The recent surge in metal thefts has prompted the implementation of several prevention schemes. In the UK this been alongside repeated calls for changes to relevant legislation, particularly updating the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 1964 to help thwart metal thieves and increase the transparency of the scrap metal industry. Presently, reliable evidence on the effectiveness of preventive measures is limited. Robust evaluations to complement anecdotal reports are required. An important requirement of any evaluation of metal theft prevention activities is to demonstrate that any changes in the levels of theft cannot be explained by simple changes in the price of metals.

Efforts to reduce metal theft have tended to focus on two areas: 1) making it harder to steal metals and 2) making it riskier or less rewarding to sell stolen metals. These are expanded on below:

1. Across several crime types, evidence demonstrates that increasing the effort required to steal an item can lead to reductions in the levels of theft. Various target hardening schemes have therefore been implemented to reduce the ease with which metals can be stolen. These include the implementation of security measures, such as the chaining of manhole covers or the caging of air conditioning units. It can also refer to changes in practice to remove available targets, such as not leaving copper piping at building sites or copper cabling alongside railway lines. In addition, measures have been put in place to increase the security at places where metals are commonly found. Removing gaps in perimeter fences near railway lines and controlling access to utility companies or construction sites are common examples.

2. **Property marking**: Many groups affected by metal theft now use invisible foren1ly0a