



# Your guide to impartiality



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[london.gov.uk](https://www.london.gov.uk)

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For more information go to the GLA Democracy Hub  
at <https://registertovote.london/>



# Introduction

This guide is for organisations in London who help people take part in **democracy**.



**Democracy** means being able to vote for the people who run:



- **your local area**

Vote for the councillors who run your local council. There are 32 councils in London.

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- **London**

Vote for the Mayor and the London Assembly.

- **the UK**

Vote for your Member of Parliament – your MP. They represent the area you live in.





# Introduction

It is important that **campaigns** about democracy are **impartial**.



A **campaign** is an organised way of telling people about an issue or persuading them to do something.

For example, telling people how to register to vote, or helping them to do it.



Campaign materials include:

- advertisements on TV
- a stall in a high street
- social media posts and videos
- leaflets
- newspaper articles



Being **impartial** means not influencing who people vote for.



# Being impartial



Charities **cannot** influence who people vote for.



They **can** campaign about issues that are to do with the charity's purpose.

## For example:



A charity's purpose is to teach people about democracy.

They:

- **can** tell people how to vote and where to vote
- **cannot** tell people who to vote for

Election of the London Assembly Constituency Member  
for the constituency of *[insert name of constituency]*

Vote for only one candidate by putting a cross  in the box next to your choice

A	<input type="checkbox"/>
B	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
C	<input type="checkbox"/>
D	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Learn about politics



It is not always easy to make campaigns impartial.

Start by learning about how our country, cities, and local areas are run.



Having this knowledge is called **political literacy**.



Learn about:

- local and national government
- how and why people are elected
- rules about who can vote, and how to vote



# Local Councils



There are **32 borough councils** in London. Each council covers a local area. For example, Wandsworth, Ealing or Lewisham.



They run many services, including:

- Libraries and leisure centres
- support for children and disabled people
- car parking
- rubbish collection



Election of local councillors

Vote for only one candidate by putting a cross **X** in the box next to your choice

<b>A</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>B</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>C</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>D</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Local people elect councillors every 4 years. Councillors are in charge of the Council.

Councillors can belong to a political party or be independent.

# Greater London Authority

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The Greater London Authority looks after issues that affect the whole of London. For example:



- transport
- police
- fire brigade
- arts
- health

It is run by:



- The Mayor
- The London Assembly:  
25 people who make sure the Mayor is doing the things that they were elected to do



London residents elect the Mayor of London and the London Assembly every 4 years.

# UK Parliament



The UK is divided into 650 areas called **constituencies**.

There are 75 constituencies in London.



The people who live in each constituency elect 1 Member of Parliament, or **MP**, for that area.

MPs are elected every 4-5 years, at the general election.



The MP represents their constituents - local people - in the **House of Commons**.

The **House of Commons** is where laws are made and changed.

# How to be impartial

This is an example of impartial campaign material:



It is impartial because:

- no political party uses this colour
- it does not tell people who to vote for
- it tells people where it is from: the small text at the bottom – called an **imprint**



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# How to be impartial



- Learn about democracy and politics. Keep up-to-date with any changes.



- Know what your organisation is for, and why you are campaigning.



- Keep your opinions separate from the campaign you are working on.

- Ask lots of different people what they think about your campaign.

# How to be impartial



- Be honest and clear about who is paying for your campaign.



- Make sure that everyone who is involved is impartial.

- Don't get involved in political events or campaigns.



- Be careful about who you are photographed with.

- Be careful about what you post, share and comment on social media.

# Making campaign materials



**Campaign materials** include social media posts, leaflets and advertisements.

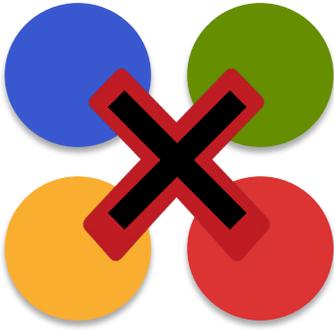
Good campaign materials are:



- politically neutral
- accessible - in a range of languages and formats
- factual
- free of spelling mistakes and other errors



# Making campaign materials



## Colour

Avoid colours used by political parties - or use lots of colours.



## Language

Don't use words or phrases that could persuade people to vote for a person or political party.

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## Include imprints

This is information about how your campaign has been paid for, and who is running it.



## Fact-check

Make sure that all of the information in your campaign is accurate and true.

