YOUR GUIDE TO IMPARTIALITY

A HANDBOOK FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS WORKING ON CIVIC AND DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

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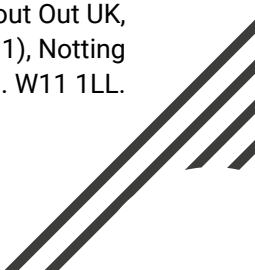#NO VOTE NO VOICE

Register to vote www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

YOUR GUIDE TO IMPARTIALITY

This manual has been produced by Shout Out UK (SOUK) and the Greater London Authority (GLA) for civil society organisations doing democratic participation work in London. It was developed as part of Phase 2 of the GLA voter ID public awareness campaign (June 2023 – February 2024). It draws on the content of an impartiality training series that was provided to organisations receiving GLA funding to deliver this campaign. While we refer to the campaign throughout, this manual has been designed so that you can apply the principles outlined here to your democratic participation work. Please note, this info is accurate as of May 2024, unless otherwise stated . For up-to-date information and resources, check the GLA's Democracy Hub – https://registertovote.london/

The GLA is the regional authority for London. It has statutory powers to support impartial civic and democratic participation. It does so in coordination with borough electoral services, the Electoral Commission, and a broad, pan-London coalition of civil society organisations, with the aim of ensuring that every eligible Londoner is aware of, and has access to, their civic and democratic rights.

SOUK is an impartial, multi-award winning, creative social enterprise on a mission to defend and amplify democracy. It does so by ensuring all citizens understand how democracy works; and are inoculated against disinformation through media and political literacy.

The GLA and SOUK have worked together on the annual London Voter Registration Week from 2020-2024. More recently they have worked on the Voter ID public awareness campaign to address the equalities impact of the Election Act (2022), especially around the introduction of photo Voter ID.

Groundwork London is an environmental and social regeneration charity that works with communities across London to make the city greener and better for everyone. Groundwork London's grants team worked closely with the GLA on Phases One and Two of the GLA Voter ID Awareness Campaign Grants to support grant recipients to deliver impactful and impartial awareness raising activity.

The GLA would like to thank the grantees in phase 2 of the Voter ID grants programme for the resources and activity they've created and delivered, some of which feature in this report. For more details, visit the GLA Democracy Hub.

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Contents

CHAPTER 1

Introduction to impartiality and political literacy

In this chapter you will find information on:

- understanding democratic structures and processes

- the difference between the powers of the GLA, the Mayor of London and borough councils

- what impartiality is, and its role in democracy; and how to ensure your campaign materials are impartial

- how to create impartial campaign materials, with some examples of scenarios you may encounter.

1.1 Impartiality through political literacy

To make impartially informed decisions it is important to understand political processes and frameworks. Both impartiality and political literacy contribute to a more transparent, fair, and engaged society by promoting informed decision-making, reducing bias and mistrust, and encouraging active participation in civic and democratic processes.

An overview of councils, the GLA and constituencies

In London, there are three main tiers of elected government, each with its own responsibilities and voting system:

- **Councils:** These are the most local level of elected government in London, responsible for services such as rubbish collection, libraries and parks. There are 32 borough councils across London, each covering a specific area. You can find a map of the London boroughs on page 8.

- **GLA:** This is the strategic governing body for London, responsible for city-wide issues such as transport, planning and economic development. It has two parts:

  - Mayor of London: elected by all Londoners in a mayoral election.

  - London Assembly: 25 members, who are elected at the same time as the Mayor, from 14 territorial constituencies and 11 London-wide seats. Each voter can elect two London Assembly members.

- **Parliamentary constituencies:** These are electoral districts used for national elections to the UK Parliament's House of Commons. Following the latest boundaries review, London now has 75 constituencies, each electing one MP.

What is the role of councils?

London borough councils deliver on local priorities and provide day-to-day services for their local residents. Their work spans:

- housing
- planning applications
- health and wellbeing
- crime and public protection

- environment
- adult education
- social services
- children's services

- rubbish and recycling
- council tax collections
- arts and leisure services
- parking

These are some of the responsibilities that borough councils have. But who works in the council and how do they get elected?

Councillors are elected for four-year terms. Councillors can represent political parties, but can also be independent.

Boroughs are divided even further, into small territorial units called 'wards'. For example, Southwark Borough Council has 23 wards, with two to three councillors elected in each ward.

Council officers (civil servants) are non-party-political, paid employees of the council. By contrast, elected councillors are not paid a salary. They do, however, receive an allowance to recompense them for their work while in office.

On the following page you will find a map of the London boroughs.

London Boroughs
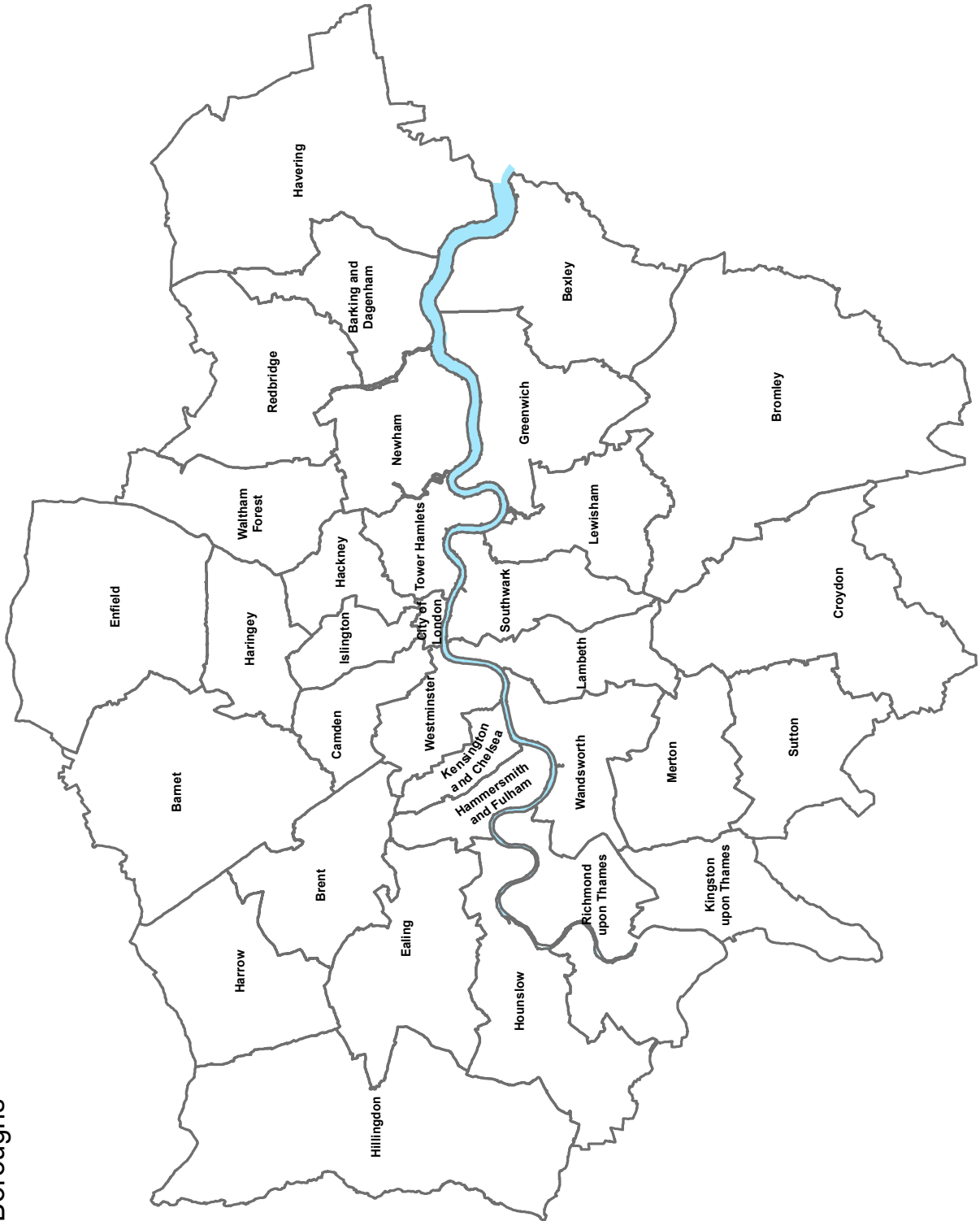
© Crown Copyright and database right 2022. Ordnance Survey 100032216. Map produced by GLA City Intelligence Unit.

What is the role of the GLA?

The GLA is the regional administrative body for Greater London. It is responsible for city-wide strategic planning and coordination, and major initiatives across a range of policy areas.

The GLA is made up of the Mayor of London and the London Assembly. The Mayor sets priorities on policy areas such as housing, the environment, arts and health and oversees 'functional bodies', including Transport for London, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime, and London Fire Brigade. The London Assembly is made up of 25 elected Members, who hold the Mayor to account. Elections for the Mayor of London and the London Assembly usually take place every four years.

By virtue of the voting system changes brought in by the Elections Act (2022), from 2 May 2024, the London Mayoral elections will use the "first past the post" system, where voters choose just one candidate. The candidate with the most votes wins that election. This replaces the supplementary vote system, which was used in past London Mayoral elections and allowed voters to choose their first and second preferences.

Constituencies and general elections

Parliamentary constituencies are national electoral districts used solely for electing Members of Parliament (MPs) to the UK Parliament's House of Commons.

Each constituency is represented by an elected MP. MPs mainly represent political parties, but can also be independent. Their job is to listen to their constituents, and represent their interests and concerns in the House of Commons. Residents of a constituency can contact their MP for issues beyond local services, such as national policies or government actions. This includes asking government ministers questions about current issues; or proposing legislation that would improve the lives of their constituents.

General elections have to be held no more than five years apart, but the exact date is determined by the Prime Minister.

As illustrated on page 8, there are 32 London boroughs. If we take the London Borough of Lewisham as an example (below), there are three constituencies within this borough: Lewisham North, Lewisham West and East Dulwich, and Lewisham East. Some constituencies cross borough boundaries. In total, there are 32 London boroughs and 75 constituencies in London.

LEWISHAM BOROUGH

LEWISHAM NORTH

LEWISHAM WEST

LEWISHAM EAST

1.2 What does it mean to be impartial?

This section is all about the importance of impartiality; the relationship between charity and electoral law; and practical tips on running an impartial democratic participation project.

Why is impartiality important?

Campaigns that are grounded in impartiality, and build political literacy, can contribute to a more transparent, fair and engaged society. They do so by promoting informed decision-making; reducing bias and mistrust; and encouraging active participation in civic and democratic processes.

Ensuring and promoting your organisation's impartiality means your beneficiaries can access non-partisan information. This increases trust in your messaging, and ultimately empowers them to engage meaningfully in democracy.

To make impartially informed decisions, it is important to understand political processes and frameworks.

