Appendix A

Individual Electoral Registration

Update for Electoral Registration Working Party

19 March 2015

Background

Individual Electoral Registration

- The introduction of Individual Electoral Registration (IER) in 2014 represented the biggest change to electoral registration in almost 100 years. Residents are now required to register to vote individually replacing the outdated system where a "head of household" submits an application for registration.

Declining Registration

- Research from the Electoral Commission provides the best available estimate of electoral registration prior to the introduction of IER (February/March 2014) – this shows that the register was 85% complete nationally which equates to approximately 7.5 million missing eligible voters nationally. Using the number of registered voters at the last local election in Lewisham (2014) this would equate to almost 35,000 missing voters locally.

- Stuart Wilks-Heeg has suggested that the decline in registration began in the mid 1990s and increased dramatically in the 2000s and if this trend continues it will pose a threat to register completeness and equal access to electoral participation. (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/78883/IER_Literature_review_Feb_2012.pdf)

Case Study: Northern Ireland

- Introduced IER in 2002.
- Following introduction there was a fall in registered electors of 10%.
- Can be explained by a mixture of:
  - Improved accuracy of the register (i.e. removal of duplicates
  - Reluctance of electors to register individually or provide personal identifiers
  - Lack of awareness of how IER operates and changes
  - For those who weren't head of household there may be a complete lack of awareness of how electoral registration procedures work.
- Much of the planning for the UK-wide role out of IER drew upon the lessons learned in Northern Ireland including the need for additional support, reassurance and encouragement for registered and unregistered individuals and groups.

Under-registered group	Register completeness
Social renters*	78%
BME groups**	77%
Irish and Commonwealth national	68%
Private renters	56%
Young people (19-24 years)	56%
EU nationals	56%
Young people (17-18 years)	55%

Under – Registered Groups

- The table to the left is taken from a report entitled *Great Britain's Electoral Registers 2011* produced by the Electoral Commission.
- Further analysis has shown that of these groups it is students, people living in communal establishments and private renters who are least likely to be confirmed through IER transitional arrangements (i.e. data matching) and these should be the focus of re-registration campaigns.

What is being done?

Opportunities presented by IER

- The transition to IER is generating a large amount of publicity and public interest providing Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) across the country with an opportunity to focus on promoting registration and democratic engagement. This will help address some of the issues around declining registration and the transition to IER as highlighted on the previous page.

UK wide work

- The Electoral Registration Working Party have asked for a report detailing examples of good practice on what is going on across the UK in terms of maximising electoral registration. The rest of this report will look at good examples across three broad categories and look at examples from elsewhere in the UK and what we are doing locally:
  - Intensive Canvassing
  - Partnership Working
  - Publicity Campaigns

- Much of the evidence is drawn from the experience of the 24 local authorities and regions who were successful in gaining a share of £385,848.28 as part of a government scheme for maximising registration. More information can be found in the Cabinet Office evaluation report that is available online: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/351448/Maximising_electoral_registration_full_report_sept_2014.pdf

London work

- London Boroughs have come together to run campaigns around IER, some of which was funded from the government scheme. Below is a summary of 2 of these campaigns:

Change Things Now campaign

- Online social media campaign targeting students and young people that started in the winter of 2013 and lasted until just before the 2014 elections. Campaign was lead by Westminister Communications team and funded by government grant
- The objective was to increase the registration rate of young people in the 2014 register (published 17th Feb) in order to maximise our CLR green figures
- Campaign used a new social media website as well as twitter and Facebook
- Generated a huge number of unique visits and retweets – some from high profile people across London
- Resulted were around 1,200 new registrations
- “The evaluation was positive as the learning was useful. The one major drawback was that people were not yet able to register online. Now you can register online it enables a different approach.” (London Borough)

IER transitional canvass campaign

- Large posters at 131 different sites across the London tube and rail network. They went up in early September and most remained in place until Christmas
- 5 separate adverts in the Metro and in 5 different London ethnic media publications
- Campaign was timed to coincide with the start of the write-out for a lot of London, and for the first reminder form and door-knocking for the rest of London
- Total spend of just over £60k with each Borough contributing just over £2k