# Chapter 2

## Changes to voting laws





# Changes to voting laws

The UK Parliament introduced the Elections Act in 2022.

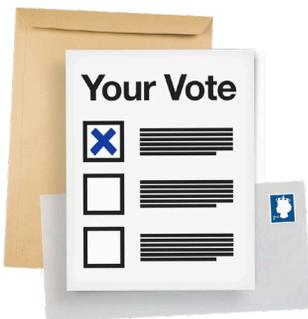


There were changes to who can vote, and how people vote.



The changes are about:

- photo Voter ID
- accessibility
- postal and proxy voting
- voting when you live overseas
- voting rights for EU citizens who live in the UK



# Voter ID

**ID means identification.**



Voters must bring ID to the polling station. For example:

- passport or photo driving licence
- Disabled person's bus pass
- Blue Badge
- National ID card from a European (EEA) state



- Freedom Pass or 60+ Oyster card.
- Voter Authority Certificate

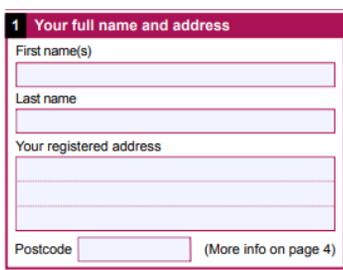


# Voter Authority Certificates



If you don't have an accepted form of photo ID, apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate:

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate>



1 Your full name and address

First name(s)

Last name

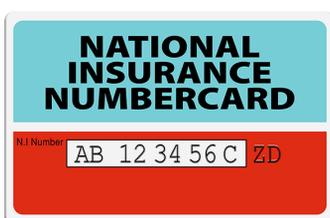
Your registered address

Postcode  (More info on page 4)

Or [download and fill in a paper form](#). Send it to your local council.

To apply, you need:

- a recent photograph
- date of birth
- your National Insurance number (optional)



The deadline is 6 working days before election day.

# Who can vote



Since the Elections Act (2022), citizens of these countries can vote in all elections:



- British, Irish and some **Commonwealth** citizens



The Commonwealth

The **Commonwealth** is a global community of 56 countries.

- EU citizens can vote in local elections if they:



- have lived legally in the UK since **before** 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021



- live legally in the UK and arrived **after** 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021, **and** there is an agreement between the UK and their home country



# Registering to vote

To vote in the UK, you must be registered.



- You can **register** to vote if you are aged 16 or over
- You must be 18 or over to **vote**

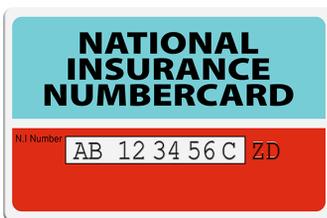


Register online:

[www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote)

You will need your:

- address and date of birth
- National Insurance number
- contact details



If you don't have these things, contact your local council and they will be able to help you.

# Voting registers



## Electoral register

This is a list of names and addresses of people who have registered to vote.



## Open Register

People, companies and other organisations can buy the information on this list.

You can choose not to be on this list.



## Anonymous Register

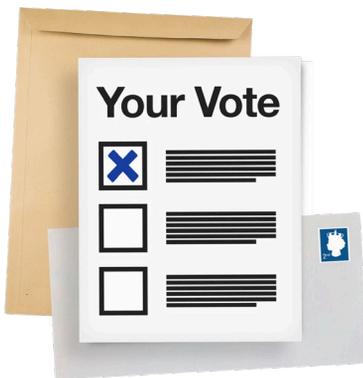
You can be on this register if putting your name and address on the electoral register would make you unsafe.

# 3 ways you can vote



## In person

Go to your local polling station on election day. Your poll card sent to you in the post tells you where it is.



## By post

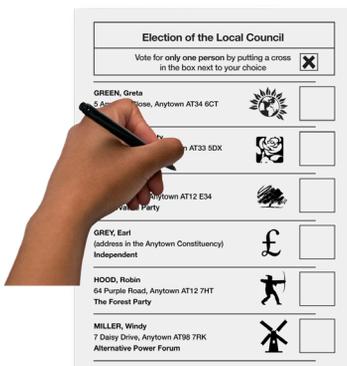
Apply for a postal vote at least 2 weeks before an election.

Apply here:

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote>

## By proxy

Someone can vote for you if you cannot get to the polling station. You both need to be registered to vote.



