



**#NO
VOTE**
NO VOICE

London Voter Registration Week 2020

EVALUATION REPORT

December 2020

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December 2020**

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CONTENTS

Overview	2
London Voter Registration Strategic Partnership	3
LVRW 2020 – Online campaign	5
LVRW 2020 – Reach	6
LVRW 2020 – Impact	10
Considerations for LVRW 2021	11

London Voter Registration Week

14 – 20 September 2020

Overview

London has one of the lowest voter registration rates across the UK regions and nations [“Atlas of Democratic Variation”, Cabinet Office, January 2019]. Young people, who are more likely to be recent home movers; social and private renters; Black, Asian and ethnic minority (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 further disproportionately impacted by the Covid–19 pandemic.

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

LVRW 2020 took place mainly online between 14 and 20 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, the London Association of Electoral Administrators and a broad, pan-London civil society coalition of support.

During LVRW 2020, based on the analysis of the data provided by the Cabinet Office, there was an increase in voter registration rates in London, while UK-wide there was a reduction:

- 27,120 people registered to vote during LVRW 2020, across London. This is a 14 per cent increase from the week before. During the same week, the number of people who registered to vote across the UK fell 5 per cent from the week before.
- 5,920 young people (16 to 24-year olds) registered to vote during LVRW 2020, across London. This is a 23 per cent increase from the week before. During the same week, the number of young people who registered to vote across the UK fell 6 per cent from the week before.

Through a broad, pan-London coalition of support under the slogan #NoVoteNoVoice and via a combination of social media (digital assets, video and animations) and education resources (the GLA Political Literacy pack and resources in community languages), LVRW 2020 also managed to achieve the following:

- Between 925,000 and 1.2 million Londoners directly reached with the LVRW 2020 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 civil society organisations and influencers
- Almost 65,000 unique engagements with LVRW 2020 posts (the vast majority of which included the link to the Government’s voter registration page) and an online reach of 2.6 million
- Over 150,000 views for the LVRW 2020 #NoVoteNoVoice video and over 140,000 views for the two animations: “Who and how to register to vote” and “The history of voting rights”

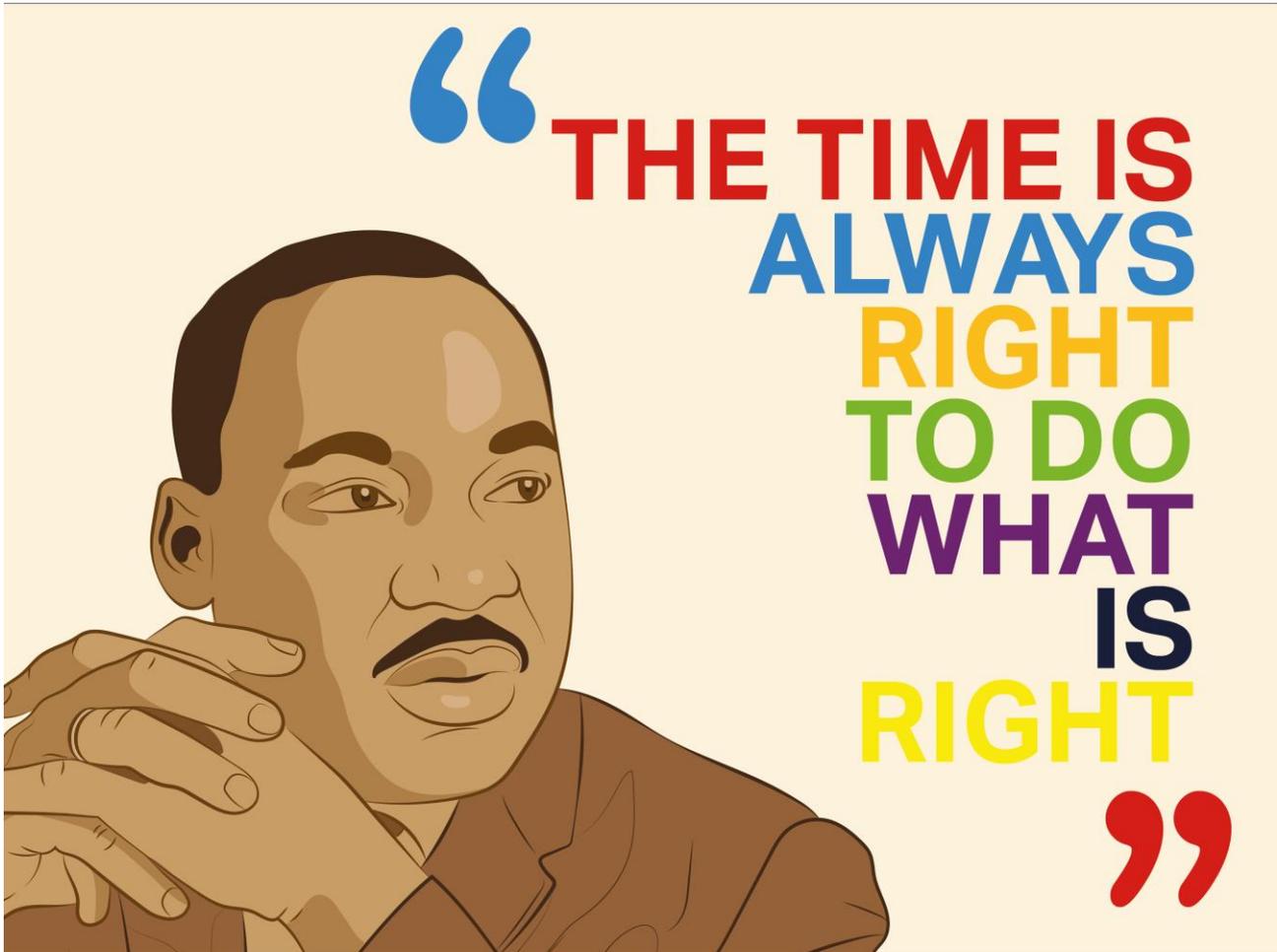
London Voter Registration Strategic Partnership

