



# Targeted: Cold call bosses to get a taste of own medicine

**BOSSES** of companies that harass Scots with nuisance calls will be held personally responsible under a crackdown.

The Scottish Government is to set up a commission to consider tough measures designed to protect families from 'cold call cowboys' who flout the law.

Campaigners want to see unsolicited calls from certain sectors - such as PPI, car accident and medical negligence compensation claims - banned.

Research shows Scots are more likely to be targeted, with 91 per cent saying they have suffered from nuisance calls, compared to 71 per cent in the rest of the UK.

Nicola Sturgeon called a sum-

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mer summit, including consumer, industry and regulatory bodies, to examine practical solutions. She will now form a commission to make proposals to the UK Government.

The Scottish Government insists power over nuisance calls is reserved and any proposals would need to be approved by Westminster Ministry of Justice (MoJ).

But the MoJ said its Claims Management Regulator only monitors cold call companies in England and Wales, which means Scots have less protec-

tion than people south of the Border. An MoJ spokesman added that any steps taken in Scotland were a matter for Ministers at Holyrood.

The Scottish Government is expected to put pressure on firms to change business practices voluntarily, with penalties for bosses of those that continue to break the law. Vulnerable people will be given call-blocking technology.

Alex Neill, director of cam-

David Hickson, of the Fair Telecoms Campaign, said: 'The Ministry of Justice has a code of conduct that says companies and their agents can sell claims by telephone as long as they keep within the rules of the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

'They should change that and say these services should not be sold by telephone.'

In her Programme For Government, Miss Sturgeon said: 'We will establish a nuisance calls commission to deliver an action plan focused on empowering consumers to protect themselves, tackling persistently offending companies, supporting companies that want to do the right thing and seeking to improve the regulatory environment.'

Stephen Eckersley, ICO head of enforcement, said: 'We have acted on information provided by the public and specifically targeted companies that phone people in the middle of the night, ask to speak to deceased relatives or ring repeatedly after being asked to stop.'

A Scottish Government spokesman said: 'We will bring together a nuisance calls commission which will work with stakeholders to develop and implement solutions that will make a long-term difference.'

## 'Take action against this menace'

paigns and policy at Which?, said: 'Recent research shows that nuisance calls are a bigger issue in Scotland than the rest of the UK, so we welcome the announcement of a nuisance calls commission by the Scottish Government.'

'With 29 per cent of Scottish residents saying that they received 11 or more nuisance calls a month, compared to 17 per cent in the rest of the UK, the commission must ensure that businesses, regulators and the Government work together to take collective action against this everyday menace.'

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