Charity law and impartiality

- Charity law dictates that charities cannot have a political purpose.[1]

- A charity can undertake political campaigning or activity only in the context of supporting the delivery of its charitable purpose (e.g. campaigning for or against a particular piece of legislation). However, it must remain non-party-political at all times.[2] In other words, charities can never engage in party-political activity – such as direct support for a party, politician or candidate.

- The Charity Commission's guidance calls for additional care in maintaining and stressing a charity's independence in the run-up to an election – whilst using its voice effectively at a very opportune moment to get issues into the public discourse, and onto political party agendas.[3]

- Charitable companies are subject to the regulatory requirements applicable to companies, as well as those applicable to charities.[4]

- Companies need member approval to spend money on influencing politics. This "political expenditure" includes anything likely to affect public support for a party, candidate or organisation. It's similar to election law's "regulated activity" definition.[5]

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[1] Bates Wells (2023). General Election 2024: 'Charity Campaigning: Using your charity's voice effectively in the run-up to a General Election'. p.6
[2] Ibid
[3] Ibid
[4] Electoral Commission (2023). Charity Commission and Electoral Commission chairs share advice for charities engaging in public debate.
[5] Ibid

Impartiality and electoral law

Election law is regulated by the Electoral Commission, the independent body that oversees elections in the UK.

Election law does not stop charities from campaigning. However, UK electoral law requires that some types of content must include what is known as an 'imprint': a transparency statement about who is responsible for, and who has paid for, content that might influence electoral events. This applies to hard-copy materials, digital content and audio-only content. Content that may require a legal imprint includes:

- hard-copy 'election' material

- digital 'political' material that you have paid to advertise

- digital 'election' material which you have not paid to advertise.[6]

In the types of content given, there is reference to both 'election' and 'political' material:

- **Election material:** anything meant to influence voters in relation to candidates or political parties, even indirectly through shared policies or opinions. Material that is reasonably regarded as intended to influence voters to vote for or against one of the entities listed above includes both a positive campaign about a party's policies, and a negative campaign criticising a rival party's policies.

- **Political material:** material whose sole or primary purpose can reasonably be regarded as influencing the public, or any section of the public, to: give support to, or withhold support from, political parties; a particular candidate; a particular elected office-holder; the holding of a referendum; a particular outcome of a referendum; or any combination of these.[7]

Charities and other campaigning civil society organisations are required to register as 'non-party campaigners' with the Electoral Commission, if they spend over a certain amount on regulated campaign activities in the 12 months leading up to the general election.

The GLA's legal guidance requires that all public content funded by the GLA for democratic participation work transparently contains a legal or digital imprint. Later on, you will see an example of digital campaign material that includes a legal imprint.

As illustrated with the image on the next page, at the bottom of the image that was posted online, there is a clear legal imprint. Digital and legal imprints should show your organisation's name and

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[6] Ibid

[7] Electoral Commission (2023). Statutory Guidance on Digital Imprints.

This image was produced by Shout Out UK and the Greater London Authority. The information contained was accurate as of July 2024. At the bottom right hand side of the image you can find the legal imprint.

address, as well as the name and address of any organisation that has funded the printing and promotion of the materials.

Incorporating the imprint directly within the content itself is always the preferred approach, whenever reasonably possible. This could mean reading the imprint aloud in podcasts; or embedding it within shared images.

The pre-election period (the regulated period before an election is due to take place) primarily impacts public bodies. However, civil society organisations can also experience direct and indirect effects. For further information on the pre-election period, check this info from the Local Government Association.[8] For further information on the potential impact on civil society organisations, check the guidance from the Electoral Commission.[9]

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[8] Local Government Association (2024).

[9] Electoral Commission (2023). Charity Commission and Electoral Commission chairs share advice for charities engaging in public debate.

Impartiality and the GLA

The GLA democratic participation programme is civil servant-led and strictly impartial. All GLA activities in this area are governed by its own legal guidance, which requires it to be apolitical at all times; and not to be perceived to be associated with the promotion of any political party, individual politician or potential candidate, including the Mayor of London. Hence, all activity is GLA-branded and kept separate from Mayor of London communication channels. It is worth noting that all GLA-funded democratic participation projects are also subject to these rules.

General steps and key elements to foster impartiality

Now that you know why, let's move on to *how* you implement impartiality in a project or campaign.

- **Understand your role and responsibilities:** Recognise that your decisions and actions should be guided by the objectives of your organisation, project or campaign; and governed by the relevant legal frameworks.

- **Separate your personal beliefs:** Set your personal beliefs aside. While you have a right to your opinions, make sure they do not influence your decisions, interactions or campaign materials.

- **Seek diverse perspectives:** Make an effort to gather input from a diverse range of viewpoints. Consider the implications of your decisions on various groups and communities. Pay close attention to what the individual is saying. Seek to understand their viewpoint without agreeing or disagreeing with it. Showing any opinion is partisan. Also remember that freedom of speech is not freedom to incite hate against any individual or group of people. So ensure that you create and take part in safe spaces that leave no room for racial bias, homophobia, misogyny or any other harmful or hateful discourse.

- **Avoid conflicts of interest:** Identify and disclose any potential conflicts of interest that could compromise your impartiality. Take steps to mitigate these conflicts, such as removing yourself from decisions where a conflict exists.

- **Communicate transparently:** Communicate openly and transparently about your decisions, explaining the rationale and criteria behind them. Full transparency about who is funding your campaign is also important. This helps build trust and demonstrates your commitment to fairness.

- **Stay informed:** Keep yourself informed about relevant laws, regulations, policies and best practices. This knowledge will guide your decisions and ensure they are consistent with impartiality standards.

- **Act consistently:** Treat similar situations and individuals in a consistent manner. Avoid giving preferential treatment to certain individuals or groups based on personal relationships or biases.

- **Avoid partisan activities:** Avoid engaging with partisan individuals and organisations. This means, among other things:

  - refraining from engaging in party-political activities, campaigns or endorsements that could compromise your impartiality

  - avoiding sharing platforms, or appearing in photos, with party-political figures or partisan individuals to ensure the perception of impartiality is also addressed.

- **Focus on public interest:** Prioritise the broader public interest over personal or narrow interests. Consider the impact of your decisions on the wellbeing and welfare of the entire community.

- **Remember that impartiality is also a perception:** It is how people interpret and assess whether a particular entity is acting in an unbiased and objective manner. Perception of impartiality can significantly influence trust, credibility, and legitimacy.

Advocacy in line with your charitable purposes is important, but avoid attacking individual politicians or political parties or making party-political statements. Standards and safety in democratic discourse and practice are very important.

Get ready to vote in the 2 May 2024 London elections!

Register to vote
by midnight, Tuesday 16 April 2024.

Apply for a postal vote
by 5pm, Wednesday 17 April 2024.

Apply for a proxy vote
by 5pm, Wednesday 24 April 2024.

Apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate
by 5pm, Wednesday 24 April 2024.

GREATER **LONDON** AUTHORITY

#NO **VOTE** NO **VOICE**

SOUK SHOUT OUT UK

Supported by the Greater London Authority, City Hall, Kamal Chunchie Way, London, E16 1ZE. Printed and promoted by Shout Out UK, 240 Portobello Road, London, W11 1LL.

This image was produced by SOUK and the GLA, providing information on registration deadlines ahead of the May 2024 London elections. The information contained was accurate as of February 2024.

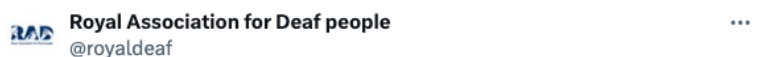## 1.3 Some ways you can make your campaign impartial

Initial questions to ask yourself when creating campaign materials

There are a few initial questions you need to ask yourself. These include: how will the materials be used? Is it a leaflet, an event poster, a social media post or a video? In what ways will you need to design these to ensure their impartiality?

The following should be considered:

- **Colours (do they represent political parties?)** By using neutral colours, you can avoid compromising your impartiality. But if you wanted to use colours traditionally associated with political parties, for instance, you would want to ensure you were including them all, not just one or a few.

- **Are the campaign materials accessible?** You want to reach as much of your target audience as possible. So, for instance, could someone with a visual impairment read the text on your materials or distinguish between the colours you have used? Have you created easy read or alternative text versions of your materials? Have you created British Sign Language (BSL) versions of your videos?

- **Will your materials be translated?** For example, GLA campaign leaflets co-designed with Londoners and produced with SOUK have been translated into several community languages, including BSL. Translation can significantly broaden the audience you can reach; improve accessibility; and ensure communities feel seen and heard.

Adapt your materials into what makes sense for your target audiences to make sure it's accessible for them.

An example of making campaign materials accessible: this Instagram post by the Royal Association for Deaf people includes a BSL video to broaden the reach of the campaign. This info was accurate as of February 2024.

Royal Association for Deaf people
@royaldeaf

How to register to vote
Your voice matters. This is your opportunity to have your say for your future.
To register – go to: gov.uk/register-to-vo...
Three different ways to vote: in person, by post or by proxy.
For support, please contact: VoterID@royaldeaf.org.uk
#NoVoteNoVoice

Why is it important to vote?

Top tips for creating impartial campaign materials

- Include legal and/or digital imprints on regulated print and digital materials, respectively. Digital and legal imprints should show your organisation's name and address, as well as the name and address of any organisation that has funded the printing and promotion of the campaign material.

- If you are collaborating with other organisations, ensure the nature of this collaboration is clear on the campaign materials.

- Ensure all the information is factually accurate, up-to-date and verifiable. Cite your references in articles, presentations and blog posts.

- Monitor the political landscape to remain aware of particularly sensitive topics or issues that could render your materials susceptible to interpretation of bias.

- Consider the wording and phrasing of your materials. Ensure that, as an organisation, you are clear and consistent on how you will be phrasing information throughout the campaign.

- Vet any hashtags that you are using to ensure partisan organisations aren't also using them.

- Consider perceptions of impartiality in the creation of materials, for example, choose colours that are not party-political.

- Consider accessibility; and make materials available in relevant languages and formats for your audience, including print to address digital inequality.

- Check for spelling errors and grammatical mistakes.

MUESTRA TU ORGULLO LATINO

Regístrate para votar hoy y dar tu opinión.

VOTE

SUPPORTED BY GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY Con el apoyo de: LAWA voades LATIN AMERICAN HOUSE LAWRS IRMO

Supported by the Greater London Authority, City Hall, Kamal Chunchie Way, London E16 1ZE. Printed and promoted by Coalition of Latin Americans in the UK, Unit 9 Warwick House Overton Road London SW9 7JP

An example of using key dates as hooks, using the momentum of pride month to share messages about registering to vote. Translation from Spanish: 'Show your Latin pride. Register to vote today and give your opinion.' This image was created by Coalition of Latin Americans in the UK (CLAUK). and was accurate as of February 2024.

