumers feel about the chances of a break-in and what are they doing about it?

What have we found out?

- The major DIY retailers dominate distribution of home security products, but this is a sector where specialists perform well because they can deliver installation services as well as home security goods. Good advice would motivate 18m adults to decide where they shop for home security.
- Some 9m adults would consider reviewing their home security when moving house or undertaking a major redecorating project.
- Awareness is driven by campaigns by the government, which has publicised the advantages of smoke alarms, the dangers of carbon monoxide and sensible precautions against burglaries. One in ten adults have fitted officially-endorsed security products and nine in ten have a smoke alarm - although only half regularly check that the alarm is in working order.
- Even though there is a long-term decrease in crime in the UK, widespread media reports of theft, violent crime and anti-social behaviour keeps fuelling awareness of theft and could even be blamed for creating a fear culture. In a typical year 2 in every 1000 homes will have a fire, 20 in every 1000 will be burgled and a tiny fraction (a total of 37 incidents nationally each year) will suffer from a carbon monoxide leak.
- But consumers are more worried than these statistics might indicate, as 9 million consider the area where they live to have a medium to high risk of a burglary, although this is far lower than the 34m who live in an area where they believe the risk of burglary is medium to low.
- For the future the ageing population, underlying growth in number of households in the UK and the trend towards living in flats will all help contribute to underlying growth in demand for home security items. As economic conditions improve and consumers begin to move house more regularly, we expect an upturn in demand.

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