Intensive Canvassing

Maximising Registration Fund

- 13 of the 24 Local Authorities / Regions involved in the Maximising Registration Fund used the money to conduct an intensive canvass. Broadly this meant they did one of the following:
  - Targeted specific wards, groups, and/or individuals known to be under- or unregistered in the local area
  - Carried our additional canvassing activity as an extension of the statutory requirements of the annual canvass i.e. sending further mail outs and increasing the number of face to face visits to non-responding properties.
- The boroughs recognised that canvassing was difficult and it increased the workload of Electoral Services however:

  "The scheme overall was a success… We believe that without this scheme significant numbers of these harder to reach groups would simply not be registered" (Ealing)
- The majority of boroughs targeted social and private renters but there is evidence from Reading and South Tyneside to show that the same methods can be successful with students and attainers as well.

Who did they target?

LA / Region	Target Groups	Total Spend	% registered (of those targeted)
Dover District Council	Social renters; private renters	£7,316	19%
London Borough of Ealing	Social renters; private renters	£11,345	61%
Glasgow City Council	Young people; students; BME	£46,500	*
London Borough of Lambeth	Social renters; private renters; Latin American community	£12,581	85%
Mansfield District Council	Social renters	£6,906	31%
Medway Council	Social renters	£1,700	*
Reading Borough Council	Students	£6,890	25%

Intensive Canvassing

Who did they target? (Continued)

LA / Region	Target Groups	Total Spend	% registered (of those targeted)
London borough of Richmond upon Thames	Social renters; private renters; students	£10,000	*
Rother District Council	Social renters; private renters	£822	78%
South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council	Attainers	£2,391	31%
Southend on Sea Borough Council	Attainers; young people; social renters	£6,827	35%
City of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council	Social renters	£7,000	48%
Westminster City Council	HMO residents	£7,699	*

*data unavailable

Intensive Canvassing

Identifying Target Groups

- Much of the activity focussed on social and private renters as a result of matching the results of previous canvasses with information held on local council tax and housing systems to identify under-registration.
- Other LAs assessed the number of individuals in various local areas who were identified as part of the Electoral Commission's under-registered groups. Areas where under registration is likely to be high were then targeted for additional canvassing work.

Success rates…

Social and Private Renters:

- Average success rate of 51% (n=7)

Students:

- Average success rate of 25% (n=1)

Attainers:

- Average success rate of 31% (n=1)

Personalised Communication

- Evidence has shown that targeted communication lead to more effective canvassing. Ideally this would use personalised letters or face-to-face visits but where time / data constraints prevented this some LAs targeted voters by ward, area or polling district.
- Obtaining data relied on building strong relationships with local partners (i.e. schools and universities) and where possible the LA should utilise existing relationships

Key Success Factors:

Lambeth stressed the importance of "in house" **data analysis skills**:

"We found that when the team was able to use the skills ourselves we could take more advantage of it – it also allowed us to trust the results more, which will be important during IER when we will need to make determinations"

Ealing highlighted the importance of **resourceful and resilient canvassers**:

"some of our best and most diehard canvassers, some of which employ patient stake-out tactics in order to achieve contact"

Partnership Working

Maximising Registration Fund

- 6 of the 24 Local Authorities / Regions involved in the Maximising Registration Fund used the to conduct partnership working activity. This work included:
  - Outreach work through democratic engagement workshops and roadshows, interactive discussion events, and community champions;
  - Targeted and open canvassing through partners (such as housing associations), in town centres, and in local colleges;
  - The inclusion of registration forms in tenant welcome packs;
  - Messages in partner publications;
  - Promotional materials displayed in libraries, leisure centres, and other venues with high footfall of target URGs;
  - Building registration into community learning services, including English for Speakers of Other Languages courses where there is an element of citizenship education;
  - The development of social housing networks
- The boroughs recognised that partnership working can take time to develop but it enabled them to access skills, resources and networks they might otherwise lack:

  "Partnership working, if relevant, can be and was vital to the success, by using the skills and resources already established to work in the most efficient way " (Bradford)

Who did they target?

