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Handbags and belt join the crime fight

By Nathan Rous

Lingerie-style stealth belts and anti-mugger handbags were today unveiled as the latest weapon in the fight against street crime.

The range of fashion accessories has been designed to protect their owners from street-snatchers and pick-pockets. Fashion designers have worked with the Suzy Lamplugh Trust, the Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science and women's self-protection experts to develop the collection.

Anti-mugger undies



It is being launched at the Design Council in London.

Items include lingerie belts used for concealing purses, and slings for hiding mobiles and other personal valuables.

Marketed by Selfridges and other stores throughout the UK, the accessories are designed to deter four of the most common techniques employed by street criminals.

These are dipping, grabbing, lifting and slashing.

The range includes security features such as anti-slash materials, cut-proof straps, combination lock clips and personal alarms.

Social

Designer Adam Thorpe said: "We have a track record of producing designs which tackle social issues head on and there's little doubt that street crime as an issue is in the forefront of many people's minds at the moment."

"This range is our response to that as designers."

"By reducing the risk that users will be targeted by criminals our new products should make them feel more secure when they're out and about."

"At the same time they're extremely fashionable and desirable."

"They won't make users look like riot police - secure design doesn't have to look criminal."

The launch was given extra backing with the start of a new 'Guardian Angel' patrol scheme in London's crime-ridden West End.

The 25 wardens - known as Red Caps - will patrol the West End shopping district, pounding beats along the Bond Street, Oxford Street and Regent Street areas, offering help and advice to tourists and shoppers.