

RBWM COLD CALLING CONTROL ZONE POLICY

A. Introduction, Purpose and Considerations.

1. Cold Calling Control Zones are specified areas in which cold callers are discouraged from calling. They are not designed to stop all callers and thus regular callers, utility services, political canvassers and other known callers should not be deterred. Those involved in door to door selling may still call but should always provide prior notice of their intention to call.
2. Cold Calling Control Zones are designed to assist in areas that are considered to be vulnerable, but are not designed for areas that just feel that they do not want cold callers. Vulnerability can be measured in many ways but it may be an area of elderly persons, an area where there has been a high level of recorded crime, such as burglary or distraction burglary, or even an isolated area of a small number of properties.
3. Cold Calling Control Zones will discourage rogue traders who, for example, tell householders work needs doing and then charge exorbitant prices, sell poor quality items at high prices or pressure sell. The zones will also discourage those who use doorstep selling as the opening for distraction burglaries or to make plans for future burglaries.
4. Cold Calling Control Zones provide the opportunity for householders to collectively say “no” to the practice of cold calling. A zone should reduce the fear and threat felt by some householders when the doorbell rings and the caller is unknown.
5. Cold Calling Control Zones are visibly identified by overt street signs and by participants being encouraged (but not compelled) to display a sign on their door.
6. Cold Calling Control Zone participants are provided with information on how to deal with callers should the signage be ignored. The intention is that zones will have the support of the police and that police call handling staff will be aware of the scheme.
7. Consideration needs to be given to the size of a Cold Calling Control Zone. About 20 properties is a workable number, but a zone could be up to 3 or 4 or even more times this size. Too few properties and the zone will have little, if no impact, similarly if the zone is too large. A proposed zone should have identifiable boundaries, for example a break in the properties, the end of a street or a lamppost on which a sign is to be placed.
8. The creation of a zone is facilitated by trading standards, with the involvement of residents themselves and also of community safety, community wardens, the local police and, if appropriate, representatives of the parish council, a Neighbourhood Watch scheme, a residents’ group or other relevant community group. However, a co-ordinator for each zone will need to be nominated to ensure a smooth implementation. The Local Police Officer and/or Police Community Support Officer should also be part of the team if at all possible. They will provide valuable support and guidance and provide the support needed when first contacting the properties in question.

9. A Cold Calling Control Zone will not work without the support of those residents within the zone. This does not mean that a particular zone must have a 100% support from its residents, but it does mean that a scheme cannot be just “given” to an area. Residents will need to be contacted, and this is covered in the step by step guide to implementing a zone.

B. Step by Step Guide – Creating a Cold Calling Control Zone

This is a “Step by Step” guide to the creation of a Cold Calling Control Zone. It is not designed to be the definitive method but a guide to a successful implementation.

- 1) Following a request for the creation of a zone the first step is to decide whether there is actually a need for such a zone.
- 2) Put together a small team that will be responsible for deciding whether the zone is necessary and if so for its implementation.
 - a) The team needs to be sustainable with a commitment to see the process through and complete follow-up activities.
 - b) The team will need somewhere to meet.
 - c) The team will need access to facilities to create letters mailings.
 - d) The team will need access to a relatively small amount of funds (provided by the local authority) to cover the costs of packs, signs and mailing materials.
 - e) During the formation of the team consideration should be given to including the Local Police Officer and/or a Police Community Support Officer, as well as representatives from appropriate resident and/or other community groups, to work with trading standards and a representative from community safety and the community wardens.
- 3) From the team nominate a co-ordinator – ideally a resident.
 - a) The co-ordinator of a zone will be the main point of contact.
 - b) The co-ordinator should be willing to disclose a contact telephone number and a contact address is also required, although this could be a central office.
 - c) The co-ordinator will lead the project and be the point of contact for publicity.
 - d) The co-ordinator will be the point of contact for the Local Authority.
- 4) Identify evidence of a need for the zone.
 - a) Discuss the area being considered. What evidence is there to prove that a zone is required? There must be specific intelligence/evidence that doorstep crime exists in the area in question or that the zone will reduce or prevent crime or the fear of crime and that there is a high concentration of consumers who are particularly vulnerable to exploitation within the area. Will any signage to be used need to be in alternative languages – for instance if intelligence suggests a high incidence of foreign cold callers. The local authority, particularly trading standards, and the police will have reports, statistics and experience to help identify if this is so.
 - b) If there is insufficient evidence and/or no high concentration of vulnerable residents then there is no need for a zone and the process will be abandoned at this point.
 - c) If the evidence/concentration exists then visit the proposed zone, initially without calling on any of the residents, to ascertain where the boundaries to the zone would be, how many residencies there are in the zone, where signs would be placed and to ascertain whether there are any specific issues to be considered. The size of the zone must correspond to the geographic scope of the identified problem.