An example of tailoring campaign content to your target audience, considering the impact of Voter ID requirements on the trans community. This image was created by LGBT Hero and was accurate as of February 2024.

Interacting impartially is essential to your campaign

All events must be non-party-political. If you are organising a community event and a politician is due to attend, then **you must ensure there is representation across ideally all (but at least the main) political parties** to ensure impartiality is maintained. You should also make sure they are fully briefed, and know that your campaign is strictly impartial. Cross-party representation should also be ensured if running hustings – a meeting where election candidates or parties debate policies and answer questions from the audience. This gives your communities and beneficiaries an opportunity to hear the views of as many candidates or parties as possible.

Interacting with partisan individuals can be hard to avoid in this kind of work. Knowing how to interact with these individuals impartially is essential in keeping your campaign impartial.

Tips for interacting impartially

START BY DOING YOUR RESEARCH!

If you are due to attend an event organised by a third party, you cannot necessarily control who else might be there. It's possible that elected officials and political figures might attend. Be prepared by researching, in advance, who the ward councillor, borough mayor and local MP is, and check if there will be any media present.

You should also have 'key lines' ready to use

For example, WHY are you doing this work? WHO are you engaging? WHAT is your expected outcome? This is in case:

- you are asked difficult questions or experience pushback

- you are approached by national, local or community press.

1.4 Example scenarios

Below are some example scenarios around impartiality. When reading these scenarios, discuss with your team to find some solutions to tackle these challenges.

SCENARIO 1:

You are running a stall for an impartial democratic participation campaign, and a local councillor asks to take a picture with you in front of the stall.

What to consider:
- Think about the implications of taking a photo with a political representative.
- Consider the perception of impartiality.
- How would this be perceived by the public?
- How will you handle it?

SCENARIO 2:

You have created a video to raise awareness for an impartial democratic participation campaign. You start getting 'trolled' by bot accounts, with no name, and you suspect there isn't a real person behind them.

What to consider:
- Do you really have control on who comments on social media?
- How you respond to this will be a reflection of your campaign's impartiality.
- Do you want to engage with negative comments?

SCENARIO 3:

Another organisation has approached you to ask if you would be interested in collaborating on the campaign. This organisation is perceived as having political leanings.

What to consider:
- Consider the risk in the perception of impartiality.
- Will the risk be worth the campaign objectives?
- How would this be perceived by the public now and in the future?
- How will you respond?

SCENARIO 4:

You agree to an interview with a journalist; but mid-interview you realise the questions are leading, and focused on specific candidates or parties.

What to consider:
- How will you remain clearly impartial in this interview?
- Have you prepared lines as an organisation on how to deal with this kind of scenario?
- How could you use the opportunity to promote the impartial campaign you are running?

1.5 Key takeaways

✔ Think about the target audience of your campaign. Make sure you are as inclusive and accessible as possible, by gathering insight from them.

✔ When running online or offline impartial democratic participation activity, communicate clearly and simply who you are; what you want to achieve; and why.

✔ All events must be non-party-political. However, if a politician is due to attend, then you should ensure there is representation across the main political parties in order to maintain impartiality.

✔ None of the activity or materials produced for your campaign should support an individual politician or political party; or call for your beneficiaries to vote for a particular politician or party based on their manifesto pledge.

✔ Stay up to date with best practice and legislation on impartial civic and democratic participation.

SOUK delivering an impartial Voter ID awareness workshop to Year 13 students on behalf of the Greater London Authority's #NoVoteNoVoice campaign.

CHAPTER 2

Voter registration and the Elections Act (2022)

The focus of this chapter is to review the changes to our voting system brought about by the Elections Act (2022). We are also going to share information on who can register to vote; and the impact of the Elections Act on elections in London. Understanding and communicating this information about the changes to voting in a clear and impartial way is key.

For up-to-date information on democratic rights, check the GLA Democracy Hub at **https://registertovote.london/**.

In this chapter you will find information on:

- the voting system changes brought in by the Elections Act (2022)
- who can register to vote, and the different electoral registers
- how to support someone to register to vote, and the different ways of voting.

2.1 Voter identification: Elections Act (2022)

On 28 April 2022, the UK Parliament passed the Elections Act (2022). This introduced photo Voter identification for in-person voting in elections, among other changes to the voting system.

This means voters in London must show an accepted form of photographic identification (photo ID) before being given their ballot paper in polling stations in elections. This includes Mayor of London and London Assembly elections; borough/council elections; and general/ parliamentary elections.

The GLA has carried out extensive insight gathering from communities; worked with the GLA City Intelligence team; and commissioned polling to inform their campaign to raise public awareness. This ensures disproportionately impacted communities (many already under-registered and under-represented) do not lose their voting rights.[10]

On top of this, research from the Electoral Commission into the impact of photo Voter ID at the May 2023 elections in England concluded that "most people who wanted to vote were able to do so, but that some groups struggled to meet the ID requirement." It added: "Our evidence indicates that this stems from two overlapping issues: variations in levels of ownership of accepted ID, and in awareness of the new requirement."[11]

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[10] GLA/YouGov polling (2023)

[11] Electoral Commission (2023), Report on the May 2023 local elections in England.

In the May 2023 elections, the Electoral Commission found the following:

- **Not owning an accepted form of photo ID:** 3 per cent of all non-voters said they did not vote because they did not have the required ID. However, this was higher for unemployed non-voters (8 per cent) and disabled non-voters who reported being 'limited a lot' by their disability or health condition (9 per cent).[12]

- **Not bringing an accepted form of photo ID:** On average, 1 per cent of those who did not vote said that this was because they went to vote without the required ID. However, this was higher among non-voters aged 18 to 24; and non-voters from a mixed or Black ethnic background (both 5 per cent).[13]

Other changes brought in by the Elections Act (2022)[14]

- **Changes to postal voting:** Londoners will have the option to apply for a postal vote online at **www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote**. Voters do not need to show a photo ID. However, additional checks will be required including verification of signature and date of birth. This will need to be renewed every three years.

- **Changes to proxy voting:** Voters will be able to apply online, at **www.gov.uk/apply-proxy-vote**, and their identity will need to be checked as part of the process. The person you mandate to vote on your behalf (the proxy) will need to show their own photo Voter ID at the polling station.

- **Improving the accessibility of elections:** Voters with disabilities will be able to choose anyone over 18 to accompany them in the polling station to help them vote.

- **Changes to overseas voting:** British and eligible Irish citizens living overseas can register to vote in the UK regardless of their time abroad or previous registration. Overseas declarations now last three years, and online registration (excluding Northern Ireland) is available.

- **Changes for EU citizens:** As of May 2024, some EU citizens in England, Wales and Northern Ireland cannot vote or present as candidates in local elections. Those already registered can vote until removal, but cannot re-register afterwards.

- **Changes to the voting system for mayoral, and Police and Crime Commissioner elections:** Since May 2023, the voting system at mayoral elections in England, and Police and Crime Commissioner elections in England and Wales, uses the "first past the post" system.

- **Preventing undue influence:** Undue influence laws simplified since November 2023, encompassing threats, intimidation, and vote interference across various UK elections (England, Wales and Northern Ireland). This aims to clarify and ease enforcement against unfair voting practices.

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[12] Electoral Commission (2023). Report on the May 2023 local elections in England

[13] Ibid

[14] For more info check the Electoral Commission website here – **https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/news-and-views/elections-act**

When did the photo Voter ID requirement become applicable?

The requirement was rolled out in local elections across England (except in London) in May 2023, and will remain in place for all future elections. It was rolled out across London for the first time at the Mayor of London and London Assembly elections in May 2024.

Voter Authority Certificate

If you do not have one of the accepted forms of photo ID, you can apply for a **free** Voter Authority Certificate. This is a government-issued document that includes your name and photograph. It does not include any other personal information.

The Voter Authority Certificate is valid for 10 years and can only be used as photo ID for voting purposes.

To apply, you only need to provide:

- a recent, digital passport-style photograph
- your date of birth
- your National Insurance number.

If you don't know your National Insurance number, you can still apply (similar to registering to vote). Once you have submitted your application form, the council will then contact you to request an alternative proof of identity.

EERC

Your voice matters.
You too have a vote.

To vote in London you need to:
- be a London resident
- be a British, Irish or a qualifying Commonwealth citizen to vote in the UK parliamentary/ general elections
- be a British, Irish, Commonwealth or EU citizen to vote in local/ borough council elections and Mayor of London and London Assembly elections
- be registered to vote at your current address
- be minimum 18 years old on polling day
- have an accepted form of photo Voter ID to vote in person on election day.

Still confused? We can help - call
East European Resource Centre for more information:

PL/EN – **07521 857 415**   Monday – Thursday
RO/EN – **07730 021 986**   10am – 4pm
UA/EN – **07718 612 218**

Supported by the Greater London Authority,
City Hall, Kamal Chunchie Way, London E16 1ZE.
Printed and promoted by East European Resource Centre,
Room 18, 238-246 King Street, London W6 0RF.

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EERC

Vocea ta contează!
Și tu ai un vot!

Pentru a vota în Londra, trebuie să îndeplinești următoarele condiții:
- să fii rezident la Londra
- să fii cetățean britanic, irlandez sau cetățean al unei țări din Commonwealth eligibil pentru a vota la alegerile parlamentare/ generale din Regatul Unit
- să fii cetățean britanic, irlandez, cetățean al unei țări din Commonwealth sau cetățean al UE eligibil pentru a vota la alegerile consiliului local/ districtual și la alegerile pentru primarul Londrei, precum și la alegerile pentru Adunarea de la Londra
- să fii înregistrat pentru a vota la adresa actuală
- să ai minimum 18 ani în ziua votării
- să ai un act de identitate cu fotografie acceptat pentru a-ți exprima votul

Ai întrebări suplimentare? Te putem ajuta! Contactează East European Resource Centre (Centrul de Resurse pentru Cetățenii Est-Europeni) pentru mai multe informații:

07730 021 986
luni – joi
10:00 – 16:00

Supported by the Greater London Authority,
City Hall, Kamal Chunchie Way, London E16 1ZE.
Printed and promoted by East European Resource Centre,
Room 18, 238-246 King Street, London W6 0RF.

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Resources created by the Eastern European Resource Centre to explain what you need to vote, including the changes brought about by the Elections Act (2022), translated into various languages (Romanian pictured here). The information was accurate as of February 2024.

Is there a deadline to apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate?

The application deadline for a particular election is 5pm, six working days before polling day.

However, you can apply for a Voter Authority Certificate at any time.

You can apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate online at: **https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate**.

Or you can fill out a paper application form (available here: **https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/63f39a43e90e077bb472a81b/VAC_public_facing.pdf**) and send it to your local council. You can request the instructions in large print, Braille or easy read.

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NO VOTE, NO VOICE

Did you know that the Elections Act (2022) has changed the way we vote?

