

# Setting up a No Cold Calling Zone

Hundreds of No Cold Calling Zones are now operating successfully across the UK with reports of significant crime reduction and a greater feeling of security amongst residents.

This guidance has been put together to help local communities in conjunction with local authorities set up their own No Cold Calling Zones. The guidance is divided into four sections and includes information on:

### **Section 1 – WHAT & WHY?**

- No Cold Calling Zones
- Doorstep crime
- Criminal Offences

### **Section 2 – GETTING STARTED**

- Selecting an area
- Information packs
- The voting procedure
- What happens when residents are in favour
- How callers are made aware they are in a No Cold Calling Zone
- Launching the scheme

### **Section 3 – OTHER PARTNERS & EDUCATION**

- Neighbourhood Watch
- Basic crime prevention & awareness

### **Section 4 – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

- Exempt callers
- Dealing with unwanted callers
- Charity Collectors
- Reducing unsolicited telephone calls & junk mail

## 1 WHAT & WHY

### What is Doorstep Crime?

This is crime arising from doorstep callers; bogus workmen, high pressure sales people, bogus officials and distraction burglary. Distraction burglary is where the householder is distracted by one caller whilst an accomplice steals money/possessions. It is now well established that distraction burglaries and rogue doorstep trading are all too often interlinked. A zone can assist in detecting doorstep criminals by raising awareness amongst residents leading to an increase in reporting of suspicious or criminal activity.

The number of doorstep crime incidents reported to the Trading Standards Services has grown significantly over the past few years. In response to this partners have developed a number of strategies to combat it - one of which is the setting up of 'No Cold Calling Zones'.

### What is a No Cold Calling Zone?

No Cold Calling Zones should be considered where there is a real need to stop sellers/callers due to concerns for the well-being of the residents.

They are a crime prevention initiative implemented by the residents themselves but supported by the Public Protection Partnership and Thames Valley Police. They aim to deter unscrupulous cold callers and empower residents to say "No". Although some cold callers are legitimate, there is a minority who commit doorstep crime.

### Is it illegal for cold callers to call within a No Cold Calling Zone

The Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 state

*"Conducting personal visits to the consumer's home ignoring the consumer's request to leave or not to return, except in circumstances and to the extent justified to enforce a contractual obligation."*

The consumer's request can be in the form of a "No Cold Callers" doorstep sticker (see Section 2 "Information packs")

## **2 GETTING STARTED**

### **Selecting an area**

The size of zones varies greatly across the UK from just a few homes to a number of streets. Ideally, the area for a No Cold Calling Zone should be easily defined by its boundary and manageable by the coordinator.

The most important thing is that the initiative has the wholesale support of local residents. Consultation with residents is a vital first step, not only to get consent, but also to raise awareness of the issues and encourage community involvement. It is known that doorstep criminals will target particular properties, areas or residents. Vulnerable people, older people and others living alone, are especially at risk.

### **Information packs**

Any proposed zone requires a co-ordinator to distribute the relevant information packs provided by the Public Protection Partnership. Each information pack contains a letter informing the householder that their area is being considered for the zone, a leaflet on Doorstep Sales, a voting card and a “No Cold Callers” sticker.

### **The consultation**

Consultation cards are distributed to each household in the area by a nominated coordinator. Residents are asked to indicate whether they are in favour, against or indifferent to their area becoming a No Cold Calling Zone. There is only one response per household permitted. The consultation cards can be collected by the co-ordinator on a pre-determined date or, as is more commonly the case, returned to an agreed address.

If more than 2/3rds of householders are in favour, then the zone will be implemented. Indifferent votes or unreturned cards, including vacant households, will be considered as an against vote in the overall total.

### **How will cold callers know they are in a No Cold Calling Zone?**

Trading Standards will erect metal street signs at the entry and exit point of the zone to effectively notify would-be cold callers of the residents’ wish not to be called upon.