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 who continue to inform and advise the GLA in this area.

The LVRSP is designed to be 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 participation and representation. Via the biannual meetings and regular conversations, the LVRSP acted as a conduit for sharing best practice, reviewing LVRW 2020 assets, supporting with the delivery of LVRW 2020 and its evaluation, including testing and learning from new approaches to address voter registration inequality.

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LVRW 2020 – Online campaign

The LVRW 2020 campaign slogan was **#NoVoteNoVoice** - a reference to the empowering role democratic participation plays, namely, the relationship between the voter registration rates of Londoners and their ability to have a say on the issues that impact them, their families, communities and city, and its established link with belonging and identity.

The vision of the campaign built on the lessons learned from LVRW 2019 and the LVRW 2020 focus groups: the need to educate around the voter registration process, who has voting rights and the history of voting rights (adapted from the Democracy Lesson plan, one of the most successful LVRW 2019 resources); specific assets for each audience (students, faith and ethnic minority communities, private renters/ frequent home movers); and addressing apathy and disenfranchisement by touching on issues like climate change.

The campaign itself focused on digital, video and animation assets and education resources (the GLA Political Literacy pack and resources in community languages). Given the vast majority of voter registration applications take place online, in the early stages of planning, the strategic decision was made that most resources will be digital. This ensured a smooth transition to an online LVRW 2020, once the Covid-19 restrictions came into force. It also ensured enough lead-time to refine the video and animation assets and increase the likelihood of them organically going viral.

The resources were conceptualised by the diverse, young team at SOUK, under the steer of the GLA Lead Officer and guided by the lessons learned from LVRW 2019 – 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, impartial 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 future activity and resources.

The LVRSP, the networks of the delivery partner and the LVRW 2019 coalition of support played a key role in forging partnerships early on with education institutions and community organisations, thus enabling plans for LVRW 2020 to progress despite the uncertainty around the pandemic and pressures on the capacity of civil society organisations. The Partners page on the LVRW Hub displays the logos of the broad coalition of organisations who supported LVRW 2020.

LVRW 2020 – Reach

LVRW 2020 took place between 14 and 20 September. Even without the background of an upcoming general election and within the context of Covid-19, LVRW 2020 has exceeded the directly comparable metrics from LVRW 2019.

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

	LVRW 2019	LVRW 2020
Individuals reached with the LVRW social media and education packs via the broad coalition of support	85,000	925,000 - 1.2 million
Unique engagements on London Gov and SOUK social media	18,000	65,000
Reach on London Gov and SOUK social media	1.3 million	2.6 million

This reach was facilitated by a number of factors:

- **The coalition of support - LVRW 2020 launched with the support of over 100 civil society organisations, and the week itself saw the organic support of a further 100 civil society 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 to other historically under-registered and under-represented groups (young people; BAME and migrant Londoners; private and social renters), so did this year’s coalition of support, which in fact tripled.

