

'Nuisance' telephone calls usually fall in to 2 brackets:
Persistent/unwanted calls (e.g. cold callers, silent calls etc.) and those of a more serious nature: e.g. Threats, abuse or attempts to defraud the recipient.

With the 1st type there are a number of things which can be done:

*Applying to be put on a list of no-cold-calling numbers (more information available through Citizens Advice Bureau)

*Contacting their phone provider and blocking the number (number can be obtained through 1471 or if withheld the service provider will be able to find out and should be able to block it if information such as: time and date are provided (although they may not be able to provide you with the nuisance number))

*Phones are available which show the number that someone is contacting you from and if withheld/private or unknown to the recipient, they have the option of not answering.

*Or if someone wants more thorough security there is still the option of being ex-directory.

A combination of 1 or more of these methods should stop 'low-level' nuisance calls.

The 2nd type fall in to criminal behaviour and should be reported to the Police:

*i.e. Threats to cause damage/violence/threats to kill – may constitute a criminal offence: give all details of these instances to Police (telephone number of caller/time/date/content/duration/who made the threat) etc to the Police on the Thames Valley Police general enquiries line: **08458 505505 or phone 999 if you think you are in imminent danger.**

*Abusive phone calls – for example: from children phoning anonymously from a public call box can mostly be dealt with in the same way as the 'first type' of nuisance calls as detailed above but if these attempts fail or if the abuse is of a more serious nature: e.g. domestic violence related, sexual harassment or a sustained/targeted campaign against someone then, again, it will fall in to the Police remit and should be assessed by Thames Valley Police after it has been reported to them.

*Finally: the other most likely nuisance calls are: attempts to defraud the call taker e.g. someone claiming to be calling from your bank/building Society and requesting your bank account number, sort-code or PIN number (Remember: your bank will never ask you for these details over the phone because they already know them! If it is a genuine call they may ask you a security question that you have already agreed with them on a previous occasion; also, banks very rarely call unless they are prompted by your initial contact with them and there is nothing stopping you giving out NO details over the phone and instead attending your high-street branch in person).

If you feel you have been contacted by someone attempting to defraud you: give absolutely no details to them over the phone and contact the Police as above; and soon after receiving the call from the suspicious person: check back with the company they purport to be representing (using contact details you know are genuine) and report it to the genuine company. When it comes to fraud most large companies (and all banks) have their own fraud department that is best placed to investigate any details where fraudulent processes may have taken place.

In terms of a response from Thames Valley Police: all calls are treated seriously, prioritised depending upon the type of crime, avenues of investigation open to the Police, and resources available at the time. Victims of crime will be updated with significant 'break-throughs' in an investigation or if the investigation is unlikely to go any further. Also, as people will appreciate, Fraud can sometimes be a very difficult offence to obtain evidence, or trace offenders from.