It is important that each household within the zone displays their “No Cold Calling Sticker” in a prominent position on their door or window. (Ignoring this sticker could be deemed an offence under the regulations mentioned in Section 1)

### **Launching the scheme**

The nominated co-ordinator will deliver a letter to each household informing them that the zone has been implemented and details on how to report unwanted Cold Callers.

A public launch will help raise awareness and encourage support from both the public and partner organisations but is not essential.

### **3 OTHER PARTNERS EDUCATION**

#### **Neighbourhood Watch**

Neighbourhood Watch is a well-established National scheme usually operated and managed through the local police, but delivered by local residents and volunteer Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators. The organisation and local focus of Neighbourhood Watch has made them one of the most common local partners.

Other local partners which may be keen to assist include:

- Community wardens
- Parish Councils
- Social Landlords
- Tenants' associations
- Age UK
- Social Services
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Fire and Rescue Service
- Faith organisations

#### **Basic crime prevention and awareness/education measures**

The No Cold Calling Zone is only one part of the picture when it comes to reducing crime.

Basic crime prevention and security issues such as the use of door chains / bars and checking IDs are vital. These cost very little but can be extremely effective if residents choose to use them. It may be that one of the partner organisations will be able to help with the supply or even the fitting of such equipment to older people's homes. There are free installation schemes for older people available through some local Age UK organisations.

#### **Approved trader schemes**

If you require work carried out on your home there are lots of companies of all types registered with organisations who endorse companies which are committed to trading fairly.

- Buy with Confidence - [www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk](http://www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk)
- Which? Trusted Traders - [trustedtraders.which.co.uk](http://trustedtraders.which.co.uk)
- Trustmark - [www.trustmark.org.uk](http://www.trustmark.org.uk)

### 3 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### Are there any exemptions to who can call within the zone?

The following are not intended to be excluded from a zone:

- Regular rounds people e.g. milkman or postman,
- Companies with pre-booked appointments e.g. utility companies,
- Religious groups,
- Electoral candidates,
- Charity collectors (house to house collectors with Council permit). (Also see page 8).

Please note; leaflet dropping is permitted within a No Cold Calling Zone.

#### What can a resident do if they have an unwanted caller?

A resident is under no obligation to open the door to anyone. If a resident does not wish to be called upon at the door, Trading Standards advise the resident to politely inform the caller that they are not interested in conducting business in this manner and to not return.

If the resident is concerned about the cold caller visiting households in the area, they can telephone Trading Standards on 01635 519930. Trading Standards will attend if it is appropriate and they have the resources to do so. Trading Standards will not attend for any of the exemptions listed above.

If the unwanted caller fails to leave the residents' premises or the resident feels threatened then they should contact the Police on the 999 number.

#### What about charity collectors

In September 2015 the Institute of Fundraising added the following to their code:

##### *16.10 Conduct of Collections*

*Fundraisers MUST NOT knock on any door of a property that displays a sticker or sign which includes the words 'No Cold Calling'.*

Therefore if a household is displaying a "No Cold Callers" sticker then charity collectors who collect in accordance with this code of practice should respect their wishes not to be cold called upon.

#### What about unsolicited telephone calls and junk mail?

These types of callers are not covered by a NCCZ.

- To reduce the number of unwanted sales telephone please visit the Telephone Preference Service website at [www.tpsonline.org.uk](http://www.tpsonline.org.uk) or call 0845 070 0707
- To limit the number of unsolicited mail please visit the Mail Preference Service website at [www.mpsonline.org.uk](http://www.mpsonline.org.uk) or call 0207 291 3310

If you or someone you know has become a victim of a scam please ring Trading Standards on 01635 519930.

If you witness a crime being committed or are in fear of your safety ring the police immediately on **999**.

This scheme is operated by the Trading Standards Service, Public Protection Partnership (a *shared service provided by Bracknell Forest Council, West Berkshire Council and Wokingham Borough Council*).

If you require this information in a different format, such as audio tape, or in another language, please ask an English speaker to contact Trading Standards.

Tel: **01635 519930**

email: **[tsadvice@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:tsadvice@westberks.gov.uk)**