Londoners are now required to show photo ID when voting in person.

Accepted forms of photo ID include:
- **UK, Channel Islands or EEA driving licence**
- **UK, Commonwealth or EEA passport**
- **National identity card issued by an EEA state**
- **Blue Badge Scheme Card**
- **60+ Oyster Card or Freedom Pass**
- **Biometric immigration document**

If you do not have an accepted form of photo ID to vote in person, you can apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate at www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate

Call us on 020 8969 9105 if you are aged 50+ and need support registering to vote or to apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate.

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Printed and promoted by Age UK Kensington & Chelsea, 1 Thorpe Close, London, W10 5XL.

An example of campaign resources showing the accepted forms of photo ID and offering support for applying for a free Voter Authority Certificate. This campaign resource was created by Age UK Kensington and Chelsea and Age UK Westminster.

2.2 Voter registration and voting

London has one of the lowest voter registration rates in England – 82 per cent of Londoners are registered to vote, compared to 86 per cent in the rest of England (Electoral Commission, 2023) However, the Electoral Commission also found that:

> "In England, among different types of local authority area, the most notable change in completeness [of the electoral register] has been among London boroughs with an **increase from 76% in 2018 to 82% in 2022.**"

For context, this increase coincides with the launch of the annual GLA London Voter Registration Week in 2019.[15]

Furthermore, certain demographics are underrepresented when it comes to voter registration. The Survey of Londoners published by the GLA found that a much smaller proportion of those aged 16-24 were registered to vote (70 per cent) than those aged 65 and over (96 per cent).[16]

Who is eligible to vote in elections following the Election Act (2022)?

British, Irish and qualifying Commonwealth citizens are eligible to vote in all elections.

Up until 7 May 2024, EU citizens were eligible to vote in local and borough elections, as well as the Mayor of London and London Assembly elections. However, from 7 May 2024, EU citizens can only vote or stand in local government elections if they have meet either of the following criteria:

- **have been resident in the UK since before 1 January 2021, and retain lawful immigration status**

- **have been resident in the UK since after 1 January 2021, and there is a bilateral agreement between the UK and their home country.**

As of February 2024, the UK holds bilateral treaties with Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Denmark.

The latest information on EU voters' eligibility is available here: **https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/running-electoral-registration-england/eligibility-confirmation-and-review-process-european-union-citizens/franchise-amendment-eu-citizens**.

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[15] Electoral Commission, 2023

[16] GLA (2022)

For an up-to-date list of EU and Commonwealth countries (and thus, information on eligibility in terms of voting rights), please check the Electoral Commission website: **https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/which-elections-can-i-vote#citizenship-en**.

On top of this, to register to vote in London you must be:

- aged 16 or over – remember that while individuals can register to vote at 16, they cannot actually vote in elections in London until they are 18.

- a resident at a UK/London address or living abroad and registered as an overseas voter.

The benefits of voter registration

When delivering this work, people might ask you why they should register to vote. Some of the benefits you can highlight include the following:

- You are playing a key part in decision-making by electing local and national representatives. Registering to vote enables you to exercise fundamental democratic rights, which were hard won and are not available to everyone.

- You are able to have your voice and your opinion heard on the issues that matter to you. Ensuring we are part of the local and national conversation is one of the most important reasons for voting.

- You could pass credit checks more easily and improve your credit score. Registering to vote improves your credit score, which is useful for making loan applications, for example. The reason behind this is that lenders often use the electoral register to check your identity.

- You are eligible to be called up for jury service. The electoral register is also used to select participants for jury service. Diverse juries are more likely to result in fairer verdicts. Ensuring people from all backgrounds are registered to vote therefore has a knock-on effect in the justice system.

This is an excerpt from a leaflet on the benefits of voter registration to be handed at in-person campaign activities. This leaflet was created by New Europeans UK and was accurate as of February 2024.

2.3 Supporting Londoners with voter registration

When supporting Londoners to register to vote, it's important to signpost people to the relevant web pages, and be prepared to answer practical questions on the registration process.

Remember that if someone has changed their address, name or nationality, they will need to re-register.

Here is a step-by-step guide to supporting someone registering to vote, including addressing common misconceptions:

1 **Go to www.gov.uk/register-to-vote** Follow the steps on the webpage. It should take a few minutes to register. It can be helpful to have a big QR code available for people to scan, to take them straight to the correct webpage, as demonstrated on the page opposite.

2 **Enter your details:** Ideally, to register to vote, you should know your address, date of birth and National Insurance number. However, you can still register without your National Insurance number. Just leave your email or other contact details, and the local electoral services will get in touch to support you.
If you do not have a fixed or permanent address, you can still register. Further guidance is available at **https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voting-and-elections/who-can-vote/other-registration-options/people-experiencing-homelessness**.

3 **Submit the form:** You might want to note the application reference number, in case you need to get in touch with the electoral services team in your local borough council.

It is worth making people aware of deadlines related to any upcoming elections.

Further support

The GLA and SOUK have created the first WhatsApp Democracy ChatBot. This can provide further support when registering to vote; answer questions on photo Voter ID; and point to further accessible resources produced by the GLA.

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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SOUK
SHOUT OUT UK

This banner, produced by SOUK and the GLA, demonstrates how QR codes can be used to allow Londoners to access webpages easily.

**#NO
VOTE
NO VOICE**

https://registertovote.london/
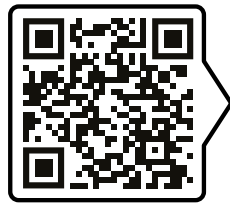
**VISIT THE GLA
DEMOCRACY HUB**

**REGISTER
TO VOTE**
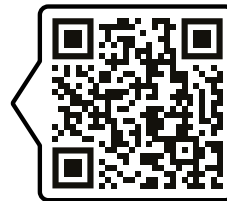
https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

**APPLY FOR A FREE
VOTER AUTHORITY
CERTIFICATE**

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

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Shout Out UK, 240 Portobello Road, London, W11 1LL.

Types of registers

It is important to know that there are different types of registers, especially when dealing with safety and security:

- **Electoral register:** This lists the names and addresses of everyone who is registered to vote in local or general elections. It is used for electoral purposes and jury selection.

- **Open register:** This is an extract of the electoral register. Any person, company or organisation can buy this information. As an elector (someone who is eligible to vote), you can opt out of the open register.

- **Anonymous register:** This is a register where your name and address are kept anonymous. If you think your name and address being on the electoral register could affect your safety, or the safety or someone in your household, you can register anonymously. You will still be able to vote, but your name and address will not be on the electoral register. In the application process, you will be asked to provide evidence to support your application. Anonymous registration only lasts one year, so you must reapply each year.

Ways to vote

- **In person:** You will be sent a poll card to your address. This will tell you where your local polling station is; and the date and time at which you can vote. Then you simply head to the correct polling station on the day of the election. You must remember to bring an accepted form of photo ID with you. This needs to be the original, not a photocopy or a picture on your phone. If for any reason, you would like your photo ID to be checked in private (e.g. if you are wearing a head covering for religious reasons), then you can request this. Polling stations should have privacy screens; and you can ask for a female member of polling staff, if one is available.

- **By post:** If an election is coming up and you will not be able to vote in person, at the polling station, on election day (for example, because you are away on holiday), you can instead apply for a postal vote. The deadline to apply for a postal vote is around two weeks before election day. You can apply for a postal vote here: **https://www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote**.

- **By proxy: I**f you cannot vote in person (for example, for health reasons), you can nominate someone to vote on your behalf. You can apply for a postal vote here: **https://www.gov.uk/apply-proxy-vote**. Please note that you and your proxy must both be registered to vote first. You can also apply by completing a form and sending this to your local Electoral Registration Office. You can find their contact details here: **www.gov.uk/contact-electoral-registration-office**.

This image is of The Politics Project delivering an assembly in a school encouraging student discussion to help connect voting to the issues students care about and get them to register to vote.

2.4 Example scenarios

Below are some example scenarios around supporting Londoners with voter registration and applying for photo Voter ID. When reading these scenarios, discuss with your team to find some solutions to tackle these considerations and challenges.

SCENARIO 1:

You are running an information session to inform people about registering to vote and voter ID. Someone says "I'm not going to vote. There's no point in voting." How do you respond?

What to consider:

- How can you respond in a way that is respectful of the person's opinion without agreeing or disagreeing with them?
- How do you put across that you want to support them exercise their democratic rights, while stressing that it is their choice whether they vote or not?
- What kind of arguments might help persuade the community you're working with that their vote matters, while remaining non-party-political?

SCENARIO 2:

You are running a voter ID stall at a local event. Someone asks you "What do you think about this new voter ID requirement?" How do you respond?

What to consider:

- How can you answer the question in a factual, yet neutral, non-party-political way?
- What evidence or statistics could you draw on?
- Is this an opportunity for you to explain the reason behind your campaign and bring someone on board?
- Do you have your 'key lines' ready?

SCENARIO 3:

You are running a stall at a local event. Someone explains their citizenship and immigration status, and asks you if they are eligible to vote. You don't know the answer. What do you do?

What to consider:

- Do you have to give an immediate response?
- What resources do you have available to you that might help you find the answer?
- What would be the implications of giving the wrong response?

2.5 Key takeaways

✔ The Elections Act 2022 has introduced photo Voter ID for all elections. An accepted form of photo ID will need to be shown prior to voting in person.

✔ Photo ID is not required to vote by post. There are other identification checks, including verification of signature and date of birth.

✔ If someone does not have an accepted form of photo Voter ID, they can apply for the **free** Voter Authority Certificate.

✔ Although the age to vote in London is 18, you can register to vote at 16.

The law has changed. You now need one of these accepted forms of photo ID to vote in person.

UK, Channel Islands or EEA driving licence

UK, Commonwealth or EEA passport

Blue Badge scheme card

National identity card issued by an EEA state

60+ Oyster photocard or a Freedom Pass

Free Voter Authority Certificate

PASS card issued by the National Proof of Age Standards Scheme bearing the PASS hologram

Biometric Immigration Document

Supported by the Greater London Authority, City Hall, Kamal Chunchie Way, London, E16 1ZE. Printed and promoted by Shout Out UK, 240 Portobello Road, London, W11 1LL.

This image was produced by SOUK and the GLA to highlight the accepted forms of photo ID. The information contained was accurate as of February 2024.

CHAPTER 3

How to create impartial campaigns offline

This chapter is centred on the offline elements of impartial democratic participation campaigns – in other words, in-person campaign activities.

There are many benefits to impartial in-person campaigning. Not least among these is the opportunity for meaningful conversations, whose only motive is better understanding the civic and democratic barriers experienced by certain communities; and reaching people who are digitally excluded, or just not online.

