

London Voter Registration Week 2021

Evaluation Report

December 2021



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December 2021**

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Dr. Elisabeth Pop

Citizenship and Integration Adviser

Citizenship & Integration Initiative

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London Voter Registration Week

September 2021

Overview

According to Electoral Commission and Cabinet Office analysis, London has one of the lowest voter registration rates across the UK regions and nations. Young people, who are more likely to be recent home movers; social and private renters; Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) and migrant Londoners (including Commonwealth and EU Londoners, in line with current voting rights), are the most under-registered and under-represented groups [“Survey of Londoners”, Greater London Authority, June 2019]. Many of these groups have been disproportionately impacted by the Covid–19 pandemic.

In September 2021, in line with its remit, the Greater London Authority (GLA) collaborated with London borough electoral services, the Electoral Commission and with civil society organisations to coordinate London Voter Registration Week (LVRW) 2021. The project aimed to build on the 2019 pilot, the lessons learned from LVRW 2020 and reduce inequalities in voter registration among historically under-registered and under-represented groups.

LVRW 2021 had a soft launch on 15 September to take advantage of the attention around International Democracy Day and build capacity around the coalition of support. The main activity took place online between 20 and 26 September. It was delivered in partnership with Shout Out UK (SOUK) and had the support of members of the London Voter Registration Strategic Partnership (LVRSP), including the Electoral Commission and the London Association of Electoral Administrators, the London Assembly and a broad, pan-London civil society coalition of support.

LVRW 2021 activity took place during a period of extreme strain on the capacity of civil society organisations, especially education institutions, following the May 2021 elections and the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Even so, based on the analysis of Cabinet Office data, the extended LVRW 2021 activity (15—26 September 2021) had a positive impact on voter registration rates in London compared to the previous period when no activity took place (1—12 September). Perhaps due to negative effects on civil society organisations and Londoners themselves mentioned above and coming soon after the postponed Mayoral and London Assembly elections, the week itself (20—26 September 2021) was not as successful as last year’s activity (14—20 September 2020).

- 39,302 people registered to vote in London, during the extended 12-day LVRW 2021. This is a seven per cent increase from the previous 12-day period. In comparison, during the 12-days in which LVRW 2021 ran, the number of people who registered to vote across the UK fell by six per cent from the previous period.
- 8,568 young people registered to vote in London, during the extended 12-day LVRW 2021. This is an 11 per cent increase from the previous 12-day period. In comparison, during the extended 12-day in which LVRW 2021 ran, the number of young people who registered to vote across the UK fell by two per cent from the period before.

Through a broad, pan-London coalition promoting the #NoVoteNoVoice message and via a combination of social media resources (static and dynamic digital assets, a video, various animations) and education resources (the GLA Media and Political Literacy pack and resources in community languages), LVRW 2021 also managed to achieve the following:

- Between 500,000 and 1.4 million Londoners directly reached with the LVRW 2021 social media and education resources, based on the impact assessments of our coalition partners
- An official launch with the support of over 100 civil society organisations, while the week itself saw the organic support of a further 100 organisations and influencers
- Almost 74,000 unique engagements with LVRW 2021 posts (the vast majority of which included the link to the Government's voter registration website) and an online reach of 4.7 million

London Voter Registration Strategic Partnership

In 2019, before the launch of the pilot project, the GLA established the London Voter Registration Strategic Partnership (LVRSP) to collaborate, coordinate and support this work. The advisory group is made up of representatives from statutory bodies, including the Electoral Commission and the Association of Electoral Administrators, and civil society organisations led by under-registered and under-represented communities who continue to inform and advise the GLA in this area.

The LVRSP is designed as a long-term strategic partnership that enables the GLA to maintain close working relationships with statutory bodies, London boroughs and civil society on issues of equal, accessible, representative civic and democratic participation. Through meetings and regular conversations, the LVRSP acts as a conduit for sharing best practice, reviewing LVRW 2021 assets, supporting with the delivery of LVRW 2021 and its evaluation, including testing and learning from new approaches to address voter registration inequality and inform related advocacy.

