



Setting up

NO

Cold Calling
Zones



WHAT AND WHY

No cold caller zones

Quite simply, this is about local residents or communities having the confidence to say “NO” to uninvited salespeople and to warn rogue traders and cold-callers that they are not welcome.

Following successful trials, this information pack has been put together to help local communities set up their own cold-calling zones. The pack is divided into three sections and includes information on:

Section 1 – WHAT & WHY

- Doorstep crime

Section 2 – GETTING STARTED

- Key partners
- Funding
- Selecting an area
- Signs & Door stickers
- Residents packs and information
- Launching a scheme

Section 3 – RUNNING THE SCHEME

- Basic crime prevention messages
- What to do if somebody cold calls
- Measuring success

WHAT AND WHY

Doorstep Crime

This is crime arising from doorstep callers, bogus workmen, high pressure salespeople, bogus officials and distraction burglary. It is now well established that distraction burglaries and rogue trading are interlinked - all too often, the seemingly innocent doorstep seller is actually checking things out for a re-visit to carry out a burglary or distraction burglary.

Whilst this type of criminal behaviour can impact on anybody in any place, research shows that older people are particularly vulnerable, especially those living alone.

A national Trading Standards Institute survey involved feedback from 9,000 randomly selected households. The results showed that nationally, 96% of people simply did not want doorstep cold-callers and nobody actually welcomed them.

The number of serious doorstep crime incidents reported to both the police and trading standards services has grown significantly over the past few years. Incidents involving older people losing thousands of pounds are now not unusual and what has become clear is that the response and support mechanisms of enforcement agencies has not kept pace with the skills and organisation of the criminals.

GETTING STARTED

Key partners

The support of partner organisations is essential to the success of this initiative. However, the level of commitment from partners will vary from area to area.

For local schemes to succeed, there will need to be a local champion (manager). This could be, for example, an enthusiastic Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator, a community support officer, a community warden, or indeed anybody willing to give a little of their time to help their local community.

With the co-operation of local residents a scheme can be established without the support of official agencies such as the trading standards service or police, but far better that they be involved as they can make a major contribution to its success.

Community safety issues are high on the agenda for local councils and, in every area of the UK, councils will have policies and groups specifically dealing with local issues such as this. In many cases funds are available to support local initiatives and staff may be on hand to give help and support. However, support will be more likely for areas which have a problem with doorstep crime / distraction burglary. Listed below are some of the key potential partners to contact when thinking about setting up a scheme.

Trading Standards

The Trading Standards Service is part of your local Council. It is a criminal enforcement agency, but at the same time, works closely with communities and businesses to protect them from rogue traders. Trading Standards is likely to be a key partner.

Police

All police forces are committed to crime prevention through community policing. How they do this varies from one force to another. In addition, the police generally take a lead role in organising Neighbourhood Watch schemes.

GETTING STARTED Continued

Local Council Local councils are required by law to consider community safety issues in relation to everything that they do and as such, it will be very high on their priority list. A local council will be a key partner if only through its network of contacts and ability to influence others.

Local Councillors All areas will have a local councillor, maybe two or even three. Local councillors are elected by local residents. In some areas there could be a parish / town councillor, a district councillor and a county councillor - three different people. In others, particularly unitary, metropolitan and London Boroughs, there may only just be one councillor representing an area. Whatever the case, councillors can be very influential people and their support is important.

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRP) These are high level partnerships between councils, police and other agencies. They help establish crime policy and direction for their areas (usually based on Council areas). CDRPs are a vital route to funding.

Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) These are more local and more 'hands on' (although in some areas they are part of, or the same as CDRPs). CSPs bring together many agencies with community safety roles and they have budgets to support local initiatives (contact through your local council).

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 of Neighbourhood Watch makes this an ideal vehicle on which to deliver 'no cold calling zones'.

For details of other partners and useful contacts see www.doorstepcrime.com

GETTING STARTED

Funding

It doesn't cost much to set up a No Cold Calling Zone, but it does cost. In most cases there will be funds available from or through one or more of the partners listed in the section "Key Partners".

Obviously costs will vary depending on the size and organisation of the scheme, but at its most basic, the following provides a rough outline.