In this chapter you will find information on:

- methods to create engaging impartial in-person activities and offline materials
- how to interact impartially
- guidance for vetting partners or speakers
- how to run accessible events

3.1 How to create an offline campaign

What are some primary considerations when creating and running an offline campaign?

What are you aiming to achieve?

When planning to run an offline campaign, it is imperative to consider what your overall aims are. Consider who your target audience is, and what you are trying to achieve from your campaign. Do you want people to take a certain action? Or are you trying to increase knowledge, shift attitudes and behaviours? Use these considerations to decide what type of activities would be best suited to your campaign, and what would have the maximum impact on your beneficiaries.

What do you need to do to get your message across and organise impactful activities?

Tailor your message and activity to resonate with your audience's needs and preferences. Focus groups and co-design workshops are great ways of ensuring your assets are well tailored to your audience's needs and preferences.

How can you best communicate this to your target audience?

It's crucial to understand your target audience's communication preferences and needs. Would they prefer a text-heavy zine (a booklet of text and images) or a concise leaflet? Knowing their media habits helps you choose the format that resonates most.

Tailoring your message and making it simple is paramount. Consider what your audience truly needs to know. Don't overwhelm them with excessive information or complex jargon. Remember, the ultimate aim is to remove barriers to engagement and ensure understanding. A long PowerPoint presentation might cause them to tune out. Instead, explore engaging formats – such as short videos, followed by Q&A sessions or interactive quizzes.

Remember, the ideal format and level of detail will vary depending on your audience. By prioritising their needs and keeping things simple, you can create an impartial campaign that effectively reaches and informs your community.

An example of attending events where communities will already be gathered. Here, Henna Asian Women's Group attended Camden Puja to reach specific communities.

What are some examples of offline campaign activities?

There are many activities that you could carry out to create an offline campaign. Examples include:

- local festivals
- community forums
- focus groups and workshops
- registration drives and stalls
- offline media (e.g. radio/ local papers)
- one-to-one support
- disseminating print awareness-raising material such as posters, flyers, leaflets and zines
- door-to-door canvassing.

Engaging community workshops run by Voice 4 Change England, featuring interactive activities.

3.2 Creating campaign materials

What to consider when creating resources and materials

Whether the materials you are creating are printed or digital – there are a few key things to consider before you start creating them:

- **Accessibility:** Design your materials with diverse abilities in mind. Depending on what is relevant for your audience, this could mean different things. Use clear fonts, sufficient colour contrast, and consider adding text alternatives for visuals and translations, if needed. For example, for the impartial voter ID campaign – Phase 2 (June 2023 – February 2024), the GLA produced an FAQ (which can be found on the GLA Democracy Hub at **https:// registertovote.london**) available in easy read format; BSL videos; and 15 community languages.

- **Accuracy:** Focus on the accuracy of information, and ensure your resources include the most up-to-date information.

- **Impartiality:** This also involves seeking to understand what might lead to your campaign not being perceived as impartial, to ensure you're doing everything you can to maintain trust and credibility.

- **Inclusivity:** It is important to consider cultural or other sensitivities, and use inclusive terminology.

Creating impartial materials for offline events

In terms of the creation of resources and information materials, there is sometimes a misconception that impartial campaign materials are not as interesting or engaging as their partisan alternatives.

Effectively executed impartial communications can be highly impactful, benefiting from strong aesthetics and the creativity and voices of communities, while conveying vital, accurate, trusted information.

In an age of misinformation and disinformation, what audiences are often seeking is accurate information removed from partisan discourse.

When creating impartial materials, you should:

- avoid colours associated with political parties, or use a range of colours
- avoid partisan terms – instead use neutral, simple and informative language
- correctly use legal and digital imprints in relevant campaign/election materials
- remember your mission: the overall aims of your impartial campaign.

Some examples of impartial materials created by Shout Out UK and the Greater London Authority.

☑ HERE'S A CHECKLIST TO HELP YOU CREATE OFFLINE ASSETS:

✔ **Set parameters:** As an organisation, define what "impartial" means in your specific campaign context.

✔ **Identify potential biases:** Be aware of your own biases, and those of your target audience.

✔ **Fact-check everything:** Check all information used in your assets. Rely on credible sources and verifiable data.

✔ **Choose neutral design elements:** Opt for balanced visuals, colours and fonts that don't favour any particular side. Avoid emotionally charged imagery or symbols.

✔ **Use inclusive language:** Focus on objectivity and respect for diverse viewpoints.

✔ **Present balanced perspectives:** If presenting different viewpoints, ensure equal weightage and fairness in representation.

✔ **Use neutral language:** Employ clear and concise language without exaggerated claims, subjective opinions or loaded terms.

✔ **Prioritise accessibility:** Ensure your assets are accessible to individuals with disabilities, considering things such as clear visuals; audio descriptions; and alternative text for images.

3.3 Running in-person events

Before the event

Planning an in-person event

Some questions to ask yourself when planning an in-person event:

- If you are hosting, do you know the accessibility needs of your audience? Is the event or venue accessible? What measures can be taken to make it more accessible?

- Who will be attending the event? Are any media or political figures expected to attend? Will interacting with them impact people's perception of your impartiality?

- How will you ensure your stall or event remains impartial? The location of your stall is also important. For example, whose stall is next to yours? Are you next to a stage, and therefore likely to appear in pictures with potentially partisan individuals (e.g. a mayor addressing a community festival)?

Furthermore, when running in-person events you should consider the following points:

- **Visual:** Think about how to convey your identity and campaign message clearly – for example, using t-shirts and banners. Use enlarged QR codes to give people easy access to the websites they need, e.g. the register-to-vote portal.

- **Resources:** It is important to bring plenty of resources to each event, be they leaflets or stickers. Empty tables are far less appealing, so always bring more than you think you will need.

- **Proactive engagement:** Because people won't necessarily approach you, you need to be prepared to approach them. Have an opening question ready, and don't be afraid of being rejected or ignored.

- **Data collection:** It is important to maintain a record of your interactions to monitor your impact. This is crucial to building your understanding of your effectiveness, and allows you to see what works and what doesn't.

SOUK delivering an impartial Voter ID awareness talk at Barking Gurdwara on behalf of the Greater London Authority's #NoVoteNoVoice campaign.

These two images show examples of SOUK's stalls for the GLA voter ID public awareness campaign, with our information leaflets and t-shirts – which can work really well for engaging some audience.

On the image on the left, you'll see three different numbers. At this stall, we asked people to select the number they thought represented the age when people could register to vote. This is just one example of the many ways that you can make your stalls interactive and increase engagement.

Ensuring accessibility at your event

- **Inclusive planning and budgeting:** Begin by incorporating accessibility considerations into the event planning process from the outset. This includes venue selection and communication strategies.

- **Consider the venue:** It is important to select an accessible venue. For example, ensuring that there is wheelchair access and accessible toilets. For hybrid events, make sure there is a strong WiFi connection and test the sound quality. Also, check whether language interpreters are required, including for BSL.

- **Accessible materials:** Ensure that all event materials are accessible. This may involve producing them in large print, Braille, easy read, BSL or community languages, depending on your audience.

This stall is an example of ensuring accessibility through translation into community languages. The Bulgarian Centre for Social Integration and Culture have printed resources in English and Bulgarian.

Choosing speakers

It's important to choose relevant speakers who will make meaningful contributions to your event. Ask yourself: what is the benefit of offering them a platform? Choose community leaders and people with lived experience, over clout-chasing influencers!

To ensure you maintain actual and perceived impartiality in your campaign, it is important to research who you are working with. This applies to anyone publicly supporting, speaking for or endorsing your campaign with your permission. You can vet organisations and individuals for impartiality in the following ways:

- **Research:** Assess the mission and objectives of the organisation or influencer you want to work with. You can also carry out checks via Google, the Charity Commission and Company House.

- **Check for political affiliation:** Check for previous partisan endorsements, or affiliations that may indicate bias, whether in the past or the present.

- **Review past activities:** Examine the organisation or influencer's history, previous activities, statements and stances on issues. Look for any instances of bias. Remember it's about perception: even if you know that your event is impartial, it is important to consider how it may be perceived by others.

A presentation at a local community Turkish breakfast event, hosted by the Refugee Workers Cultural Association.

During the event

Interacting with partisan individuals

During your in-person events, you are likely to encounter opinions about politics and political parties. The frequency of these conversations will likely increase around elections. Choose your interactions carefully, and remember that perception is crucial to impartiality.

It is important to listen respectfully to all views shared, without agreeing or disagreeing; and to highlight that you are running an impartial, non-partisan campaign to promote awareness of civic rights and active participation in democracy, irrespective of individual political views.

Top tips:

- A "setting the facts" response works well. Using the following phrases can help engage people in your impartial campaign:
"As I'm sure you're aware, civic and democratic rights are fundamental rights."
"Wouldn't you agree that every voice should be heard?"

- Anticipate the types of questions that will be asked and prepare impartial answers for them. For example, people often ask "Who should I vote for?" You should remind people that who they vote for is entirely their decision.

You can always direct people to impartial resources to find out more. For example, the website **https://whocanivotefor.co.uk/** gives information on candidates standing in your local area in upcoming elections.

You should also have clear key lines on the following:

- WHY are you doing this work? Do you have any statistics or evidence to back up the necessity of this work?

- WHO are you engaging?

- WHAT are your expected outcomes?

- WHO is funding your campaign?

Ensure that all volunteers and representatives at the event are fully briefed and confident on key lines. Know where to find information to help them with questions they might not know the answer to.

Getting consent

Taking pictures and videos, and collecting email addresses, require consent – so it is important to keep privacy and personal data protection in mind. One way to ensure consent is not an issue for photos and videos is the "yellow lanyard method". You can implement this by having several yellow lanyards available at reception, for anyone who cannot/does not want to have their picture taken. This means that the videographer or photographer can spot who not to film or photograph.

After the event

Evaluation

Have a debrief with staff and volunteers who attended about how the event went. What worked well and what didn't? Does the data you collected tell a story? How engaged were participants? What were the most frequently asked questions? Were there any difficult questions or controversies that are useful for future learning?

Telling your story

Using social media to post a photo from your event is a great way to tell the story of what you are doing, and amplify your campaign. Tag relevant partners and use hashtags.

Follow up

Follow up with participants and the wider community via email (provided you got consent). This way the event is not solely a stand-alone event in a vacuum, but instead part of a much wider campaign. Following up is a way to continue the conversation further.

Examples of engaging in-person activities, including bringing a variety of resources. These stalls were run by Faiths Forum for London at university freshers' fairs.

3.4 Example scenarios

Below are some example scenarios around creating impartial offline materials. When reading these scenarios, discuss with your team to find some solutions to tackle these considerations and challenges.

SCENARIO 1:

You are creating an impartial campaign poster that will be used in faith community settings. How do you go about this?