#NoVoteNoVoice

Register To Vote at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

An illustration of Mary Seacole, a Black Jamaican nurse and businesswoman, shown from the chest up. She has dark, curly hair and is wearing a dark, high-collared garment with a white lace or ruffled trim. The background is a light, warm yellow.

**BLACK VOICES MATTER.
REGISTER TO VOTE.**

**“UNLESS I AM
ALLOWED TO
TELL THE
STORY OF
MY LIFE IN
MY OWN WAY
I CANNOT
TELL IT
AT ALL.”**

**MARY
SEACOLE**

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LVRW 2021 – Online campaign

The established LVRW campaign slogan is **#NoVoteNoVoice** - a reference to the empowering role of civic and democratic participation, namely, the relationship between voter registration rates in London and the ability of Londoners to have a say on the issues that impact them, their families, communities and city.

The vision of the LVRW 2021 campaign built on the lessons learned from the 2019 pilot and the LVRW 2020 focus groups. Specifically, these confirmed the need to educate the public on the voter registration process, who has voting rights (in terms of nationality) and the history of voting rights (especially unheard or forgotten civil rights figures); the importance of co-design for specific assets directed at each target audience (young people, faith and minority ethnic communities, private renters/ frequent home movers); and the need to address apathy and disenfranchisement by touching on prominent issues such as climate change, mental health and domestic abuse.

The campaign itself focused on static and dynamic digital, video and animation assets and education resources (the GLA and SOUK produced new Media Literacy resources and materials in more than 20 community languages, which is unique for such a campaign in the UK). In the early stages of planning, the decision was made that most resources will be digital, given the vast majority of voter registration applications take place online and given the ongoing uncertainty around the Covid-19 pandemic. However, print formats and guidance were also made available if civil society organisations and local authorities felt it was safe to run in-person voter registration drives.

The resources were conceptualised by the diverse and young team at SOUK, with guidance from the GLA Lead Officer based on the lessons learned from LVRW 2019 and 2020 – the importance of using a mosaic of colours, addressing issues of accessibility and ensuring resources in various formats and for various communication channels. They were co-designed with young people, BAME and migrant Londoners and private renters through three representative virtual focus groups. Given London's demographics and the scarcity of non-party political civic and democratic participation resources in community languages, these were deemed particularly important across our target audiences and coalition partners for accessibility, diversity and inclusion reasons. All the assets are hosted on the LVRW Hub – **registertovote.london** – a website built to host all past and future activity and resources.

The LVRSP, the networks of the delivery partner and the LVRW 2020 coalition of support played a key role in forging new partnerships early on. This enabled preparation for LVRW 2021 to progress despite inevitable burnout from the May 2021 elections and the ongoing impact of the pandemic on the capacity of civil society organisations, especially education institutions. The Partners page on the LVRW Hub displays the logos of the broad coalition of organisations who supported LVRW 2021.

LVRW 2021 – Reach

LVRW 2021 had a soft launch on 15 September, while most of the activity took place online between 20 and 26 September. Thanks to the established credibility of the GLA in this policy area, the reach of the broad coalition and the quality of the assets, **LVRW 2021 has slightly exceeded the directly comparable reach metrics from LVRW 2020 and has significantly exceeded those from 2019.**

Figure 1. Comparison between the reach of LVRW 2019, 2020 and 2021

| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|--|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Individuals reached with the LVRW social media and education packs | 85,000 | 925,000 - 1.2 million | 500,000 – 1.4 million |
| Unique engagements on social media | 18,000 | 65,000 | 74,000 |
| Reach on social media | 1.3 million | 2.6 million | 4.7 million |

This reach was facilitated by a number of factors:

- **The coalition of support - LVRW 2021 launched with the support of over 100 civil society organisations, and the week itself saw the organic support of a further 100 organisations and influencers.**

With one in three young Londoners not registered to vote [“Survey of Londoners”, Greater London Authority, June 2019], the pilot project, LVRW 2019, focused mainly on 16-to 24-year-olds. As the scope for LVRW 2020 expanded in 2021 to other historically under-registered and under-represented groups (young people; BAME and migrant Londoners; private and social renters), so did the coalition of support.