Apply for a proxy vote at least one week before election day:

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-proxy-vote>

# Chapter 3

## Impartial in-person campaigns





# Planning a campaign

Think about what your organisation can do:

For example, you might:



- give people information about registering to vote
- encourage young people to vote
- teach migrant Londoners about their rights



Design your campaign materials around who you want to reach.

For example:



- young people
- disabled people
- people who have not voted before



# In-person campaigns

Examples of in-person campaign activities:



- stalls at markets or festivals
- focus groups and workshops
- radio and local papers



- supporting people 1-to-1
- making posters, flyers or leaflets



- visiting people's homes

This is sometimes called **door-to-door canvassing**

# Events



## Location

Your event must be accessible, and in a **politically neutral** place.

For example, don't set a stall up next to a political party's stall.



## Speakers

Check that people who speak at your event are impartial. Find out:

- who they work for
- if they belong to a political party
- things they have said or written in the past



## Information

Bring plenty of leaflets, banners or t-shirts - anything to help people to understand your campaign.

# Speaking to people



Staff and volunteers must know how to be impartial.

This will help them to have conversations with people who have strong views.



## Some tips:

- listen respectfully
- answer with facts
- tell people where to get impartial information
- be clear about:
  - what the campaign is about
  - who the campaign is for
  - who pays for the campaign





# Accessibility

Think about accessibility from the start. Work out how much it will cost.

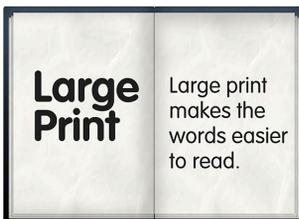


**Venue** – for example:

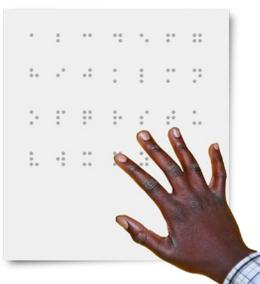
- transport, disabled parking
- wheelchair ramps
- accessible toilets
- hearing loops



**Information** – for example:



- large print
- Braille
- Easy Read
- translation into a range of languages



# Chapter 4

## Impartial online campaigns



# Online campaigns



Online – or **digital** - campaigns use the internet to communicate with the public.



Start by thinking about:

- what you want to say
- who you want to say it to



A digital campaign could use, for example:

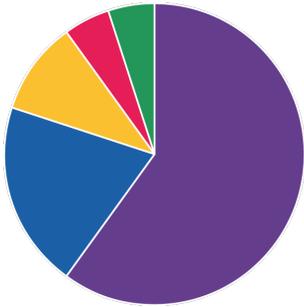
- a website
- social media such as Facebook, Instagram or TikTok.
- podcasts
- You Tube videos



# Digital content



Here are some things you can create and share as part of a digital campaign:



- photos
- charts and diagrams
- stories and articles
- videos
- animations
- podcasts





# Accessibility

There are many ways to make online campaigns accessible.



Plan how to make things accessible from the start.



**A detached house**

For example:

- **alternative text:** descriptions of photos or diagrams

- **captions:** subtitles on videos – but don't use auto captions



- **translations:** into other languages, plain English, audio

# Social media



You can't control how people will react to things on social media. Plan your campaign carefully.



## Involve people

Ask people what they think of your campaign. Use focus groups, workshops and surveys.



## Words and phrases

Be careful about the words you use when you write or speak, to make sure you are being impartial and inclusive.



## Information

Make sure everything you write, say and share is accurate.

# Advertising or 'ads'



You can pay online platforms like Facebook and X to show your campaign to lots of people.



## Tips for online advertising:

- your ads must be impartial
- follow the rules of the social media platform you are using
- set your location to **UK**
- decide what you want people to do when they see your ad



- choose who you want to see your ads, and what time of day you want people to see them

# Fact checking

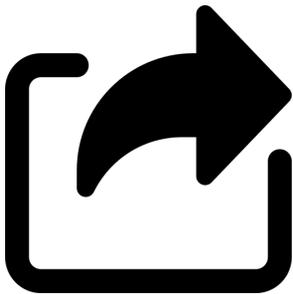


There are many different types of harmful information online. Learn to recognise them.