- 5) If the need for a zone is established then formal approval must first be obtained from the Council's Alley Gating/Cold Calling Control Zones Panel.
- 6) After gaining this approval, the affected residents must next agree to the establishment of the zone so the next step is to contact the residences in the proposed zone.
 - a) A scheme will not work without the support of the residents within the zone, but a 100% level of support is not required. The team will have to agree the level of support required for the zone to go ahead and it could be argued that anything above 50% is a majority support. On the other hand, less than 50% support in an area with a sizable minority of, for example, elderly residents may also be sufficient.
 - b) Initial contact is in two phases. The first is to send a letter (template attached) to each residence to advise them that the team will be calling (remember no cold calling!) and the second is to call to explain the proposal.
 - c) The team needs to agree a date and time during which members of the team will call to explain Cold Calling Control Zones. It is highly recommended that either the Local Police Officer or Police Community Support Officer be present. Identity badges need to be prepared for all of those included in the initial call and they must be worn during all calls. Consider the area when making this decision, would a daytime, early evening or evening call provide the best opportunity to speak to residents. Plan to complete the visits within a 1 to 2 hour period, allowing about 10 minutes per residence. The more callers you have the shorter the time span will be.
 - d) Plan a go live date for the proposed zone. This date should be one to two weeks after the initial call date.
 - e) Prepare a letter for each residence to explain that a Cold Calling Control Zone is being considered. The letter must include the date and rough time that you will be calling. Consider whether to include in this letter the offer of some lower level "pre-Zone" action for a specified period, such as the use of "No Doorstep Selling" stickers, to see if that removes the problem.
 - f) Deliver the letter to all residences a maximum of one week prior to the planned calling date, but give a couple of days notice.
 - g) Make the initial call on the residents. Each caller should carry a Cold Calling Control Zone information pack (to be developed) so they can say to the residents "one of these will be delivered to your home". It is highly recommended that either the Local Police Officer or Police Community Support Officer be present as this lends strength to the project and gives confidence to the residents. Remember that this is a vulnerable area so the fact that the police are present should alleviate fears.
- 7) During the visit the caller needs to record whether or not the resident is in favour of the scheme. They also need to check that there is a suitable place for the Cold Calling Control Zone stickers, which will be contained in the packs, to be placed should the resident agree to use the stickers. A view also needs to be taken as to whether the resident will need the information re-explaining to them when it is delivered. A "Visit Report" template is attached for this purpose.

- 8) It is probable that not all of the residents will be in when you make the visit. Arrangements can be made to call back but a further “you were out” letter template is attached to cover this situation. When setting the response date within the “you were out” letter do not allow more than a few days as this wait may delay your implementation.
- 9) Decide whether to continue.
Immediately after the deadline for any replies from residents that were not in an analysis of support for the scheme can be made. If there is insufficient support then it is recommended that the team considers this most carefully and if necessary makes the decision to abandon the scheme.
- 10) The go live process.
 - a) The go live process involves delivering the packs, putting up signs and gaining publicity.
 - b) Signage needs first to have been discussed with Streetcare – both in terms of erecting the signs (which are typically placed on lampposts) and also for details of street sign suppliers, specifications, approvals required, likely cost and so on.
 - c) On the agreed date deliver packs to all residents in the zone. Where the initial call record indicated a re-visit then a further explanation needs to be given to the residents during the delivery of the pack. Delivery may also include putting up the sticker for the resident if appropriate.
 - d) Put up the signs.
 - e) This is the day when the team may wish to gain publicity so this should have been considered and suitable action taken.
- 11) First follow-up.
About one week after the go-live process the zone should be visited to see how many of the door stickers are in place in homes where the resident agreed to display a sticker. Where a sticker is not in place a reminder should be given to the resident. A template letter is attached to assist in this process.
- 12) Second follow-up.
 - a) The second follow-up is designed to assist in measuring whether or not the zone was a success. It should be completed three to four months after the go-live.
 - b) Send out a letter to the residents in the Cold Calling Control Zone stating that you wish to ask them a few questions. The survey should not take more than a few minutes. A template letter is attached to assist in this process.
 - c) On the given date at the given time call on residents and ask the follow-up questions. (The letter must have been sent otherwise this visit constitutes cold calling.) If a door chain is not being used then advise the resident that it should be used. (Door chains should not be left in place over night as they pose a safety risk in the event of a fire.) Members of the initial team should make this visit and they must be wearing their identity badges. A “Follow Up Questionnaire” form is attached.
 - d) Analyse the results of the survey. Are more door stickers required? Is it considered a success? Did the residents complete registration for mailing, telephone calls and utility services?

- 13) What to do if somebody does cold call
- a) The Cold Calling Control Zone information pack will contain a small card for residents to hand to unwanted cold callers explaining that they are in such a zone and that they do not want to buy from doorstep sellers.
 - b) The pack will also contain instructions requesting residents to report cold callers to the trading standards service. The service will then contact the business/person and investigate or advise accordingly.
- 14) Regular review
- The need to maintain a Cold Calling Control Zone needs to be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it remains a proportionate measure. It is proposed that an annual review is appropriate, the format of which is to be decided by the team and the results documented.