The LVRW 2020 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; BAME housing associations; organisations representing or working with disabled Londoners and LGBTQIA+ Londoners. It is important to note the determination of LVRSP members and civil society coalition partners to support the delivery of LVRW 2020 and ensure democracy is not put on hold during the pandemic, despite pressures on their capacity.

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The influencers had varying numbers of followers, 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 (models, writers, mental health campaigners, etc.), youth and climate change activists, radio and TV presenters, faith leaders, directors of philanthropic organisations, and others.

- **Reach at scale - between 925,000 and 1.2 million Londoners were directly reached with the LVRW 2020 social media and education packs**

This estimate is based on the feedback provided by LVRW 2020 partners, those who agreed to have their logo posted in the Partners section of the LVRW Hub (registertovote.london/partners-2020/) and supporters, those who agreed to share the education and digital packs in their networks.

In particular, SOUK ensured **the LVRW 2020 video was used as part of the virtual Freshers Fairs or in the induction packs of 17 London education institutions**. This facilitated the reach at scale and the empowerment 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 Shout Out UK (delivery partner) social media channels alone, we saw **almost 65,000 unique engagements with LVRW 2020 posts (the vast majority of which included the link to the Government's voter registration page) and an online reach of 2.6 million**.

The LVRW 2020 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.

The design of awareness resources in community languages was key to addressing barriers to accessibility. Resources were produced in 13 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 resources in terms of inclusion and belonging, with some saying that they felt seen and heard for the first time in relation to their civic and democratic rights.

Based on SOUK analytics, 40% of the audience reached through their social media channels were BAME and 75% were aged under 25. Other social media metrics include:

- LVRW 2020 video has had over 152,000 views (40,000 on the day of the launch)
- LVRW 2020 animations on Who and How to register and on the History of Voting Rights have had 140,000 views and over 10,000 unique engagements on Instagram

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Have YOUR say on the climate emergency!

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LONDON Londonas nebūty won't be the same toks part without your voice be tavo bals... REGISTRUOKIS REGISTRUOKIS REGISTRUOKIS balsuotii

LONDYN nie będzie taki sam bez T w o j e g o głos u... Zarejestruj się do głosowania!

VOTEZII!

Regisztrálj hogy szavazzass!

Лондон няма да е същият без твоя глас... Регистрирай се, за да тръгнеш!

Londra nu va fi la fel fără vocea ta înregistrează-te să

Londra sose lesz már ugyanaz a szavad nélkül...

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- the “Martin Luther King” digital asset – was the most popular digital asset across social media channels and audiences. However, it also attracted the highest number of racist and radical right or far right comments and trolls.
- **The non-party political, impartial nature of the project** - LVRW had the support of the regulator, **the Electoral Commission, all the London boroughs and the London Assembly.**

LVRW 2020 – Impact

The Cabinet Office has supplied the GLA with data on voter registration applications (segmented by day, by age group, by London borough local authority) for LVRW 2020 (14 - 20 September 2020), the week before LVRW 2020 (7 - 13 September 2020), and the equivalent week in the previous year (14 - 20 September 2019). We have also collected publicly available UK-wide data on voter registration rates (by day, by age groups) from the Voter Registration Dashboard (www.gov.uk/performance/register-to-vote).

Headline registration statistics

- During LVRW 2020, **27,120 people registered to vote in London. This is a 14 per cent increase** from the week before.
- In contrast, in the same week **the number of people who registered to vote across the UK fell 5 per cent** from the week before.
- The number of people who registered to vote in London during LVRW 2020 was lower than the equivalent week in 2019 (27 per cent lower). This can probably be attributed to the fact that in 2019 there was talk of an imminent general election and registration rates are typically higher in the run-ups to general elections.

