



## Pushchair 'black market' worth £60 million

*The vogue for increasingly expensive buggies has sparked a new crime wave, according to a study. Findings from Halifax Home Insurance reveal thefts of baby strollers have almost doubled in the past year fuelling a thriving black market now worth an estimated £60 million.<sup>1</sup>*

- *Sales of baby buggies costing more than £500 have increased by 40 per cent*
- *Baby buggy thefts have almost doubled in the past 12 months*
- *Parents are unwittingly fuelling the buggy 'black market' through second-hand purchases.*

Sales of top-of-the-range buggies have risen by 40 per cent as parents compete to buy the latest, most sophisticated models. A high re-sale value makes these items a prime target for opportunist thieves.<sup>2</sup>

This combined with an increase in the number of strollers 'on the road' following the recent baby boom<sup>3</sup> has meant there is now an abundance of valuable buggies for robbers to cash in on.

The study suggests that criminals are even stealing specific models, with the Bugaboo Bee Plus (worth £459), Silver Cross 3D (£250), Quinny Zapp (£150) and the Maclaren Techno XT (£196) among those sought after.<sup>4</sup>

Thieves seize these unoccupied strollers most frequently from inside the home (22 per cent) or just outside the property (11 per cent), while car parks, cafés and restaurants are other buggy-theft hotspots.<sup>5</sup>

But as the value of pushchairs increases, almost a quarter of parents (23 per cent) have been forced to buy second-hand buggies rather than new ones, mainly from online auction websites, or from friends

and family.<sup>6</sup> Saving money is a clear motive, considering the average parent purchases three buggies in their lifetime. Some serial buggy-buyers acquire as many as five or six.<sup>7</sup>

Yet unknowingly these parents are fuelling the buggy black-market, with criminals easily able to sell pushchairs on popular auction sites – where they sell for as much as £599.<sup>8</sup>

David Rochester, Head of Underwriting at Halifax Home Insurance comments:

"It may seem surprising that thieves would stoop so low, yet it appears the increasing value of baby buggies has caused parents to become a target for thieves. We recommend all new parents make sure buggies are safely secured when stored in the home, and not left visible in porches or driveways where they can be easily stolen as they are on wheels, enabling a quick getaway."

Despite the high value of buggies, almost a fifth of parents (17 per cent) are unaware whether their pushchairs are covered under their insurance policy if stolen from inside the home, while a fifth (20 per cent) don't know if they're covered if the pushchair is stored outside.

Halifax Home Insurance covers buggies under home contents insurance to an unlimited value if taken from inside the home. Buggies in garages and outbuildings are also covered up to £2000, and up to £500 if left outside the home but within the grounds of the property. Optional additional personal belongings cover can be purchased to cover buggies in public places up to a limit of £1,500.

## ENDS

### Halifax Home Insurance

- Halifax Home Insurance is underwritten by St Andrew's Insurance plc.
- There is no upper limit on the sums insured for buildings and contents insurance (some limits apply to single and high risk items, and contents away from the home).
- Further details of Halifax Home Insurance products can be found online at [Halifax.co.uk/insurance](http://Halifax.co.uk/insurance), by calling 0800 169 8785 or by visiting your local branch

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### Methodology

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## Methodology

Unless otherwise stated, all research was commissioned by Halifax Home Insurance plc and conducted by 72 Point Research in October 2010. The research programme used a nationally representative survey of **2,000 UK parents 18+**.

## Footnotes

1. 34.02 per cent of baby buggies that were stolen were taken in the last 12 months. This is compared to 18.56 per cent that were taken 1-2 years ago (a percentage increase of **83 per cent**), or **almost double**.

72 per cent of UK households have children (ONS). According to the latest Communities and Local Government figures there are 25,751,000 households in the UK. Therefore 18,540,720 UK households have children.

Of these, five per cent have reported they've had a buggy stolen (927,036), 34.02 per cent of which were in the last 12 months. This equates to **315,378** baby buggies stolen in the last 12 months. The average baby buggy costs £188.39, therefore  $188.39 \times 315,378 = \text{£}59,414,061$  or **almost £60 million**.

2. The number of parents buying top of the range baby buggies (defined as costing in excess of £500) has increased from 3.68 per cent to 5.2 per cent – a percentage increase of 41.3 per cent. The timescale is based on asking parents how much they paid for a buggy for their oldest child compared with their youngest.

3. Source: ONS. In 2008 the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) was at its highest point for 35 years <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=369>

4. Of those that have had a baby buggy stolen, 18.56 per cent reported it was a Bugaboo Bee Plus, 10.31 per cent said it was a Silver Cross 3D, 9.28 said it was a Quinny Zapp and 7.22 per cent said it was a Maclaren Techno XT. 'None of the above' constituted 15.46 per cent. Prices obtained from Babys-Mart.co.uk, Toys "R" Us, Boots.com and Tesco.com respectively in October 2010.

5. The majority of these buggies were taken from either within or outside the home (22 per cent / 11 per cent), from a café or restaurant (13 per cent), or from the back of a car (8 per cent).

6. 22.54 per cent of parents bought their most recent baby buggy second hand. 6.83 per cent of these were from online auction sites, while 8.92 per cent was from a family member or friend.

7. The average parent has purchases 2.55 buggies (simplified to three buggies). 4.95 per cent of parents have bought five buggies in their life time, while 2.9 per cent have bought six buggies.

8. After conducting a search on popular auction site eBay for 'baby buggy' on the 19<sup>th</sup> October, the highest price buggy was listed for £599.