

ELECTORAL REGISTRATION WORKING PARTY

IER UPDATE

ADDENDUM

19 March 2015

Report to Electoral Registration Working Party - 19 March 2015

Faith Group Engagement In IER

Faith groups in general have a commitment to strengthening the communities in which they are situated and in supporting their members to play an active role in society. Lewisham Council has a strong history over the past 15 years of working in partnership with faith groups in addressing some of the borough's key issues. Faith groups are also an important conduit for accessing a significant number of people within black and minority ethnic communities.

The Mayor meets quarterly with The Ecumenical Borough Deans – a group of senior church leaders that represent the various denominations and church groupings, as well as leaders from other faiths on a more ad hoc basis. At the past two meetings between the Mayor and the Ecumenical Borough Deans the issue of IER has been raised and discussed in some detail. The first meeting was attended by Simon Woolley from Operation Black Vote. Both meetings were attended by Helena Pugh from the Electoral Services team who was able to provide an important link into the wider Council strategy around IER and answer more detailed questions.

The outcome from these meetings has been a commitment from church leaders to work with the Council to promote the IER messages amongst their members and networks. A letter from the Mayor has now been sent by email which explains the issues to a wider audience, along with supporting information to help churches encourage members to register. Materials have been provided that can be used as part of Sunday services, including PowerPoint slides. Also text that could be inserted into newsletters. The offer has also been given of hard copies of flyers to groups that would like them.

A similar approach has been made to other faith groups, although in Lewisham there is a much smaller number of these groups.

Copies of the documents sent to the Borough Deans are appended.

Andy Thomas
Cultural Development Manager

From: Thomas, Andy

Sent: 17 February 2015 17:08

To: 'N DESBOROUGH'; 'Alfred Williams'; 'Bishop Samuel Thomas'; 'David Brown '; 'David Evans'; 'David French'; 'Denis Wade'; 'Douglas Bull'; 'Kevin Stanbury'; 'Michael White '; 'Nigel Desborough'; 'Paul Butler '; 'Raymond Singh'; 'Rev Dave Mahon'; Elliot, Sam; 'Stephen Maunder'; 'Venerable Alastair Cutting'

Subject: Voter registration

Dear Borough Deans

You will remember when you last met with the Mayor that he raised concerns with you that the new system of voter registration may to lead large numbers of people losing their right to vote and asked for your help in getting the word out to your members, encouraging them to make sure that they are registered. I enclose a letter from him highlighting the issues and a short PowerPoint presentation that you could use to highlight the issue with your congregation if your church is equipped to do so. I also enclose a short script that could be inserted into newsletters. If you would like some flyers to give out we can send you those - just let me have an address and how many you would like and I'll arrange for some to be sent - I enclose an electronic version of what these look like.

Finally, if you could forward this message on to the churches in your networks that would be very much appreciated.

Yours

Andy

Andy Thomas | Cultural Development Manager | 2nd Floor, Laurence House, Catford, SE6 4RU | Tel. 020 8314 9996



Sir Steve Bullock
Mayor of Lewisham
Mayor and Cabinet Office
Civic Suite
Catford
London SE6 4RU

Tel: 020 8314 6193
mayor@lewisham.gov.uk

Dear Friend

I am writing to ask you for you and your community's help. The Government have recently introduced a change to the way people are registered to vote. Whereas before, each household was sent a single form to register everyone who lives in that property, now every individual voter must register individually.

This seems like a small change, but it is a significant one. The change to the system means that many people will have to re-register now, even if they live at the same address they were previously registered at.

The council is doing lots of work to promote the changes and to get as many people registered as possible, but even with all this activity many people may not realise they are not registered until they come to vote. We also believe that those people who are already less likely to be registered to vote, especially students and those in private rented housing, will be especially affected by this change.

As Church leaders, you have the ability to reach many thousands of people through your congregations, their friends and family, and the networks you work with. I am therefore asking you to help us ensure that every single person in our borough has the ability to participate in civic life and exercise their democratic right, by spreading the word and encouraging everyone to make sure they are registered.

Please consider using the materials I have enclosed in your church newsletter, email communications or to distribute at events and services. You may even want to hold a special session to help people register. Everyone can register by visiting the website www.gov.uk/register-to-vote. You can also contact our electoral services team who will be happy to provide more information and advice (details enclosed).

Yours sincerely

Sir Steve Bullock
Mayor of Lewisham



Register to vote



The way everyone registers to vote changed last year. This means each person is responsible for their own registration, including young voters.

Register to vote



In February a letter will be sent to each household listing the people registered at that address. If your name is not listed on the letter you will need to register on the electoral roll so you can vote in the general election on **7 May 2015**.



You can register online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote. You will need to have your national insurance number to hand.