What to consider:

- How can you ensure that all voices are represented through co-design methodologies?
- How will you consider cultural sensitivities when creating the poster?
- What are the key messages you're trying to get across?
- Will this be perceived as impartial?
- Where would be a suitable place for it to be displayed?
- How can you encourage a call to action?

SCENARIO 2:

You are due to run a stall at a freshers' fair targeting young people. How do you prepare?

What to consider:

- Will partisan individuals be in attendance?
- How will your team ensure a firewall between your impartial activity and the partisan individual?
- Are the members of your team attending familiar with the requirements of this campaign and briefed with the 'key lines'?
- Have you checked if you'll be charged to have a stall and whether you've allocated the appropriate budget for this event?
- Could the positioning of your stall be perceived as aligning with partisan ideas or individuals?
- How are you going to engage people?
- Do you have enough materials to cater for a wider footfall than expected?

3.5 Key takeaways

✔ Ensure you have ample resources when attending or organising events for your campaign. It is always better to have extra than to run out.

✔ Prepare responses for potential interactions with partisan individuals at in-person events, as well as key lines to ensure meaningful interactions with other individuals.

✔ Put in place a post-event communications plan when hosting events, taking into account privacy rules.

✔ Choose non-party-political colours and design elements in order to avoid conveying political endorsements.

✔ Ensure that training sessions and in-person events are accessible for all participants. This is important to ensure inclusivity.

✔ Partners and speakers at events should be briefed and adhere to the impartiality requirements.

✔ Take steps to vet and ensure partners and speakers are impartial.

The GLA running a stall in a college, talking with students about registering to vote and Voter ID requirements, as part of the #NoVoteNoVoice campaign.

CHAPTER 4

How to create impartial campaigns online

This chapter focuses on creating and running impartial democratic participation campaigns online.

In this chapter you will find information on:

- good social media use, including methods to create ethical engaging online content
- misinformation, disinformation and malinformation; and how to review content and protect your identity
- why and how to use online ads
- how to interact online – the good, the bad and the ugly.

4.1 Good social media use, including methods to create ethical, engaging online content

Perception is everything

It is vital to acknowledge the weight of language, particularly within the digital realm. Careful consideration should be given to the intended and potential interpretations of your message. Be mindful of the diversity of perspectives; and ensure clarity to avoid misunderstandings. Staying abreast of current trends can create more engagement; but it is imperative to prioritise accuracy and responsible information sharing.

Recognising the rapid dissemination potential of online content, with posts reaching millions in mere seconds, proactive measures are crucial. Engaging your audience early in the creation process can mitigate risks. User testing and co-design methodologies offer valuable insights, enabling the crafting of messages that resonate deeply with your target demographic.

Key tips on how you can avoid a digital crisis:

- Co-design: When creating materials, use co-design methodologies such as focus groups, user testing, surveys, and workshops in order to gain valuable insights into your target audience.

- Words matter: Choose your language carefully, considering potential misinterpretations and cultural sensitivities.

- Fact-check: Ensure the information you share is accurate, reliable and verifiable. This includes reposting or liking other users' content.

- Stay informed: Keep an eye on major news stories and trends so you can avoid controversies or any perceptions of partisan content.

- Have a crisis plan: Develop a plan to address potential issues, such as negative publicity or misinformation, quickly and effectively.

By following these steps, organisations can navigate the digital landscape with confidence, ensuring their campaigns resonate positively. Remember that perception is important. Make sure your campaigns control the narrative, not the other way around.

Creating a digital campaign

When creating a digital campaign, you should consider the following questions:

- What's your organisation's voice?
- Which digital platforms are your audience using?
- What materials best represent your brand and audience? e.g. are they videos or blog posts?

When deciding what resources and materials to create, you have a range of options, including:

- images (e.g. photos, memes, infographics)
- videos and animations
- GIFs
- audio clips
- blog posts
- slide decks
- social media copy
- podcast episodes.

This image for social media was produced by SOUK and the GLA for the Voter ID awareness campaign. The information contained was accurate as of February 2024.

The law has changed.
You now need a photo ID to vote.

If you are an EU Londoner, you can still vote in the May 2024 London elections.

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY   #NO VOTE NO VOICE   SOUK SHOUT OUT UK

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In the process of choosing what resources or materials you will be creating, you should consider your campaign's aims and scope. For example, the time constraints of your campaign, whether you are aiming for broad appeal or a targeted audience, the cost of creating these resources, the suitability of the materials for the particular platforms you aim to use and the potential risks involved.

Creating digital resources

No matter what kind of materials you decide to produce, you should follow the basic rules below to ensure impartiality.

- Pick your medium and platform(s), and familiarise yourself with the needs of that platform – especially requirements for political content.

- Co-design with your audience, and engage with them in a way they want to be engaged with – considering the perception of the materials you will be posting.

- Consider the risk appetite of your campaign and organisation.

- Scan for opportunities, e.g. hashtags that already exist. Ensure you vet these to ensure they are not used in a partisan context.

- Avoid colours associated with political parties, or make sure you use a range of colours so all major parties are represented.

- Avoid partisan or sensationalist language. Instead, use neutral, simple and informative language.

- Ensure the information you are sharing is factually accurate, verifiable and up to date.

- Remember your mission and objectives of the campaign.

Accessibility is key

Ensure accessibility in all aspects of the creation process, so that your campaign reaches a range of audiences. For example, use alternative text,[17] captions on videos and BSL; and translate into the languages your audience are most likely to understand. This will ensure your message is inclusive to all. Accessibility shouldn't be an afterthought to the design process. For example, using auto-captioning on platforms such as YouTube and TikTok will not deliver accurate captions, and will not render your materials accessible. Putting accessibility at the forefront of your design process will allow you to meaningfully create inclusive resources. Free tools dedicated to improving accessibility are becoming both more readily available and easier to use.

An example from Disability Action Haringey adding text alternatives (ALT text) on social media, allowing those who are visually impaired to use screen-reading tools to access the image. Info was accurate as of February 2024.

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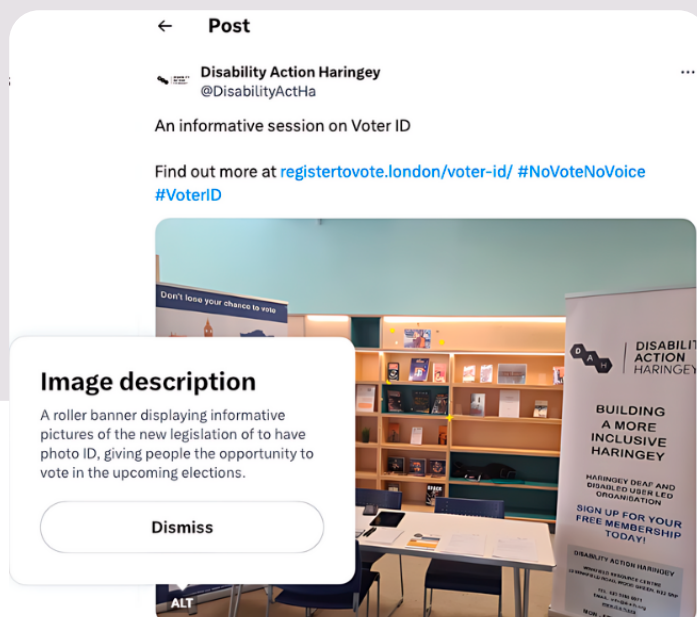
17 Alternative (or alt) text conveys the content of images. It is read aloud to users by screen reader software, and it is indexed by search engines.

4.2 Misinformation, disinformation and malinformation: how to review content and protect your identity

Protection against online manipulation

You will never be able to fully protect your campaign materials from online manipulation, but you can make it harder for malicious actors to succeed.

Here are some tips for protecting your content and identity online:

- Do not use common fonts that are easy to guess – and, therefore, manipulate.
- Only share 'raw' files with trusted organisations, via secure means.
- Avoid easy-to-edit formats. For example, posting a photo of someone holding a blank piece of paper can easily be manipulated to say anything.
- Report any misinformation you come across to the platform you are on, via their tools.

Misinformation

Misinformation is false or inaccurate information that may be shared by mistake or misunderstanding, without any intention to deceive.

Misinformation can lead to widely held beliefs, with little or no basis in reality. People may inadvertently share such claims due to misunderstandings or lack of accurate information, even though scientific research has debunked it.

Disinformation

Disinformation is false or misleading information that is intentionally created and spread with the purpose of deceiving, manipulating or misleading others.

For example: video, audio or images can be manipulated to give the impression someone has said or done something they haven't.

Malinformation

Finally, malinformation is information that is based on reality, used to inflict harm on a person, social group, organisation or country. This includes private or revealing information that is spread to harm a person or reputation.

Question: Only one of these faces is real, can you tell which one?[18]

It is now more important than ever to verify sources and convey accurate and transparent information online when talking to communities, especially in the run-up to and during the pre-election period.

Deepfakes: misinformation and disinformation

Whereas the images above use artificial intelligence (AI) to create an imagined person, deepfake technology can use photo, audio and video footage to portray a specific person doing or saying anything the creator of the deepfake wishes, in video, photo or audio format. This technology can be dangerous when used as a tool for spreading misinformation and disinformation.

Deepfakes can fabricate compromising statements from politicians or organisational leaders, or manipulate footage, to spread confusion and undermine trust in factual content. As online campaigns are increasingly driven by visual elements, campaign runners must be aware of the potential for deepfakes; and how to spot them to maintain impartiality, and avoid accidentally amplifying manipulated content. To mitigate this risk, your organisation must fact-check any online content you are considering sharing, especially if it seems sensational or unbelievable.

[18] Tsakiris, M. and Tucciarelli , R. (2022).

How to REVIEW

When it comes to ensuring the information that you are using is genuine and reliable, reviewing your sources is key. There are several steps you can use to thoroughly review a source. You can use the REVIEW acronym to help.

- **Reputation:** What is the reputation of the information's source? For instance, is it from a reputable academic or mainstream news outlet?

- **Evidence**: Are there properly cited statistics or other evidence?

- **Verification:** Has the information or evidence been verified by a reliable source?

- **Intent:** What is the intention behind this information? This can sometimes be quite hard to ascertain. Are you, for instance, being sold a certain narrative?

- **Emotions:** Is the content trying to stir up a particular emotional response, rather than one based in facts – such as trying to trigger disproportionate anger towards a certain group? These attempts are often by design.

- **Weigh up:** Assess all these elements to see if the source is comprehensively reliable, and make a reasoned decision about whether to trust it.

4.3 Why and how to use online advertisements

Social media adverts: when and why

Social media adverts allow you to target a hyper-specific audience. They do not appear on your regular @handle feed, but instead get inserted in user timelines whilst they scroll.

PROS

They allow you to grow your audience or push your target demographic to perform a certain action (e.g. register to vote). It's a great way of expanding your reach, increasing attendance to offline activities, and promoting engagement.