The LVRW 2021 broad, pan-London coalition was made up of education institutions (secondary schools, Sixth Forms, Colleges and Student Unions); faith and interfaith organisations of various sizes, including London-wide institutions and neighbourhood places of worship; community organisations, representing either individual ethnic minority and migrant communities or antiracist and advocacy groups; organisations representing or working with disabled Londoners, private renters and LGBTQ+ Londoners. It is important to note the determination of civil society coalition partners to support the delivery of LVRW 2021, even though organisations were facing a challenging funding landscape and increased demand on their services. Education institutions were struggling to deliver the curriculum given the ongoing pandemic and not necessarily focusing on extra-curricular activity, like citizenship education, and higher education institutions had delayed starts to freshers’ fairs and induction weeks.

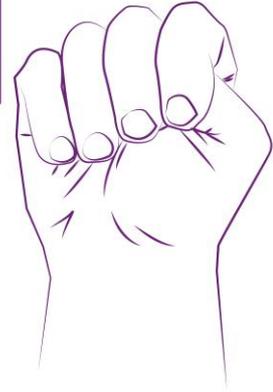
#NoVoteNoVoice

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Being a survivor of domestic abuse should never deprive someone of having their say

Register to vote anonymously



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The influencers supporting LVRW 2021 had varying follower numbers, but ensured engagement with the target audiences in ways that the GLA or the delivery partner would not have been able to achieve on their own. They were Instagram influencers, youth and climate change activists, faith leaders and others. **LVRW 2021 content also organically appeared in almost 20 traditional and online local media outlets.**

- **The non-party political, impartial nature of the project** - LVRW 2021 had the support of the regulator, **the Electoral Commission, all the London boroughs and the London Assembly.**
- **Reach at scale** - **between 500,000 and 1.4 million Londoners were directly reached with the LVRW 2021 social media and education packs**

This estimate is based on the feedback provided by official partners and supporters, those who agreed to share the education and social media resources in their networks.

In particular, SOUK ensured **the LVRW 2021 resources were shared with 30 education institutions and many used them as part of their virtual Freshers Fairs or in their Induction Weeks.** This facilitated the reach, at scale, of young people, London's most under-registered group, who are most likely to be from a BAME or migrant background, private renters, and have been disproportionately impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

- **The social media strategy and the quality of the assets** - Through the GLA (London Gov accounts) and SOUK (delivery partner) social media channels alone, we saw **almost 74,000 unique engagements with LVRW 2021 posts** (the vast majority of which included the link to the Government's voter registration website), **almost 8 million impressions** and an **online reach of 4.7 million.**

The LVRW 2021 resources had community voice and representation at their heart, spoke about the journey to full participation, and raised awareness around Londoners' power to influence decisions affecting them, their families, their communities and their city. Based on SOUK analytics, over 46% of the audience reached through their social media channels were BAME and 72% were aged under 25.

The design of awareness resources in community languages was key to addressing barriers to accessibility. Resources were produced in more than 20 community languages. Given time and budgetary constraints, we had to focus on the top languages spoken by non-UK nationals London residents with voting rights. Feedback from educators and some BAME and migrant Londoners emphasised the importance of these unique resources in the UK in terms of inclusion and representation.

Significant social media metrics include:

- The LVRW 2021 launch video has had over 80,000 views across GLA and SOUK social media platforms

- The LVRW 2021 animations “Who and how to register to vote”, “The untold history of voting rights” and “Community and democracy heroes” had over 212,000 views across GLA and SOUK social media platforms. The “Untold history of voting rights” featuring Black, Asian and female civil rights activists was in the top three most organically popular assets across Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.
- The “Flex your democratic right” and “Climate emergency” GIFs had almost 1 million impressions on TikTok and 2,000 direct clicks to the Gov.uk register to vote website
- The “Mary Seacole” asset and those aimed at “European Londoners” (explaining voting rights after the end of the Brexit transition period) were very popular across social media platforms and audiences. However, they also attracted the highest number of racist, xenophobic and far right comments, in a larger quantity and using more explicit, violent language than that aimed at the LVRW 2020 “Martin Luther King” asset.