LA / Region	Target Groups	Total Spend	% registered (of those targeted)
Bournemouth Borough Council	Social renters; HMO residents	£10,466	28%
City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council	Attainers	£6,030	11%
Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council	Attainers	£12,372	0.33%*
Harborough District Council	Social renters; private renters	**	**
Leicester City Council	Attainers; young people	£19,816	8%
North East Lincolnshire Council	Social renters	£4,948	7%

Partnership Working - Results

Attainers / Young People

- 3 of the 5 projects focused their attention on attainers and young people and placed an emphasis on working with youth services and young people. This enabled. Partnership working enabled Electoral Registration Officers to access established networks and forums in the youth work sector.
- Overall findings suggest that working directly with youth services can be a positive experience and helps to reduce the burden on electoral services.

'Having young people themselves design and front the campaign was successful […] a campaign designed and delivered by young people, for young people. We also invited apprentices, graduates and step-up colleges within the council to gather views from 18-24 year olds.' (Leicester)

What is happening in Lewisham?

- The Lewisham Young Mayor's Team have been very engaged in the process (more details available under publicity campaigns) – they have been attending school assemblies, fresher's fairs and various events across the borough to help promote voter registration. The Young Mayor's election was used to promote voter registration.
- Youth Centre's are displaying posters and schools have been supplied with rock enrol literature
- NEET team were engaged to text all NEETs in the borough to encourage them to register to vote
- Apprentices have been encouraged to register to vote.
- Goldsmiths College have been engaged to add in voter registration to their enrolment process and help advertise to students

Lewisham Homes

Phoenix

Housing Providers

- The remaining two boroughs sought to work with Housing Associations and experienced mixed success rates. Where good relationships existed they were able to work well together effectively however this was not always the case.

What is happening in Lewisham?

- Lewisham's 2 main housing providers (Phoenix Community Housing are actively engaged with the officer working group in the Council. They have agreed to target non-registered residents in their occupancy checks and add voter registration into their tenancy sign up process amongst a range of measures.
- Estate agents across the borough have also been handing out key rings with voter registration messages to new tenants
- Representatives have also attended LEWHAG and SELHP meetings to engage with all Housing Associations in the borough.

Publicity Campaigns

Maximising Registration Fund

- 5 of the 24 Local Authorities / Regions involved in the Maximising Registration Fund used the money for publicity and communications campaigns.
- All of these found it difficult to accurately measure the direct impact of their work in increasing registrations and democratic awareness:
  "I think the publicity campaign is a good thing but it's impossible to judge whether it had any material effect" (Oxford)
- There is an inherent risk that these campaigns fail to attract those that are not engaged with politics however they do have the *potential* to reach a very wide audience for minimal cost.

Who did they target?

LA / Region	Target Groups	Total Spend	% registered (of those targeted)
Ceredigion County Council	Students; Young People; Attainers	£2,435	35%
Cornwall	Young People; Attainers; Social Renters	£24,860	45%*
London	Young People	£100,700	2%
Manchester	Young People	£72,099	9%*
Oxford City Council	Young People; Attainers; Social Renters	£5,423	13%

*estimate

What did they do?

- Campaigns focused on a range of communication methods and channels including:
  - Social media: Facebook, Twitter, Email, Text Messages, YouTube
  - Print Media: Newsletters, Postcards, Football Programmes, Magazines
  - Digital Media: Bespoke Websites, Council Websites, Videos, Smartphone apps, Digital Advertising, Radio, e-newsletters
  - Physical Advertisements: Poster Sites, Bus Shelters, 'On Board' bus advertising, Bar advertising
  - Outreach: Face-to-face events, conference attendance, school visits

Publicity Campaigns - Results

Digital and Social Media

- Evidence from Manchester and London to show that 60 and 72% of traffic to their websites came through digital media however it is difficult to track how much of this resulted in actual new registrations.
- Social media and digital campaigns were useful in drawing people to a website however it was hard to sustain this interaction through to a registration.
- Ability to adapt websites and campaigns in “real time” was seen as a real positive. I.e. London and Manchester were able to make registration a more prominent feature of their website as the campaign progressed.
- Social Media requires management and constant interaction however it is also a relatively cheap method of interacting with a large number of people.

