

FEAR OF THEFT STRIKES THE I-POD GENERATION

A quarter of Britons (26 per cent) fear they are walking targets for theft because of the expensive belongings, such as i-Pods and mobile phones, they carry in public. The findings from **Lloyds TSB insurance**¹ reveal that a quarter of the population regularly carry items worth £200 in their bags and pockets, with young people owning the most valuables and feeling the most at risk.

According to the research, one in ten people (13 per cent) say they carry up to £300 worth of valuables every time they step out of the door. Young people (aged 16-24) are prime targets for thieves. One in ten (12 per cent) carry items worth up to £400, compared to just six per cent of the wider population.

Fear of being a target for theft is also more common among younger people. Two in five (38 per cent) of those aged 16-24 said they felt at risk, as did a third (30 per cent) of 24-34 year olds. In contrast, only a fifth (22 per cent) of people aged 45-54 felt thieves might target them for their belongings. Londoners feel more at risk of theft than anywhere else in the country, with a third (33 per cent) believing they are a target. This compares to just one in five (19 per cent) in the South West and North West (22 per cent).

In London, almost one in ten (8 per cent) claimed they had been physically threatened or attacked because of the belongings they were carrying. This compared to just three per cent in Wales and the South West and two per cent in the North West.

Phil Loney, managing director, Lloyds TSB Insurance, said: "As gadgets get smaller we're squeezing ever more expensive items into our pockets and handbags. It's the younger 'i-Pod generation' that is feeling the most at risk of crime, and with many carrying phones and MP3's as well as cash, the fear is unsurprising."

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Phil Loney added: “Unfortunately crime is a fact of life, but there are basic precautions people can take. Anyone carrying expensive phones, MP3 players or jewellery should make sure they are hidden out of the sight of potential thieves. But beyond that it is important to check these items are insured. It is vital that anyone carrying valuables outside checks that they have extended home contents insurance, to cover them in case something does happen.”

As well as the typical handbag and jacket fillers, such as wallets, keys and i-Pods, many admitted to carrying more unusual or expensive items. Among the quirkier belongings were darts, Mont Blanc pens, a silver propelling pencil and even a dog.

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Notes to editors:

¹ Research conducted by Tickbox.net in August 2005. Sample size of 1,765

For more information:

Emile Abu-Shakra

Lloyds TSB Press Office

Tel: 020 7356 1878

Emile.abu-shakra@lloydstsb.co.uk

www.mediacentre.lloydstsb.com