CONS

Ads are still content. You will open yourself up to trolling, as your content will be shown to those who do not necessarily follow you or subscribe to your message/ agenda. However, there are ways to mitigate this.

Online ads, tips and tricks

- Co-design your advert and spend money where your audience is.

- Follow the regulations of the impartial campaign, but also of the platform you are using.

- Ensure you and your location are in the UK when running ads that are deemed 'social issues, elections or politics'. Otherwise, they will be blocked by certain social media platforms.

- Being blocked is fine. If some of your ads are blocked, you can always appeal to a human. You should factor this into your planning.

- Set a goal for your ads. Are you aiming for mass awareness, a call to action or both? How many people are you aiming to reach?

- Start small and scale up. Digital campaigns differ from traditional press campaigns. Press campaigns require mass engagement from the start, while digital is about learning and adjusting as you go.

An example of a co-produced digital resource created by Southwark Travellers' Action Group, supporting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in Southwark. This information was accurate as of February 2024.

Ad placement optimisation

- Different social media platforms offer various ad placements. These can include feed ads, stories or sidebars.

- Analysing the performance of different ads in different settings will ensure that you can see how audiences respond to different placements, allowing you to allocate budget accordingly.

- For example, an older audience may engage more with Facebook posts, but might also be receptive to more targeted communication on WhatsApp; while a younger audience may be a passive watcher of YouTube Short dynamic content, but might also be highly receptive to a live stream on Twitch.

Ad scheduling and segmentation

- Segment your audience into categories and subcategories. For example, young people are not a homogenous group, so you could break them up into interests, sub-age sets, education, job specification, etc.

- Each audience segment and sub-platform segment will differ on their times of heavy use. For example, what time of the day are 18-24-year-olds more likely to be using Instagram?

- Ensure your ads run during peak hours for maximum effect.

- To further optimise ad scheduling, map all days marked by the United Nations or the UK, and other national and international days (e.g. International Women's Day) that can be linked with ad creatives to 'piggy-back' on already built trends and reputation.

Note: Be careful to ensure that you do not accidentally endorse something that you did not intend to endorse.

Frequency capping

Frequency capping means limiting the number of times an ad is shown to a single user within a specific time frame. Ensuring a limit on wasteful impressions is key for long-term effectiveness, as well as value for money.

By setting frequency caps, you will maintain user interest and engagement. This does not exclude multiple ads being shown to a single user. However, by limiting the repetition of ads, you will ensure the reduction of bloated impression figures.

There is a fine line between showing an ad enough times for an action to be taken and showing it too much, to the point where you end up putting your potential audience off the call to action.

This image was produced by SOUK and the GLA, using the festive period as a hook to showcase the Voter ID awareness campaign. The information contained was accurate as of February 2024.

4.4 Interacting online: how to avoid and manage difficult situations

When you interact on social media you are speaking to 'everyone' and no one at the same time. Interacting can increase engagement, but carries risks.

Things to consider when interacting:

- What is your organisation's risk appetite?
- How will the interaction be perceived?
- Is it worth it? Will you get more out of it than not engaging with the comment in the first place?
- How will you ensure your account remains impartial?
- Are you setting a precedent? If you interact once, your audience might start to expect a response to every comment.
- What will you do if it escalates?
- Choose your interactions carefully. If a partisan individual is trying to engage with you, be it positively or negatively, it might be better to ignore unless it persists.

Your organisation's voice online

Some organisations choose to have a familiar and friendly online voice; others are more formal and informative. Some organisations choose to have a familiar and friendly online voice; others are more formal and informative. In some cases, organisations use different voices on different platforms, depending on that platform's target audience. For example, TikTok is more popular with a younger audience, so a playful tone can work well.

You should consider the following:

- **Your organisation voice:** What is your organisation's voice online? Is it the same across all platforms?
- **Impartiality:** What risk will your reply bring to your impartiality?
- **Be consistent, but tailored:** Tailor your voice per platform, but once you have a brand voice, remain consistent.
- **Be data-driven:** Maintain a record of your interactions and engagements. Judge what has brought in further reach and engagement, and what hasn't. This will support your organic growth. Use brand engagement trackers – some platforms have free versions.

Responding guidelines

Negative responses to your posts on social media are very common when running digital campaigns, and aren't always a bad thing. The algorithms that run social media platforms do not differentiate between positive and negative engagement, so any engagement pushes your content to more individuals.

You should have a clear social media engagement policy that supports the person in charge of your public communication and social media in what to do when faced with certain scenarios. There are several considerations for producing guidelines for responding online – including whether it is a faceless or verified account; the number of followers; and who is engaging with you. For high-profile individuals, journalists and controversial figures, you might want to monitor more closely, and begin crisis communications if their post is gathering traction.

When things go wrong

There might be an instance where something unexpected and unintended results in a challenging situation. For example, imagine you are contacted by a journalist who will publish an article tomorrow, suggesting that your impartial campaign is trying to increase turnout for a specific political party.

Here are some important things to remember:

- Do not panic! It is easier to make a rational, informed decision if you allow yourself some time to process what has happened and come up with a communications strategy.

- Even if a journalist (or someone else) asks for an immediate response via phone or email, you do not have to respond in the moment. You can inform them that you will get back in touch and take their details (if over the phone). No comment is better than a bad one.

- Assuming the article is published with incorrect or misleading information: if the media outlet is regulated, you can place a complaint and/or correct the article as soon as possible. Attempting a conversation with the journalist in question can be a good first step.

- You can reach out to other trusted organisations with experience in this area for support.

4.5 Example scenarios

Below are some example scenarios around creating impartial online materials. When reading these scenarios, discuss with your team to find some solutions to tackle these considerations and challenges.

SCENARIO 1:

You have been tasked with creating a short viral film to raise awareness about voter ID.

What to consider:

- Who is your audience and how can you appeal to them?
- Can you include your target audience in the design process through co-design methodologies?
- What are the key messages you're trying to get across?
- What platforms would be best to use?
- How long should it be? Who should feature in your video?
- When would be best to post this content?

SCENARIO 2:

Someone from your team has posted an image on a social media platform that could be perceived as partisan.

What to consider:

- How will you address this?
- Does the post have significant traction?
- Is it better to delete this post or release a statement on this error?
- Have your staff been fully briefed on perceptions of impartiality?
- How can you mitigate this risk in the future?

4.6 Key takeaways

✔ Follow the requirements of the platforms, your organisation and the campaign for digital material creation.

✔ Ensure impartiality with all content that is posted online.

✔ Be consistent with your organisation's voice and the use of your digital platform(s) to create a digital campaign.

✔ Be aware of misinformation, disinformation and malinformation; and how it can impact your campaign.

✔ If helpful to your campaign, use ads effectively by setting goals; following the platform's regulations; and starting small and scaling up.

✔ When creating ads, consider ad placement optimisation; ad scheduling; segmentation; and frequency capping.

✔ Consider the risks and rewards when interacting publicly online with someone through social media. Follow the guidelines set out in this training.

✔ If you are approached by the press, do not panic! You do not have to answer at the moment.

This image was produced by SOUK and the GLA to encourage people to register to vote, as well as bring awareness to the need for photo Voter ID. The information contained was accurate as of February 2024.

CHAPTER 5

How to practically implement impartiality in your organisation and culture

This chapter will cover how you can practically implement impartiality within your organisation – including how to incorporate impartiality into your organisation's culture so it becomes embedded within the activity undertaken by your organisation.

There are many benefits to ensuring a strong impartiality framework within your organisation – particularly in an age where the growing threat of misinformation makes truly impartial, fact-based information all the more valuable.

In this chapter you will find information on:

- methods for implementing impartiality into your organisation
- the challenges this may present you with, and how to overcome them
- strategies to embed impartial civic and democratic participation campaigns and activity.

5.1 Methods for implementing impartiality into your organisation

Diversifying perspectives: embracing differences for informed decisions

Building an impartial culture within your organisation begins with fostering diversity and inclusion in the workplace. This means valuing and celebrating individual differences; encouraging open communication; and creating an environment where all voices are heard and respected. By embracing diverse perspectives, organisations prevent "groupthink" from developing – a phenomenon whereby harmony and conformity override critical thinking. Ensuring a wider range of viewpoints are considered is paramount for a more impartial approach.

The GLA delivering an impartial Voter ID awareness stall as part of London Voter Registration Week and the #NoVoteNoVoice campaign.

SOUK delivering an impartial Voter ID awareness talk at Christ Apostolic Church on behalf of the Greater London Authority's #NoVoteNoVoice campaign.

Clarity and coherence: aligning values through communication

Articulating clear aims for your organisation's campaigns, projects or overall operations is crucial for achieving impartiality. This ensures everyone involved understands the importance of impartiality, and how it aligns with their work. This communication translates into well-trained staff who can confidently discuss your organisation's impartial stance with media figures and members of the public. In doing so, these staff convey clear, consistent messaging about your activities and goals. Moreover, engaging with the communities you serve is essential to ensuring your work aligns with their needs, and makes a meaningful, positive impact. Collaborative design partnerships with community members enhance this process even further, contributing directly to shaping your organisational culture.

Building consensus: understanding why impartiality matters

A thorough understanding of, and commitment to, impartiality among staff, volunteers and representatives is paramount. Do not assume everyone grasps the concept. Explicitly communicate its importance, and the risks associated with adopting a partisan stance. Educate them on potential consequences; and reinforce the value of maintaining neutrality throughout their activities.

Ensuring accuracy: a multi-layered quality control approach

Implementing a rigorous quality-control process is crucial to preventing misinformation, and maintaining impartiality. A double-check system, using a fresh pair of eyes, goes a long way in ensuring content is free of bias and inaccuracy; and helps avoid messaging that could be misinterpreted. This internal review process should be supplemented by focus groups with target communities for robust quality control before wider public release. This external perspective provides valuable insight and safeguards against misinterpretations by the wider audience.

By implementing these key principles, organisations can cultivate an impartial culture, thereby fostering trust; ensuring the dissemination of accurate information; and achieving their goals with impactful, ethical approaches.

Leadership: setting the tone for ethical practice

Successfully implementing impartiality hinges upon the commitment of those in leadership positions. They must champion this value, actively communicating the organisation's unwavering commitment to impartiality. Senior leadership must consistently demonstrate impartial behaviour, setting a clear example to the entire team and representatives. This "leading by example" approach creates a trickle-down effect, ensuring consistent practice across all levels.

It is crucial to assess potential conflicts of interest – particularly by examining the political affiliations of senior leaders and board members. If an individual holds strong allegiances to a specific political party (for example, serving as a councillor), a thorough risk assessment is essential. This should evaluate the potential risks associated with such affiliations; and identify mitigation strategies. One approach could involve deliberately seeking representation from other political perspectives, to achieve a balanced and impartial outlook.

SOUK delivering an impartial Voter ID awareness stall at St Peter's Church Christmas market as part of the #NoVoteNoVoice campaign.