Street signs *	Approximately £15 each
Door stickers *	Approximately £50 for 200
Information packs for residents *	Dependent upon content, but likely to use existing leaflets and the information material - possibly cost of envelope and covering letter.
Initial letters to residents	Copying and printing costs
Ongoing information to residents	Depending on what information and frequency

** For further details see following sections.*

GETTING STARTED

Selecting an area

Ideally, the area should be relatively small (20-40 properties) and easily defined by its boundary, e.g., a street, cul de sac, small estate or a Neighbourhood Watch area. The most important thing is that the initiative has the support of local residents. How this is achieved will depend on the local situation, but consultation with residents is a vital first step, not only to get consent (from the majority), 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. Older people, living alone, are especially vulnerable. Agencies, such as the Police and Trading Standards, will have reports, statistics and experience to help identify areas at risk and as such, make them priority for establishing No Cold Calling Zones. This will be particularly important to gain support (and possible funding) from Crime and Disorder Partnerships, Community Safety Partnerships or local councils.

Other local partners which may be keen to assist include:-

- Community wardens / Community beat managers
- Neighbourhood Watch
- Parish Councils
- Housing agencies
- Tenants' associations
- Age Concern / Help the Aged
- Social Services
- Home Improvement Agencies (accessed through local councils)
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Faith organisations

GETTING STARTED

Street signs

Fundamental to the success of the scheme will be to mark the area's boundaries with signs which clearly say that it is a "No Cold Calling" area.



These signs may be fixed to a lamp-post, wall etc, but not without the permission of the land owner or local council.

Signs saying "No Cold Calling Zone" are preferable to "No Doorstep Sellers" as the latter can perhaps be interpreted as not applying to callers for roof repairs, gardening work etc.

The local council highway department will be able to supply details of their street sign supplier, specifications, approvals required, likely cost etc., **and they must be consulted/involved.**

Where a "No Cold Calling Zone" is co terminus with a Neighbourhood Watch area, consideration should be given to placing the "No Cold Calling" message on the Neighbourhood Watch plate/signs.

GETTING STARTED

Door stickers



These have proved to be a useful way of deterring callers. On the outward facing side is a clear message such as “*Doorstep sellers - you are not welcome*”. On the other side (inward facing) is a simple crime prevention message and a contact number to call for help or report an incident.

Examples of door stickers can be found on www.doorstepcrime.com under “Information materials”.

GETTING STARTED

Residents' packs and information

It is important that residents are engaged in the initiative and that they understand their role and how to deal with uninvited callers.

There are a number of ways in which this can be done, including 1:1 personal visits, group meetings or leaflets (or preferably a combination of these, e.g., a personal visit to go through the information material).

Personal visits are very time consuming, but can be effective, especially when dealing with the harder to reach residents who are unlikely to attend a meeting or read through an information pack. Personal visits should preferably be made by somebody who knows the resident and, if possible, by appointment. Great care must be taken to follow good doorstep calling procedures (*See national cold calling protocol guidelines on www.doorstepcrime.com under "Initiatives, Regional and National"*).

Group meetings are an ideal way of getting the message across, but difficult to organise and persuade residents to attend. If, however, there is an existing group (residents' association or similar), then this is worth considering, especially if a representative from the police or trading standards will attend.

It is for each area / organiser to decide what material to include in a "residents' pack", but the advice is "less is more" - keep the message simple and short. The following is a suggestion:-

- Covering letter (*for example see www.doorstepcrime.com under "No cold calling zones"*)
- Door sticker (*see previous section on Door stickers*)
- Trading Standards / DTI leaflet
- Police / Home Office leaflet
- Contact details of organiser and how to report an incident
- "No cold calling" card to hand to any callers (*see later section "Running the Scheme"*).

GETTING STARTED

Launching the scheme

A high profile public launch will help raise awareness and encourage support from both the public and partner organisations. If possible, a formal launch should be arranged with invited guests including key players, local councillors and of course the local newspaper. The launch should be located within the area (or nearby) and local residents invited. Perhaps it could be run alongside a coffee morning or luncheon club or arranged at a community hall or similar venue. Attendees should be given residents information packs and doorstep crime prevention materials and somebody should be persuaded to make a short speech to formally launch the scheme.

It is important that the local press are involved and as such, you should think about providing a staged photo-opportunity and tell the press when and where you are doing this. The press like a photograph of 'real people', so if you have a willing, older resident then better than a line of dark suited local officials! If your local council / police are involved, then they will have professional press officers and it is important that they are kept informed as they will probably issue a press release and deal with the local media on your behalf.