Cornwall Council @CornwallCouncil · Feb 5

It's National Voter Registration Day, Make sure you #RegisterToVote #hearmyvoice #NVRD bit.ly/16jTX0e

2 1

ManCityCouncil @ManCityCouncil · 5h

You must be registered in order to vote in the General & local elections on 7 May. #registertovote now gov.uk/registertovote

6 1

What is happening in Lewisham?

- Lewisham have a button displayed prominently on the front page of the website linking directly to information around IER
- We regularly tweet updates around registering to vote
- The young mayors team are engaging with young people through social media
- There is a “register to vote” note on all external emails
- Council letters are being franked with a “register to vote” message

Lewisham Council retweeted

Electoral Commission @ElectoralCommUK · Feb 5

It’s National Voter Registration Day! We’ll be tweeting throughout the day – not registered? Go online now bit.ly/1mlm9SY #NVRD

61 7

Your chance to have a say

New rules mean each person registers individually.

- Register to vote

Publicity Campaigns - Results

Face-to-face outreach

- A great deal of support for face-to-face communications in focus groups with young people and social renters.
- London authorities reported that young people in particular responded well to outreach activities
- Outreach activity can be used as a compliment to digital campaigns. Manchester and Gateshead are moving in this direction as a result of their experience in phase 1 of the pilot.
- In general targeted outreach was viewed as the most successful form of maximising registration.

'Although we could drive traffic to the site […] the barriers to them registering remain significant and they would not register on the site without face to face persuasion.' (London authority)

"Overall the results from the five publicity campaigns suggest that a multi-channel approach could be beneficial. However, while all forms of digital, online, print and social media offer significant reach and awareness raising potential, serious consideration might be given to face-to-face outreach. From the evidence collected so far it appears often to be this which is the difference between registration awareness and positive registration engagement. This is arguably a more costly approach if the same numbers of unregistered electors are to be reached as can be achieved through digital and social media." (Maximising Electoral Registration: An evaluation of local activities)

What is happening in Lewisham?

- The Lewisham Young Mayor's Team have been attending a wide range of events in schools, markets and on housing estates with tablets to encourage local residents to register to vote. This work has been targeted at young people in particular.
- Members of the officers working group have been attending Local Assemblies alongside local political representatives to promote registration
- Lewisham have been engaging with social tenants at registration events and through our housing partners
- Officers have attended various forums across the borough including the Pensioners Forum.

Members of the young mayors team engaging with 6 form pupils in St. Dunstan's College.

Publicity Campaigns – London Councils

Communications leads at London Councils have developed a 20 point checklist for the London Elections Management Board to ensure that authorities across London are doing everything they can to get the message out to all voters and under-registered groups in particular. Lewisham are currently undertaking all of this activity:

- use your residents' publication ✓
- promote it widely on your website ✓
- use e-newsletters ✓
- outreach events ✓
- involve partners ✓
- use local poster sites ✓
- engage young people as peer to peer advocates for registration in schools, colleges and universities ✓
- put the register to vote message on the footer of all external emails ✓
- include register to vote on your customer phone messages ✓
- work with registered housing providers to include in new tenants' packs and in their newsletters ✓
- use social media intensively, encouraging young people to distribute the message ✓
- engage celebrities/bloggers on social media to advocate
- work with estate agents – on and offline – to target movers ✓
- use staff newsletters/intranet ✓
- frank all external post with register to vote message ✓
- put message on GP surgery screens ✓
- Link up with Rock Enrol and Bite the Ballot ✓
- Send information to faith groups and voluntary organisations ✓
- Include messages in your council tax mailing ✓
- Advertising on receipts in local stores ✓

ROCK ENROL


community news

Have your say this May

REGISTER TO VOTE

Everyone is being encouraged to make sure they are registered to vote in the general election on 7 May. Every household will receive a letter listing the people registered to vote at that address. If your name is not listed on the letter you need to register on the electoral roll.

The way everyone registers to vote changed last year. This means each person is responsible for their own registration, including young voters. It can also affect your credit rating if you are not on the electoral roll.

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

Remember that if you:

- move you will need to register at your new address
- are a student you can register at your home address and/or your away address, but you can only vote once in national elections
- would like a postal or a proxy vote you must register under the new system
- are coming up to 18 years old you need to register to vote