LVRW 2021 – Impact

Based on the analysis of Cabinet Office data, the extended LVRW 2021 activity (15–26 September 2021) had a positive impact on the voter registration rates of Londoners compared to the previous period when no activity took place (1–12 September). Unsurprisingly, given the aforementioned wider context, the week itself (20–26 September 2021) did not see as high rates of voter registration as last year’s activity (14–20 September 2020).

Headline registration statistics – London – wide data

- During the extended 12-day LVRW 2021, **39,302 people registered to vote in London**. This is a **seven per cent increase from the period before**.
- In contrast, during the extended 12-day LVRW 2021, **the number of people who registered to vote across the UK fell by six per cent** from the period before.
- When comparing the seven-day LVRW 2021 with the seven-days of LVRW 2020 there was a 16 per cent decrease.
- Based on these figures, activity in London during the extended 12-day LVRW 2021 appears to have a positive impact on the number of people registering to vote. However, the effect of LVRW 2021 compared with LVRW 2020 was not as significant.

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Headline registration statistics - under-25s (young Londoners)

- During the extended 12-day LVRW 2021, **8,568 young people registered to vote in London**. This is an **11 per cent increase from the period before**.
- In contrast, during the extended 12-day LVRW 2021, **the number of young people who registered to vote across the UK fell two per cent** from the period before.
- When comparing the seven-day LVRW 2021 with the seven-days of LVRW 2020 there was a 16 per cent decrease.
- Based on these figures, activity in London during LVRW 2021 appears to have a positive impact on the number of young people registering to vote. However, the effect of LVRW 2021 compared with LVRW 2020 on young people registering was not as significant.

Figure 2: Comparison of voter registration rates



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Considerations for LVRW 2022

Building on lessons learned from previous years, the following principles have been identified to inform the design and scope of LVRW 2022:

- The importance of running the competitive procurement process for a delivery partner, with a strong track record, early in the new year so work can begin in February. This means activity can change if there are unexpected events, such as those experienced throughout the pandemic, and the coalition of support can start to develop before the summer holidays.
- The need to maintain the cross-party political, impartial, non-election specific nature of the project, by continuing coordination and collaboration via the LVRSP, a broad, pan-London coalition of support and by using London Gov social media channels.
- The determination to enable equal participation and build community voice and representation in the project, by continuing to co-design resources and use focus groups with young people, BAME and migrant Londoners, and private renters (London's most under-registered and under-represented communities) to test them.
- The ability to continue producing an array of resources, including in community languages and for more social media platforms, keeping in mind the accessibility barriers of various target groups and the specific nature of various communication channels. Resources should continue to be community and issue-specific, to inform Londoners of the whole voter registration process, including voting rights. For LVRW 2022, it would be worthwhile thinking about including further languages based on GLA intelligence of under-registered communities in London.
- The need to review the GLA Political and Media Literacy resources and produce new ones, if required, to counter existing and emerging misinformation and disinformation trends around civic and democratic participation.
- The strategic decision to run LVRW in the second half of September, at the start of the academic year and during the annual canvass, to help build capacity for borough electoral services and reach the target audiences en-masse.

Specifically, based on conversations with SOUK, LVRSP members and other coalition partners, LVRW 2022 should:

- Build on the legacy of this work and the established role the GLA now has in this policy area, under the #NoVoteNoVoice slogan
- Be unapologetically antiracist in its vision, strategy and messaging
- Consider the potential impact of the Elections Bill, namely the introduction of photo voter IDs and the disenfranchisement of some EU Londoners who have arrived after 1 January 2021, and review the strategy and resources for LVRW 2022 accordingly
- Build on the findings and recommendations of the London Voices research [<https://www.trustforlondon.org.uk/issues/people/london-voices-the-journey-to-full-participation/>] especially those around sharing the LVRW model with other regional authorities and supporting the creation of a London Democracy Network.

