

Frequently asked questions

Q1. What is cold calling?

A1. Cold calling is the act of making unrequested and uninvited visits to consumers' homes with the intention of selling goods or services.

Q2. What is a No Cold Calling Zone?

A2. A No Cold Calling Zone is an area in which residents have stated they do not wish to receive unsolicited visits (cold calls) to their homes from organisations. In Newcastle the zones are set up by the Trading Standards service working with Northumbria Police and Community Safety.

Zones are selected on the basis of risk and local resident demand/enthusiasm. Crime and incident reports are examined and the demographics of proposed areas are sought. Before any zone is created local residents are fully consulted.

Q3. Why are you setting up No Cold Calling Zones?

A3. No Cold Calling Zones are being established to protect residents from unwanted doorstep callers. They are designed to act as a deterrent to rogue traders that residents will report their activities to Trading Standards and the police and as an alert to businesses that residents in the area do not wish to be called on at home without an appointment. The zones empower local residents to feel confident about sending unwanted callers away. The outcome is then a reduction in doorstep crime and distraction burglary and better reporting of doorstep incidents.

Q4. What sort of people is the zone designed to prevent calling?

A4. The zone is primarily designed to reduce instances of doorstep crime and distraction burglary and therefore, the primary purpose is to prevent rogue traders. However, the zone is there to stop any unwanted cold callers and to empower residents to have confidence to send away callers they do not wish to deal with.

The zone is not designed to prevent people from distributing leaflets.

Q5. How do businesses know they are operating in a No Cold Calling Zones?

A5. Residents in a NCCZ are all provided with double-sided window stickers to display on their front doors to make callers aware that the area is a No Cold Calling Zone and that the resident will not deal with them.

Q6. Where are the No Cold Calling Zones?

A6. You can check the locations of the No Cold Calling Zones on the Council's website at <https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/no-cold-calling-zone-locations>.

Q7. Is cold calling illegal?

A7. Cold calling may indeed be illegal if a reasonable request not to call upon a household, such as the display of a notice, is ignored by the caller. It is also the case that anyone who does cold call and offers to sell you goods or services that cost more than £35 is required to provide you with a written notice of your cancellation rights. If this notice is not given the contract for the goods or services may not be enforceable and the person who failed to give this notice will also be committing a criminal offence, which Trading Standards will investigate.

Q8. Can I refuse someone entry to my home?

A8. Yes, you are under no obligation to allow anyone to enter your home and can refuse access. You should never allow anyone access to your home unless you are able to verify their authenticity and confirm that they have a valid reason for being there. Legitimate callers will not mind being challenged and will expect you to ask them for identification and want to check that it is genuine.

Q9. How can I check whether a caller is genuine and has a legitimate reason for calling at my property?

A9. Very few people will actually have a legitimate reason for turning up at your home unannounced and without an appointment. However, on rare occasions some legitimate callers may call at your home. The most likely people to visit your home unannounced are utility companies attending your

property to read a meter. Most of these companies operate a password scheme allowing you to register a password.

Once you have registered your password, any caller from the company should be asked to provide the password before being given access to your property. If they cannot provide the password, they are not from the utility company and should be told to leave. You should be able to find the details for registering a password on utility bills, if you cannot find the details call the customer service number and ask about their password scheme.

Q10. Do you require a licence to cold call?

A10. You do not require a licence to cold call however, if you are selling goods door to door you will require a pedlar's licence. Pedlar's licences have to be obtained through the Police. Each individual caller is required to hold a pedlar's licence and not just the employer. Anyone who cold calls offering services is not required to hold a pedlar's licence.

NB: A Pedlar's licence is not a guarantee of authenticity or legitimacy.

Q11. As a business, how can I find out where the No Cold Calling Zones are in Newcastle?

A11. Our website contains a list of all the roads within our No Cold Calling Zones, so you can find out exactly which areas you should be avoiding. We advise that you visit our website regularly for updates on any new Zones.

Q12. Can politicians call when canvassing?

A12. The zones are not designed to prevent politicians from canvassing for elections, however, residents are under no obligation to speak to anyone at the door and canvassers are encouraged to respect residents' wishes.

Q13. Can religious groups call?

A13. As with politicians the zone is not designed to stop religious groups from calling. However, residents are under no obligation to speak to anyone at the door and religious groups are encouraged to respect residents' wishes.

Q14. Can Market researchers call?

A14. The zones are not designed to prevent market research from being undertaken. However, this should not be market research that includes the selling or promotion of goods or services. Where possible we would always encourage market researchers to make appointments before calling. Residents are under no obligation to speak to anyone at the door and canvassers are encouraged to respect residents' wishes.

Q15. Can charity collectors call?

A15. Whilst we are sympathetic, we have to acknowledge that residents have asked that they do not wish to be disturbed by any cold callers. Where we have contacted charities in the past because of complaints received, the charities concerned have readily agreed to honour the zones. This does not prevent charities from communicating to residents via letter or other forms of written communications.

Q16. What can be done if someone does cold call in a No Cold Calling Zone?

A16. It is not illegal to cold call, even in a No Cold Calling Zone. However, in a No Cold Calling Zone the residents have decided that they do not want cold callers. If Trading Standards receive complaints about businesses cold calling in a zone we will contact them making them aware that the area is a No Cold Calling Zone and ask them to refrain from cold calling on residents in that area.

Q17. What should I do if I receive a cold call?

A17. Trading Standards advice is always to say no to cold callers. We would advise against dealing with anyone who makes a cold call to your home to try to sell goods or services. Trading Standards encourage the reporting of cold calling incidents. Even if the cold caller has gone away we are always keen to have information about what happened as this can form vital intelligence for us.

To report incidents of cold calling you should telephone Citizens Advice consumer service on 0808 223 1133 or visit the website at <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>