

# Insurance Matters



Francis Townsend & Hayward Group

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## Do your sums add up?

More than one in ten Britons do not have insurance cover to protect the contents of their home. According to new research, this figure rises to one in five in London, while in Scotland just 5% have no contents insurance. The financial sense of not having contents insurance should be questioned. When household belongings are destroyed through flood, fire or theft, you could suddenly be faced with the cost of having to replace items you have acquired over a number of years.

Over the last decade, the number of millionaires has grown by 17% per year in Britain, yet many personal possessions are only insured under a standard household policy and as a result are losing out on the benefits of specialist 'high net worth' insurance.

Don't be misled, you don't need to be a millionaire to have a High Net Worth policy. Most people's wealth builds up over time as paintings, ornaments and furniture are gradually acquired but when was the last time you had them valued? Was it when you first took

out the insurance? How many of you calculate the total value of your belongings: furniture, carpets, curtains, computers, white goods, electrical goods, clothes, your music collection, children's prams pushchairs, toys and golf clubs? The value quickly adds up and as many of you will find your sums insured may fall short on standard household insurance policies.

High Net Worth policies offer greatly enhanced protection and services and can cover a wide range of items, such as fine art, antiques and building reinstatement.

As business insurance brokers you may not have considered us for your household insurance. However should you think that you are eligible for high net worth household cover, please give us a call and we will be happy to discuss your insurance needs with you.

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### Inside this issue

Do your sums add up?

Car thieves have evolved

What is the true value of art and antiques?

Identity Theft

Are you a frequent traveller?

## Car thieves have evolved

With improved physical and electronic vehicle security, car thieves have increasingly been forced to resort to burglary, mugging and car-jacking to obtain your car keys and to steal your car.

Insurers are warning homeowners to be careful where they put their car keys and to view the security of their keys as they would other household items. Many of us just throw our car keys down when we get home and give little thought about what that could mean if we were burgled. Most of us would never dream of leaving £14,000 lying around the home (the average cost of a new car), so it pays to be more cautious. Take greater care with your car keys and consider keeping them in a locked cabinet or hidden away, not lying on the hall table.

Your duty of care also extends to outside the home. Newsagents and petrol stations are easy targets. Many motorists happily fill up at the petrol station and leave their keys in the ignition whilst going to the kiosk to pay. This is also true of those who park outside a newsagents to collect the morning paper.

Be aware, if a vehicle is stolen as a result of you leaving the keys in the vehicle, the insurer will invariably seek to reject the claim on the grounds that you did not take 'reasonable care'. The message is clear - use common sense and keep your keys out of sight and in a safe place as thieves will do almost anything to get your car.

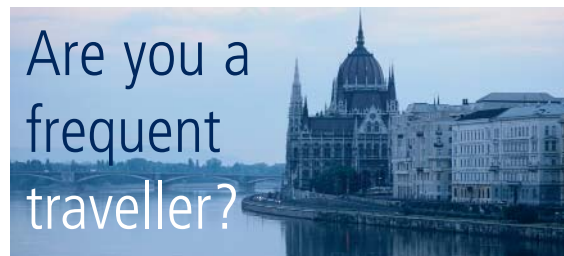




# What is the true value of art and antiques?

Owning a piece of art or a collection of paintings and other objects has ceased being the domain of only the rich and famous. Growing numbers of small investors, affluent homeowners with well paid jobs and expensive possessions are putting their savings into fine art, yet failing to adequately insure them for their true value.

Research has found that many collectors insure their art and antiques on a standard home insurance policy, most of which exclude art and antiques as standard. Therefore many collectors potentially face a big shock when it comes to making an insurance claim. Their disappointment comes from their failure to re-evaluate their possessions on a regular basis or not have it valued at all. In fact, a recent survey carried out by a leading insurer showed that fine art is being under insured by up to 80% of its true value. Contact us for more details.



## Are you a frequent traveller?

Every year, UK residents go on more than 59 million overseas journeys. Two out of five travel without adequate insurance, or none at all.

Travelling has never been so accessible. Low cost airlines and great holiday deals mean we are tempted more than ever to pack a suitcase and jet off to a foreign destination, with some forgetting to arrange their travel insurance. If you are a frequent traveller and go on holiday more than once a year, you could benefit from annual travel insurance. You will be covered for any number of trips in a year, each up to a maximum of 31 days – a perfect solution for those who like to go on long weekend city breaks as well as taking a 'big' holiday in the summer.

Travel insurance is a vital component when planning a holiday and rescues holidaymakers from all manner of unfortunate incidents. We know how important your holidays are and how much you look forward to them. Contact us to find out more about our travel insurance policies which offer a first class service and great value cover.

## Identity Theft — One of Britain's fastest growing crimes

Your identity is a valuable commodity. It is made up of your personal details (for example your name, address and date of birth) a collection of documents and records such as passports, driving licences, birth certificates and your bank details. All of these details are potentially useful to identity thieves.

Identity theft is not a victimless crime. In 2004 the CIFAS (Credit Industry Fraud Avoidance System), the UK's fraud prevention service, identified and protected over 50,000 victims of identity theft, up from 43,000 victims in 2002. Research has found that one in three of us has been or will be a victim of identity theft, which costs the economy £1.3 billion a year.

### Stolen identity

Criminals steal identities for a number of reasons, such as to take out loans, withdraw benefits or apply for credit cards in someone else's name. The cleverer the identity thief the longer they'll keep you in the dark about what's going on in your name. On average victims don't realise their identity has been stolen for at least 14 months.

How the thieves do it:

#### 1. The Phisher

'Phishermen' trick people into revealing their personal details (such as their passwords or credit card numbers) by imitating reputable websites. This is known as 'phishing'.

#### 2. The Squatter

Previous address fraud is one of the most common methods of identity theft. If you move house, make sure you redirect your post as soon as you move (get a form from your local Post Office).

#### 3. The Bin Raider

Last year Experian revealed that one in five bins contained enough information to steal an identity. Bin raiding involves thieves scavenging through your rubbish for any discarded documents like utility bills, credit card receipts or bank statements.

#### 4. The Jackal

The Jackal acquires the identity of a deceased person. On average the identities of thirty deceased individuals are taken over by criminals each week in the UK, according to figures from CIFAS.

#### 5. The Cold Caller

Be careful about disclosing personal or financial information to people who cold call you, even if they claim to be from your bank, your credit company or another official organisation.

### Basic precautions

- Think before you give out personal details - who is asking and why do they need to know? Banks will rarely send a letter or phone to ask for personal details
  - Never give out your PIN number or online password to anyone
  - Remember it's not just your bank statements and passports you need to protect - utility bills and any document which can be used as proof of your address are useful to identity thieves
  - Dispose of all personal documents carefully - shred them before you throw them out
  - If you move house make sure you have all your mail redirected straight away
  - Check bank statements and credit card bills promptly and make additional checks during the month online or from mini-statements
  - Don't have the same PIN number/online password for your different accounts
  - Don't put cash machine receipts in bins nearby, and do tear them up before you throw them away
  - If you believe your details may be used by a fraudster (e.g. you've been burgled or mugged) and had your personal documentation stolen, you can register an entry against your address to alert companies to the need for caution when processing applications from that address.
- CIFAS, the UK's fraud prevention service, runs the Protective Registration Scheme and this is administered on its behalf by Equifax. To register, call 0870 010 2091 or go to [www.cifas.org.uk](http://www.cifas.org.uk)