**For more information contact:
Electoral Services
Ground Floor
Laurence House
SE6 4RU
0208 314 6086
electoral.services@lewisham.gov.uk**

Register to vote



YOUR VOTE MATTERS

MAKE SURE YOU'RE IN



Register to vote

The way everyone registers to vote changed last year. This means each person is responsible for their own registration, including young voters. In February a letter will be sent to each household listing the people registered at that address. If your name is not listed on the letter you will need to register on the electoral roll so you can vote in the general election on 7 May 2015. **If you are not listed on the letter you need to register to vote.**

You can register online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote. You will need to have your national insurance number to hand. For more information contact

Electoral Services

Ground Floor

Laurence House

SE6 4RU

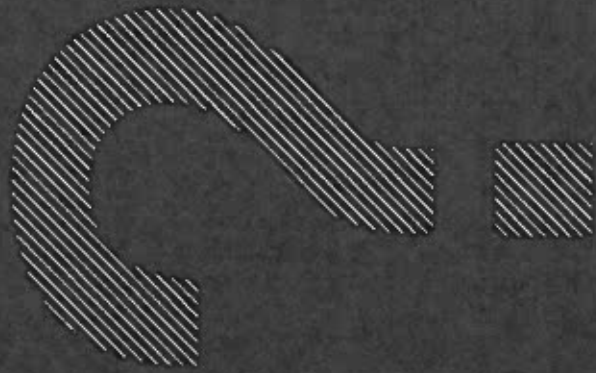
0208 314 6086

electoral.services@lewisham.gov.uk

BUT I THOUGHT I WAS ALREADY REGISTERED TO VOTE?

If you have registered yourself at your current address since 10 June 2014 in England and Wales or 19 September 2014 in Scotland – and you have not moved home since – you will be registered to vote under the new system.

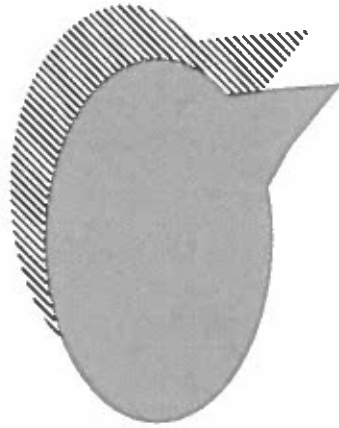
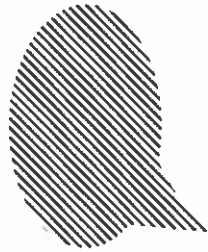
You will also be registered to vote if you received information at your current address telling you that you are registered under the new system. If you are unsure whether you are registered under the new system, contact your local electoral registration staff.



WHAT IF I DON'T REGISTER?

Not only will you not have a say at future elections and referendums, but if you don't respond to requests for information from your local electoral registration staff offices you could be at risk of getting fined £80.

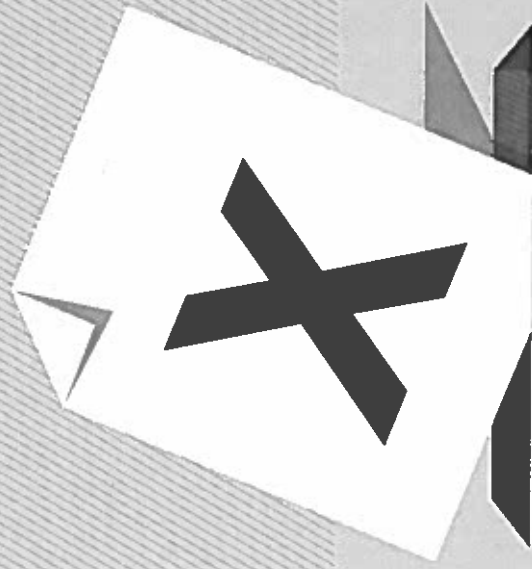
The registration system has changed and even if you were registered in the past you may need to register again now.



YOU NEED TO BE

REGISTERED IN ORDER

TO VOTE.



YOUR VOTE MATTERS

MAKE SURE YOU'RE IN

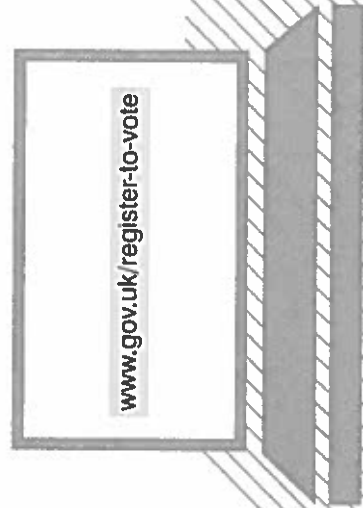


HOW DO I REGISTER?

Registering to vote is straightforward.

- 1 Go to www.gov.uk/register-to-vote
- 2 Fill in your name, address, date of birth and a few other details. You'll also need your National Insurance number, which can be found on your National Insurance card, or in official paperwork such as payslips, or letters about benefits or tax credits.
- 3 Look out for confirmation from your local electoral registration staff to say you're registered.

If you don't have access to the internet or can't use it, your local electoral registration staff will be able to help you to register.



ABOUT VOTER REGISTRATION

You need to register in order to be able to vote in elections and referendums. The way you register to vote has changed in 2014.

The new system means:

- You can now register online.
- Everyone has become responsible for registering themselves. Under the old system the 'head of every household' could register everyone who lived at their address.
- You need to provide a few more details to register – including your National Insurance number and date of birth. This is to make the electoral register more secure.



WHY SHOULD I REGISTER?

To vote: You need to register in order to be able to vote. If you aren't registered to vote, you won't have the chance to have a say on who represents you.

Some people also register to vote because they want to apply for credit. This is because credit reference agencies use the register to confirm where someone lives when they apply for credit in order to counteract fraud.