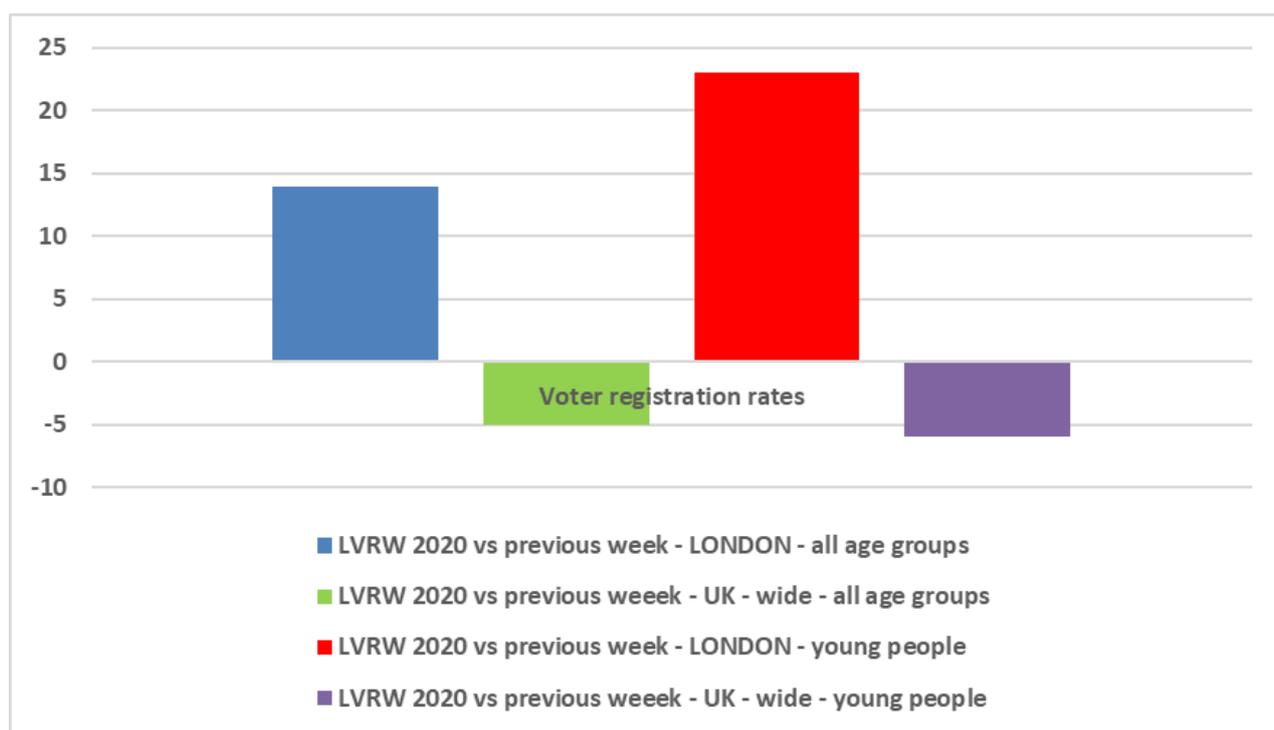
Headline registration statistics for young people (16- to 24-year-olds)

- During LVRW 2020, **5,920 young people registered to vote in London. This is a 23 per cent increase** from the week before.
- In contrast, in the same week **the number of young people who registered to vote across the UK fell 6 per cent** from the week before.
- The number of young people who registered to vote in London during LVRW 2020 was lower than the equivalent week in 2019 (44 per cent lower). Again, this can probably be attributed to the fact that in 2019 there was talk of an imminent general election and registration rates are typically higher in the run-ups to these elections.

The figures demonstrate that LVRW 2020 is likely to have had a positive impact on the voter registration rates of Londoners in general and of young Londoners in particular.

We do not have access to official voter registration data segmented by ethnicity, nationality or home ownership, and during LVRW 2020, colleagues in borough electoral services were at different stages in their annual canvass. Hence, we cannot draw conclusions on the voter registration rates of BAME and migrant Londoners (including Commonwealth and EU Londoners, in line with voting rights) or of private and social renters.

Figure 2: Comparison of voter registration rates



Source: Cabinet Office data

Considerations for LVRW 2021

The data on reach and impact outlined above demonstrate the success of LVRW 2020 in reaching its goals, despite the pandemic. Building on the lessons learned, these are some of the key principles that should inform the design and scope of LVRW 2021:

- The importance of running the competitive procurement process for a delivery partner, with a strong track record, early in the New Year and starting work in early March. This means activity can be adapted despite unexpected events and the coalition of support can start to develop before the summer holidays.
- The need to maintain the non-party political, impartial, non-election specific nature of the project, by continuing coordination and collaboration via the LVRSP and a broad, pan-London coalition of support.

