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16 THE SUNDAY POST/November 25, 2012

War on nuisance calls being won

15,000 READERS SIGN UP



THE SUNDAY POST'S campaign on nuisance calls has taken a massive step forward.

Since we started the campaign, 15,000 of you have added your voice to demands for tougher action on cold calls.

We've highlighted the faults and dithering that has led to an out-of-control cold call feeding frenzy.

Finally, the Government and industry — pressurised into action by our campaign — are starting to act.

Although it marks a battle

By Gordon Blackstock

gblackstock@sundaypost.com

victory, we won't stop our war on nuisance calls until it is won.

Edinburgh West MP Mike Crockett, who we have joined forces with, said: "This latest shows our campaign is really making a difference."

"We have had a fantastic response to the campaign. I'm confident we can reach the 20,000 mark before Christmas."

VICTORY 1

THE Government's regulators have begun naming and shaming nuisance call firms — after we demanded they take the lead.

The Information Commissioner's Office has a list of firms consumers have claimed fall foul of the rules about the Telephone Preference Service. The body has graded firms who cause "concern" in a new traffic light system.

Some of the companies named have frequently come up during our investigations.

But the ICO stopped short of naming the three firms who are the worst offenders — because they say these companies, given the red rating, could face mammoth fines.

Four claims management firms named have been given a "green" rating — they've improved their practices after meetings with the ICO.

Seven others, including energy giants British Gas and Scottish Power, have been given the "amber" grading and ordered to improve. If they don't, the ICO say they face further action.

An ICO spokesman said: "We're working with these companies to make sure they get it right."

A spokeswoman for British Gas said: "We only use contact information if we have express permission to do so."

A ScottishPower spokesperson said: "We take any complaints very seriously and have been working closely with the ICO."

David Hickson of the Fair Telecoms Campaign said: "We support the action being taken."

Mike Crockett MP said: "Naming and shaming these companies is the only way to get them to stop."

VICTORY 2

THE body that represents telemarketing companies is cracking down on cold calling dementia sufferers.

The Direct Marketing Association is to issue new guidelines to its 800 members next week.

It comes after we highlighted the murky — and highly lucrative — industry in selling products to dementia sufferers over the phone.

In September we reported how campaigners claimed people with dementia were being conned out of millions of pounds every year, often without their families' knowledge.

Sufferer Jeannie Anderson and husband Scott from Aberdeen claimed a charity got hundreds of pounds after speaking to Jeannie. Scott was furious when he found out but said it was impossible to get his money back.

In October we told how Dundee pensioner and dementia sufferer Vera Livingston was duped into putting thousands of pounds of alarm equipment in her home.

Her furious sister, Kathleen Lockhart, found out and managed to cancel the order at the last minute.

A spokeswoman for the DMA said: "The new guidelines will promote a more responsible approach for our members."

David Hickson, of Fair Telecoms Campaign said: "This is a step in the right direction."

SIGN UP NOW

WE the undersigned are fed up with the plague of nuisance calls and call on the Government to take action.

Name Mobile
Email Postcode

SIGN up to our petition for action on nuisance calls. The bigger the number, the louder the voice we can use to demand Government action on the callous sales companies who prey on us. Sign the petition at www.no2nuisancecalls.net or send the form above to: TPS Campaign, The Sunday Post, DC Thomson & Co Ltd, 16 Annandale Street, Edinburgh EH7 4AN.



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