Initial Contact Letter

To Whom It May Concern.

Dear Resident,

Cold Calling Control Zone

Fortunately, Distraction Burglaries are rare in the Royal Borough but when they do happen they can be extremely upsetting. *Group name* is working with the police and the Royal Borough's Trading Standards Service on a project to reduce Distraction Burglaries and Rogue Trading in the Royal Borough

Most people who call at your home are genuine although some may turn up unannounced and try and trick their way into your home. They may even turn up as builders or gardeners and try and talk you into paying large amounts of money for unnecessary work.

To combat doorstep crime we are inviting residents in your street to start a "Cold Calling Control Zone". This will involve putting signs on lampposts in the road telling people they are entering an area where residents do not buy goods and services from uninvited sales people. Stickers for your door or window will be provided, should you wish to display them, together with a free pack with various items to give you advice on what to do if someone still knocks on your door. The project is not intended to stop your regular rounds people or catalogue companies.

Information will also be supplied on how to reduce unwanted sales telephone calls and mail.

We would like the opportunity to explain to you the benefits of "cold calling control zones" and are arranging for your *group name* to call on you between the hours of *time and time on Day, Date*. The *your group name* will have an identification card and members of the local police force will also be in attendance in the street during this period.

Residents taking a stand together in this manner will reduce the chances of falling victim of this type of crime, especially the more vulnerable within our communities.

We thank you for your time and look forward to meeting you on the Date.

Yours faithfully
For *your group name*

Name
Scheme Co-ordinator

“You Were Out” Letter

To Whom It May Concern.

Dear Resident,

Cold Calling Control Zone

We recently wrote to you regarding the possibility of your street becoming a "Cold Calling Control Zone" and advised you that we would be calling today. Unfortunately, you were not available when we called.

Whilst doorstep crime is rare the scheme is a way of discouraging all cold calling. Surveys have shown that over 95% of residents do not want traders knocking on their doors and that residents are able to contact traders directly if they need work doing. In Cold Calling Control Zones traders who are known and welcome still call as normal. The scheme is not designed to stop regular rounds-people or meter readers.

We will continue with the creation of a Cold Calling Control Zone in your area providing a majority of households within the area are in support of the idea. If there is a majority in favour then the scheme should go live on *Date* and on this day a folder containing information and a sticker for your front door or window will be delivered to your address. Signs will also be erected in the street.

If you have any queries about this scheme please feel free to call me on *telephone number*.

Yours faithfully
For *your group name*

Name
Scheme Co-ordinator

“No Door Sticker” Letter

To Whom It May Concern.

Dear Resident,

Cold Calling Control Zone

We recently set up a Cold Calling Control Zone in your area and you agreed to display a door or window sticker. We have noticed that your door or window sticker is not in place. The sticker can be found in the green folder posted through your door.

We would be obliged if you would arrange for this to be put in place as soon as possible, as this will assist in you in NOT receiving cold callers. If you are unable to locate your pack or sticker, or do not now wish to display the sticker, please call me on *your telephone number*.

Your Doorstoppers Sticker

You will need to peel the back off this sticker to reveal the warning to cold callers, and we know this may be a little tricky!

Peel the back off the sticker and then place it on plain, smooth glass either on your front door or on a window near to your front door, so that it is clearly visible from the outside of your home. You can smooth the sticker into place using a soft dry cloth.

Yours faithfully
For *your group name*

Name
Scheme Co-ordinator

Follow-up Visit Letter

To Whom It May Concern.

Dear Resident,

Cold Calling Control Zone

A few months ago *your group name* set up a Cold Calling Control Zone in your area.

We would like the opportunity to ask you a few questions so that we can measure the benefits of the Cold Calling Control Zone and are arranging for *your group name* to call on you between the hours of *time and time on Day, Date*. The member of *your group name* calling on you will have an identification card and the survey should take a maximum of 5 minutes.

We thank you for your time and assistance in this matter and look forward to meeting you on the Date.

Yours faithfully
For *your group name*

Name
Scheme Co-ordinator

Follow-up Questionnaire

Completed by _____												
	Since the Cold Calling Control Zone Started											
	Was a householder available to answer the questionnaire	Was the Cold Calling Control Zone Sticker in place	Was door chain in place and used	Do you think the Cold Calling Control Zone is worthwhile	How many cold callers have you had	Has the level of callers reduced	Do you feel reassured	Are you more confident in dealing with a cold caller, should they call	Have you registered with the Mailing Preference Service	Have you registered with the Telephone Preference Service	Do you know where your pack is	If pack <u>lost</u>, do you require another pack
Address	Y or N	Y or N	Y or N	Y or N	0 or No.	Y or N	Y or N	Y or N	Y or N	Y or N	Y or N	Y or N
21 Example Road	Y	Y	N	N	0	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N
22 Example Road	N	Y										
Please return to the scheme co-ordinator												
Date _____												