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- 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, keeping in mind the accessibility barriers of various target groups, the specific nature of various communication channels and the need to educate about the whole voter registration process and its benefits. In considering requirements for LVRW 2021, it would be worthwhile thinking about including further languages based on GLA intelligence of communities in London.
- The need to ensure links to GLA Political Literacy resources, to counter misinformation including conspiracy theories.
- 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 LVRSP members and other coalition partners, LVRW 2021 should:

- Build on the legacy of this work and the established role the GLA now has in this area, under the #NoVoteNoVoice slogan
- Be unapologetically antiracist in its vision, strategy and messaging
- Take into account the significantly different context in which it may take place – ongoing measures related to Covid-19, the end of the Brexit transition period and the outcome of negotiations with the EU, and following after the Mayoral and Assembly election. This means that a number of engaged Londoners will already have registered to vote, so the GLA will need to adjust its LVRW 2021 strategy and metrics accordingly to reach under-registered and under-represented Londoners already disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, an economic downturn and potential tensions around Brexit.
- Consider the lack of Government assurance that EU Londoners will keep their right to vote and the ability to stand in elections post May 2021, and try to address related anxieties felt by EU Londoners
- Reflect the key role civic and democratic participation should play in informing London's recovery and beyond [with some London boroughs, like Newham, already ensuring it is at the heart of their emerging social contract and Danny Kruger MP's report on behalf of the Prime Minister, "Levelling up our communities: proposals for a new social covenant", September 2020, stressing that "the UK should aspire to lead the world in innovations in democracy".]

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 2020 in order to design and deliver LVRW 2021.

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Puppies aren't just for Christmas...

Democracy isn't just
for General Elections

And neither is **registering to vote**

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Matteo Bergamini, CEO/Founder Shout Out UK: “I created Shout Out UK when I was 22-years old with the aim of ensuring that everyone knows how our political system works, through political literacy, and then engages with that system. As a Londoner, the pride I have in my city is in the diverse voices we have. So we at Shout Out UK couldn't be more excited to be the delivery partner for the Greater London Authority's London Voter Registration Week 2020 and support them in ensuring every voice that makes this city great is registered and represented.”

Faizan Ahmed, Member of Youth Parliament for Redbridge: "When it comes to voting, it is important that young people aged 16 register to vote. The voice of young people is a powerful voice that must be listened to, as it is always an essential tool of how London will thrive in the generations to come, and it always has."

Aaron Roach Bridgeman, TV Host, Documentary Presenter for Channel 5 and Shout Out UK Ambassador: “I've grown to learn and understand that the only way to positively contribute and impact your future as a young person is to have your voice, opinion and perspective heard on both a local and national level via our right and entitlement to vote. Register and be heard. You are the future, so it's your right to be part of shaping it."

Larissa Kennedy, NUS President: “It is essential that everyone registers to vote to make sure that they can have their voices heard. We are living through a pandemic that is disproportionately impacting young people, people of colour and working-class people. These also tend to be the communities amongst which we see lower voter registration rates and so it is vital that this changes. London Voter Registration Week is an amazing project that tackles this problem directly and empowers young people in the Capital to have their say.”

Dr. Darrell DeSouza, CEO & Group Principal of HCUC (Harrow College and Uxbridge College): “I believe participation in the voting process is a fundamental part of our democracy and should be respected and valued. Recent years have demonstrated the need for young people to understand the importance and power of using their vote, in order that they start to have a recognised voice. Importantly, it is something that helps shape their futures.”

Tom Franklin, CEO Young Citizens: “Every young person – no matter who they are or what their background – can make a positive difference in their communities. And one of the most effective ways to do this is to vote in elections. That's why Young Citizens stands four-square behind this London Voter Registration Week.”

Jasvir Singh OBE, Chair of City Sikhs, Vice-Chair of Faiths Forum for London, co-founder of South Asian Heritage Month: “When you are in a minority, it can be difficult to have your voice heard. Voting gives you that voice. It allows you to have power over who makes decisions that will impact on all parts of your life, and that's why it's so important to register to vote. People of all backgrounds can use their vote to make sure that others can understand what matters to them, but you can't vote unless you have registered for it.”

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