

**SETTING UP A  
NO COLD CALLING ZONE**



◆ EDINBURGH ◆  
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

# **WHAT AND WHY**

## **No Cold Calling Zones**

A No Cold Calling Zone (NCCZ) is about helping local residents and communities to have the confidence to say "NO" to uninvited salespeople and to warn rogue traders and cold-callers that they are not welcome.

This booklet has been put together to help local communities set up their own NCCZ and includes information on:

## **WHAT & WHY**

- Doorstep crime

## **GETTING STARTED**

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

## **RUNNING THE SCHEME**

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

# 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 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.

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 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.

**Trading Standards** are a criminal enforcement agency, but also, work closely with communities and businesses to protect from rogue traders.

**Police** forces are committed to crime prevention through community policing. The police, often take a lead role in organising Neighbourhood Watch schemes.

**Local councils** consider community safety issues a priority. A local council will be a key partner if only through its network of contacts and ability to influence others.

**Local Councillors** can be very influential people and their support is important.

**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.

These are ideal for helping to set up a 'no cold calling zone'.

[www.neighbourhoodwatchscotland.co.uk](http://www.neighbourhoodwatchscotland.co.uk)

# 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, and are key to establishing No Cold Calling Zones.

Other local partners may be able to assist such as Community wardens, Housing agencies or Tenants' associations, Age UK, Social Services, Citizens Advice Bureaux and Faith organisations.

# GETTING STARTED

## Street signs and door stickers

These are fundamental to the success of the scheme and mark the area's boundaries with signs which clearly say that it is a "No Cold Calling" area.



With the permission of the land owner or local council these signs may be fixed to a lamp-post or wall.

Stickers have proved to be a useful way of deterring callers. On the outward facing side is a clear message such as "We don't buy at the door".

# 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 can be 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.

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.

# 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.

An important element of the scheme will be to persuade residents to fit (or have fitted) a door chain or bar. These things cost very little, but can be very effective if residents can be persuaded to use them.

## **RUNNING THE SCHEME**

### **If somebody cold calls**

The scheme should give householders the confidence to say "NO" and direct the cold caller out of the area. Ideally, cold callers should be reported either to the trading standards service or police. Trading standards may be able to attend to speak to the cold caller and support the householder. If trading standards officers or the police are not able to make an immediate response, where cold callers have been identified the cold caller can be contacted and it will be pointed out that they made a call in a 'No Cold Calling Zone', and insist on future compliance.

If you have any questions or to set up a zone please contact:

[trading.standards@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:trading.standards@edinburgh.gov.uk)

or

0131 529 3030

Police Scotland can be contacted on 101, or dial 999  
in an emergency



**CONTACTED OUT  
OF THE BLUE?  
SOUNDS TOO GOOD  
TO BE TRUE?  
STOP!**

Scams operate by post, online, telephone or face to face.  
Spot scams and stop scams by taking the following simple steps.

**CHECK**

unexpected calls, letters, and online  
contacts with someone you trust.

**GET ADVICE**

the Citizens Advice consumer service 08454 04 05 06.  
can provide advice and pass details on to Trading Standards.

**REPORT**

scams or suspected scams to Action Fraud  
0300 123 2040 [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk).

**TELL**

a friend, neighbour or relative about  
any scams you become aware of.

#ScamAware

