

**Question to the Police and Crime Commissioner  
From the Public PCP Meeting 22 June 2023**

**Question**

“Dear Mr Lloyd,

Re: Cold Callers to residential addresses.

I'm writing to you to ask a question which may be helpful to you. I'm retired and spend most of my time at home. This question is a written submission for the Panel on 22nd June 2023 in St Albans.

I believe we all have a responsibility to protect our properties. We do what we can to keep our homes secure using locks, cameras, alarms and so on.

I wonder whether the Police and Crime Commissioner agrees with me that issuing licences to charities and allowing charities to attempt to sign people up for direct debits using national exemptions that allow 'cold calling' undermines our personal ability to protect our properties? It isn't unknown for criminals to 'case' buildings using cover stories and distraction techniques. I have (as a householder) no way of ascertaining whether someone 'collecting' or trying to gather financial information for direct debits is legitimate or not. Whilst I assume some of the charities who use cold calling are legitimate, I have had one or two instances where the ID used and the approach seems suspicious to me, but I'm not able to forensically examine documents at the door so it is irrelevant whether credentials shown are genuine or not from my point of view. I have also had my fair share of obvious scammers and 'Nottingham Knockers' - St Albans is definitely a target town for these approaches.

I think the world has moved on and legitimate charities can and do use street collections, direct mail, social media etc. in order to publicise their causes. I would rather there be a blanket ban on door to door collections. Even in the case of legitimate charities I believe the charities use agencies who train collectors with sales techniques, I'm not especially good natured but people less assertive than myself might not be aware of the use of sales techniques in such a situation, they might not be aware that they are interacting with a secondary fund raising company given that collectors appear in branded uniforms. People who wish to donate to charities have an enormous number of opportunities to do so and I believe door to door collecting is an outdated and unnecessary intrusion.

I haven't polled local opinions scientifically. My rough and ready enquiries lead me to believe that overwhelmingly people find door to door collectors intrusive and inappropriate. I have had considerable agreement that it is difficult for people to know who are legitimate callers and who are not, given that there are definitely people seeking to case properties or scam householders I believe that issuing all licences should cease. This in my view would make it clear that anyone knocking door to door is not legitimate.

Many thanks for your attention to this matter.

### **Response from the Police and Crime Commissioner**

“Thank you for the question and for taking the time to share your views with me. The issue of licensing is not a matter for the Police and Crime Commissioner, but rather for the Council and I suggest that you get in touch with them. If you have concerns about scam callers, then I would encourage you to sign up to OWL, where the Constabulary regularly shares information about fraud and scams as well as how to protect yourself against them.”