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Register to vote today.**



Has my human registered to vote?

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- Take into account the significantly different context in which it may take place – the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on civil society, the May 2022 London borough elections, the impact of Brexit and the economic downturn on levels of poverty and trust. This means that a number of engaged Londoners will already have registered to vote, while other Londoners might feel further disengaged and disenfranchised, so the GLA will need to adjust its LVRW 2022 strategy and metrics accordingly to reach under-registered and under-represented Londoners.

The GLA plans to continue collaborative work aimed at increasing the voter registration rates of under-registered and under-represented Londoners. This will include building on the success of LVRW 2021 in order to design and deliver LVRW 2022.

In their own words

Matteo Bergamini, CEO/ Founder, Shout Out UK: “London has shown us that democracy doesn’t stop, even in a pandemic. We must continuously strive for everyone to be registered to vote and offered the very best political and media literacy education. Democracy is fragile, and as a Londoner, I could not be prouder that we at Shout Out UK are teaming up with the Greater London Authority, once more, to launch London Voter Registration Week 2021, and support them in ensuring that the multitude of voices that make this city great are registered and represented.”

John Brock, aka Miss Taylor Trash, Drag Queen featured in LVRW 2021 “This is not a trend, this is London” video: “As a member of the LGBTQIA++ community who is visibly and openly queer and works as a drag performer, I find myself being political even when I don’t expect. Registering to vote is so important if we want to see change and have our voices heard. We need to make sure we use our voices to protect the most vulnerable in our communities and hold those who are in positions of power to account to ensure they are doing what they said they would.”

Dean Okai Snr, Strategic Advisory Committee Director at African Diaspora Public Affairs Committee (ADPAC): “ADPAC is passionate about increasing the London African/Caribbean voter influence and participation by increasing our voter registration. #WeMatter.”

Portia Msimang, Project Coordinator, Renters’ Rights London: “Most of the nine million people wrongly registered or missing from electoral rolls across the UK are renters, in urban areas. There's real power in those nine million votes, but everyone who fails to register to vote, wastes their share of that power. Renters' votes have the power to fix our broken housing system.”

Rebecca Deegan, Founder and Director, I Have A Voice: “I Have A Voice is supporting LVRW because there are specific groups of the population who are less likely to vote than others, these same groups are least well represented in political roles and they experience the highest levels of poverty. Therefore, we think registering to vote and having your say has wide reaching repercussions beyond election day. What happens on election day impacts the issues affecting you and your community. If you agree, get registered, go vote, have your say.”

Peter Sogbodjor, Sportsmaker, City & Islington College: “City & Islington College are proud to be associated with LVRW as we believe that young people should be heard and should have every opportunity to exercise their right to vote. It is vital young people have their say on decisions that will affect their lives and the Voter Registration campaign plays a vital role in raising awareness about why young people should vote, as well as remove potential barriers to young people exercising their democratic right.”

Tabetha Bhatti, Public Relations & Communications Co-ordinator, Muslim Council of Britain: “Voting is an important civic duty which has the power to influence government. With the many challenges we face today, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, every vote counts towards helping shape the future direction of our country. The Muslim Council of Britain remains at the forefront of promoting voter registration within Muslim communities, and is honoured to work alongside partner organisations during LVRW 2021. Your vote is your voice. Use LVRW 2021 to register to vote, and make sure your voice is heard.”

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HOW DO YOU REGISTER TO VOTE?



GRAB YOUR NATIONAL INSURANCE NUMBER

GO TO THE WWW.GOV.UK WEBSITE

REGISTER TO VOTE!

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IMPROVE YOUR CREDIT SCORE TODAY



Registering to vote will improve your **credit score**, making it easier to get that phone, car or mortgage you want.

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Other formats and languages

For other formats, please contact us at the address below or via the London Voter Registration Week Hub:

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London, E16 1ZE

[registertovote.london](https://www.registertovote.london)

You will need to supply your name, your postal address and state the format you require.