**Misinformation:** the person sharing information does not know it is false (not true).

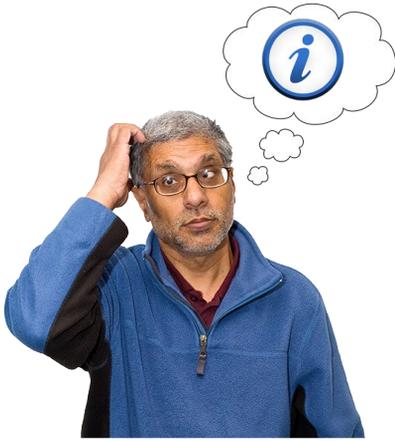
**Disinformation:** when a person shares false information on purpose.



**Malinformation:** information that is shared to harm a person or organisation.



**Deepfakes:** photos and videos which look like someone has done or said something, when they haven't.



# Fact checking

When you see information online, think about:

- where is the information from?
- what evidence is it based on?
- has someone checked it?
- is the information trying to make people feel a certain emotion?
- why was the information made?



Then, decide if the information is reliable and should be shared.

# Chapter 5

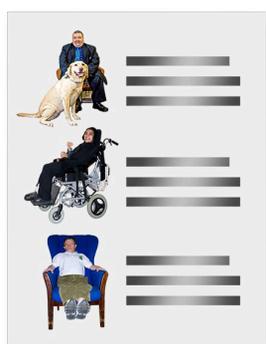
## Making your organisation impartial



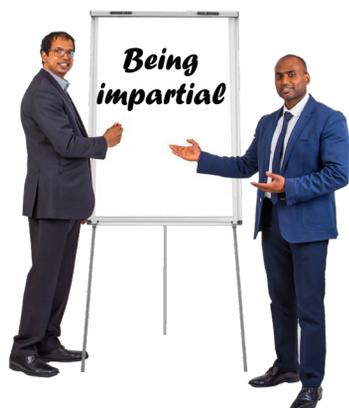
# Your organisation



Your campaigns are more likely to be impartial if everything about your organisation is impartial:



- values: the things your organisation believes are important



- the way you do things – sometimes called **processes**

- staff training and support



- how you communicate with each other

# Where to start



## Include everyone

Encourage lots of different people to get involved in your work.

- listen to everyone's opinions
- learn from what they say



## Be clear about your purpose

For example: *“We encourage and support young people to vote.”*



## Train your staff and volunteers

Make sure everyone knows:

- what impartiality is
- why it is important
- how to be impartial

# Leadership

## Leaders



Leaders in your organisation might be known as:

- trustees
- Chief Executive
- Senior Leadership Team
- managers or supervisors



Leaders should set a good example for everyone else.

# Communication



## Conflicts of Interest

Leaders must be honest about any reasons why they might not be impartial.



For example, being an active member of a political party or being a serving elected politician, like a councillor.

## Where to be impartial

**All** of your communication should be impartial:



- with your colleagues – emails, WhatsApp, text messages...etc.



- with the public – at events, on Facebook, Discord, TikTok...etc

# Quality

## Double-check everything!



When you write or design something for a campaign, ask lots of different people to check it.



For example:

- 1) design a leaflet
- 2) ask colleagues to check it
- 3) take it to a focus group
- 4) listen and learn from what people tell you
- 5) change the leaflet if needed



Your leaflet is more likely to be accurate and easy to understand.

# Stay up-to-date



Things are always changing:

- politics
- social media
- news stories
- laws and other rules



Organisations who help people to learn about democracy must always use up-to-date information.

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GLA democracy hub is helpful:  
<https://registertovote.london>

# Be impartial long-term



Being impartial is not just about election time! Make sure your organisation is always impartial.



- Find out what works well in your organisation, and what needs to change.
- Stay focused on what you exist to do.
- Work with other organisations who share your aims and can help you reach more people.



- Get people's feedback about accessibility, and act on it.

# Get more information

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## Greater London Authority Democracy Hub

Accessible information about  
voting, ID and more:



**Web:** [www.registertovote.london/](http://www.registertovote.london/)

**Email:** [democracy@london.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@london.gov.uk)

## #NoVoteNoVoice

**#NO  
VOTE  
NO VOICE**

[Follow the  
'No Vote No Voice'  
WhatsApp channel.](#)



## Electoral Commission

The  
Electoral  
Commission

Regulates elections and the  
funding political parties in the UK.  
[www.electoralcommission.org.uk/](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/)

## Check out the GLA and Shout Out UK's WhatsApp Chatbot

Looking for up to date  
information on voter  
registration  
and Voter ID?



Message us on  
WhatsApp  
at **+44 7908 820136.**

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