RUNNING THE SCHEME

Basic crime prevention measures

An essential part of the scheme is to educate local residents about how to deal with cold callers and to give them the confidence to say “NO”. Basic crime prevention and security issues such as the use of door chains / bars and checking IDs is vital. In the national Trading Standards Institute survey (9,000 householders) only 13.4% of people reported asking for IDs, and only 1.3% ever checked them out. Even basic measures such as the use of door chains was disappointingly low with only 39.4% of households having one fitted and only 6.4% ever using them.

Basic advice can be found in leaflets produced by the Home Office, DTI, Police and Trading Standards. Most of these can be found on www.doorstepcrime.com under “Information Materials”. Better still, ask a local trading standards or police officer to help produce a basic advice package for residents.

An important element of the scheme will be to persuade residents to fit (or have fitted) a door chain / bar and if necessary a door mirror. These things cost very little, but can be very effective if residents can be persuaded to use them. It may be that one of the partners will be able to help with the supply, or even the fitting of such equipment to older people’s homes. For details of doorstep security equipment see www.doorstepcrime.com under “Doorstep Security Equipment”.

RUNNING THE SCHEME

If somebody cold calls

The system for dealing with incidents where sales people cold call within a “No Cold Calling Zone” will vary, dependent upon the scheme, partners and resources available.

The scheme should give householders the confidence to say “NO” and direct the cold caller out of the area. One way of doing this is to give residents small cards to hand to any caller explaining that they are in a “no cold calling zone” and that they do not buy from doorstep sellers. The advantage of this is that it is less confrontational and doesn’t need anything to be said (*for example see www.doorstepcrime.com under “No cold calling zones”*).

Ideally, cold callers should be reported either to the local champion (manager) or directly to the trading standards service / police depending upon pre-arranged local agreements. In some areas, systems have been arranged for somebody to attend to speak to the caller and support the householder. In some cases, this may be impractical, but if, for example, there is a locally sited community warden or a sheltered housing supervisor then this could be an option. However the local scheme is operated, a ‘trigger plan’ should be produced to advise householders about what to do, giving the necessary information and telephone contact numbers.

Irrespective of whether trading standards officers or police can make an immediate response, it is essential that where cold callers have been identified there is at least some follow-up action. One option is for somebody (preferably an official agency such as trading standards) to contact the person / business pointing out that they made a call in a ‘No Cold Calling Zone’, and insisting on future compliance. (*For example of letter see www.doorstepcrime.com under No Cold Calling Zones*). Whilst such letters can be sent from the local scheme champion, it will carry much more weight if it has the support of partners such as the police or trading standards, or at least, includes their logo or reference to them.

RUNNING THE SCHEME

Measuring success

If the scheme has the support (and in particular, funding) of official partners such as the police, trading standards or the Crime and Disorder Partnership, then almost certainly, they will wish to measure its success, not only to make sure that it's working, but also to encourage on-going commitment and support to the concept. One of the things which they might want to measure is whether, whilst successful for that particular area, it has merely moved the problem elsewhere.

Whatever the case, it is worth talking to the main partners before the launch to ensure that systems are in place to measure the success of the scheme in a way in which they want.

For an example of a resident evaluation form see www.doorstepcrime.com under "No Cold Calling Zones"

Details of monitoring, developing action plans and evaluating crime reduction strategies can be found on: www.crimereduction.gov.uk/aud05.htm

SETTING UP A NO COLD CALLING ZONE

Following successful trials, this information pack has been put together to help local communities set up their own “No cold calling zones”.

Quite simply, this is about local residents for local communities having the confidence to say “NO” to uninvited sales people and to warn rogue traders and cold callers that they are not welcome.

Distraction burglaries and rogue trading are interlinked – all too often the seemingly innocent doorstep seller is actually checking things out for a revisit to carry out a burglary or distraction burglary. A recent Trading Standards Institute survey showed that 96% of people simply did not want doorstep callers and nobody actually welcomed them.

This “Toolkit” contains all the information needed to set up a “No cold calling zone” and is based upon trials which have already proved successful in reducing the number of callers and levels of crime.



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To order further supplies of this booklet contact doorstepcrime@tsi.org.uk