Communication: maintaining standards across all platforms

Impartiality should be ingrained within all forms of your organisation's communication – both online and offline. This includes open platforms such as social media (e.g. Instagram, Facebook) and closed platforms used for internal communication or audience engagement (e.g. WhatsApp, Discord). Remember that even closed platforms can inadvertently leak into the public domain.

There are several key considerations that guide online communication practices. Firstly, look how your social media presence comes across visually. As mentioned in previous chapters, practices such as avoiding colour schemes associated with specific political parties are essential. Consider the overall messaging, and tone of voice you wish to project. Maintain consistency, as it underpins professional and impartial communication.

Next, critically assess whether your organisation regularly reposts or interacts with content from specific politicians, political parties or partisan groups. While this may seem straightforward, discerning the truly neutral nature of individuals or groups can be challenging. When faced with ambiguity, delve deeper before engaging with them; this can help you determine if an interaction aligns with maintaining both impartiality and the perception of impartiality. This involves undertaking thorough checks of their social media activity and public statements.

Remember, the perception of impartiality is paramount. If your organisation's online presence raises concerns about potential bias, investigate and address these issues promptly. Engaging diverse perspectives within your organisational culture is invaluable in navigating these scenarios, and ensuring you are consistently perceived as having impartial stance.

5.2 Sustaining impartiality: adapting to a democratic landscape

Maintaining relevance in a dynamic environment

Ensuring a lasting, robust culture of impartiality requires sustained commitment to evolving against an ever-shifting democratic landscape. As communities rely more and more on your organisation for information – particularly in the lead-up to local, regional or national elections – it's vital to provide accurate, up-to-date and relevant details.

Staying abreast of the latest developments and legislative changes in electoral law is crucial. Regularly brief your team on these updates; and maintain comprehensive statistics related to voting and elections. The GLA Democracy Hub (**https://registertovote.london**) is a valuable resource for this. It offers a wealth of up-to-date information and answers to FAQs; and serves as a reliable reference point for yourself and for community outreach.

Fostering political and media literacy

Growing an understanding within your organisation is paramount in any successful campaign for democratic engagement. This includes enhancing the political and media literacy of your staff, volunteers and beneficiaries. In doing so, you solidify the importance of impartiality within your culture; and empower your team and stakeholders to see the rationale behind your neutral stance.

To facilitate this, consider incorporating political literacy and impartiality training sessions into employee-induction programmes. This will educate them about the significance of maintaining impartiality in the workplace and online. Again, the GLA Democracy Hub (**https://registertovote. london/**) can be a valuable resource for this.

5.3 Navigating the challenges of impartiality

There are many benefits to implementing and sustaining an impartial culture. However, it's just as important to acknowledge the challenges in this. **Here are some key hurdles to consider:**

- ✓ **Resistance to change:** Implementing changes that challenge established beliefs or practices can be met with resistance, both internally and externally. If your organisation previously held a different perspective on impartiality, moving towards a more robust approach may require consistent effort and decisive communication.

- ✓ **Lack of awareness:** Potential challenges faced by some employees include unconscious bias; limited knowledge of charity and electoral law; and underestimating the impact of these factors. Raising awareness about impartiality's significance is essential – but addressing personal bias can require considerable support, open communication and ongoing discussion.

- ✓ **Unclear communication:** If leadership fails to clearly articulate the rationale behind pursuing impartiality, employees may struggle to grasp its importance or misinterpret its objectives. Ensure your team understands the purpose and logic behind your neutral stance, within the context of democratic engagement work. Without this clarity, your efforts may be seen as unnecessary bureaucracy.

- ✓ **Inconsistent implementation:** Applying impartiality principles unevenly across different teams or departments can undermine your overall efforts. A unified approach throughout the organisation is crucial. Leading by example sets a clear precedent for others to follow; and empowers them to take ownership of this task, and participate in upholding impartiality as a collective responsibility.

By acknowledging these challenges and proactively addressing them, you can work towards a sustainable and impactful culture of impartiality within your organisation. Remember: impartiality fosters trust; strengthens credibility; and ultimately ensures you remain a reliable source of information and support for your communities.

5.4 Embedding impartial civic and democratic participation: strategies for success

While interest might peak around elections, coordinating non-partisan democratic participation with core organisational activities shouldn't be limited to election times. Democratic engagement is an ongoing process, and can be a long journey for some.
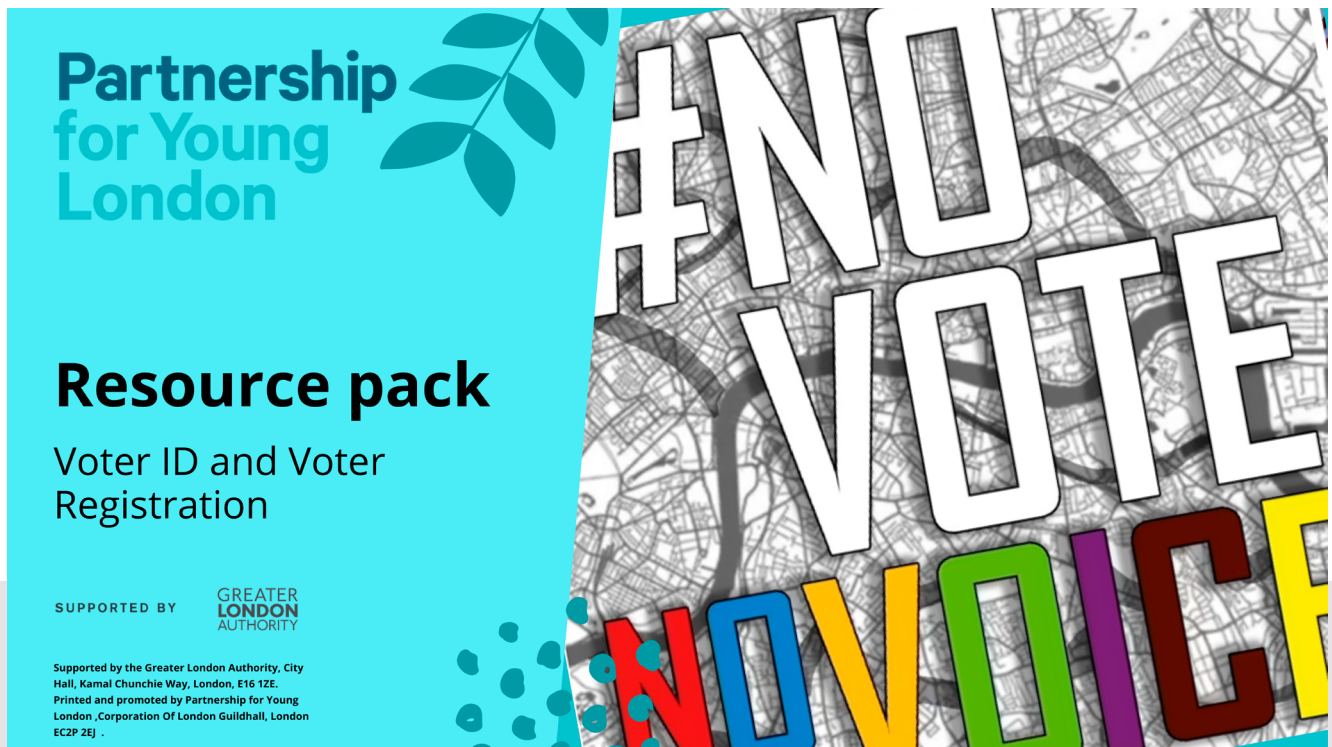
Key embedding strategies

Evaluating existing initiatives: Begin by assessing your current community support initiatives. Can they be adapted to better serve democratic participation goals? Identify elements that contribute to their success, and areas for improvement. For example: existing service-user clinics could be tailored to explain changes in voting rights, registration procedures and accepted photo ID formats.

✓ **Defining and refining goals:** Determine priority communities, and which messages are going to be most impactful for them. In the context of an upcoming election, consider groups at risk of disenfranchisement, and the information they may need before polling day – including key dates.

✓ **Empowering teams:** Prioritise equipping staff and volunteers with a clear organisational vision, mission and regular training. This will help them to effectively support communities, and provide reliable information. Ensure consistent messaging that aligns with your impartial stance.

✓ **Building strategic partnerships:** Collaborate with other organisations or community groups to spread your reach, including information. Carefully research and brief potential partners to maintain impartiality; and ensure they understand your stance and its purpose.

✓ **Sharing your narrative:** Use effective online and offline platforms to engage participants; share information; and manage communication. Control your narrative by documenting activities with clear, consistent messaging, and fostering buy-in.

✓ **Embracing adaptability and accessibility:** Show flexibility by tailoring approaches to different contexts and communities. Recognise your work as a continuous learning process; actively seek feedback to enhance accessibility, inclusivity and relevance. Implement co-design processes to better understand audience needs, wants and potential perceptions. Learn from mistakes, and evaluate alongside your team for regular improvement.

✓ **Continuous monitoring and evaluation:** Regularly assess the impact of your work to identify opportunities to build on successes, and learn from missteps. Data, voices and testimonials are crucial for storytelling and fundraising efforts that expand your reach.

There are diverse opportunities to engage communities; create engaging resources; and deliver impactful in-person activities. Far from being rigid or sterile, impartial democratic participation work can be dynamic and powerful. They ensure communities have access to reliable, impactful information to make decisions and take action. Embedding impartiality helps your organisation provide this vital support to the communities you serve.

An example of using embedding strategies such as defining and refining goals, empowering teams and building strategic partnerships. This resource pack was created by Partnershup for Young London and the Pan London Children in Care Council to share across London boroughs and support care experienced young people in democratic engagement.

5.5 Example scenarios

Below are some example scenarios around creating impartial online materials. When reading these scenarios, discuss with your team to find some solutions to tackle these considerations and challenges.

SCENARIO 1:

You are trying to implement impartiality across your organisation, but several people on your team are resistant to this.

What to consider:

- Why are they resistant? Have you carefully considered their point of view?
- Have you communicated clearly how impartiality could be beneficial?
- What would help them change their stance on this?
- How will you move forward if you do not have buy-in from your whole team?

SCENARIO 2:

Your organisation has created an impartiality policy that has been distributed amongst the team. However, you are still finding inconsistencies in how impartiality is being implemented across the organisation.

What to consider:

- How did you distribute the policy to ensure everyone understood its meaning?
- Did your team have the opportunity to ask questions, or consider different scenarios of how the policy should be implemented?
- Where have the inconsistencies been happening?
- Is there a pattern?
- Is there an opportunity to address some gaps in communication or knowledge?
- What would be the best method to address this?

5.6 Key takeaways

✔ Cultivate an inclusive impartial culture by embracing diverse perspectives; articulating impartiality aims; engaging communities; and educating staff about the importance of impartiality, and the potential consequences of not having it.

✔ Implement rigorous quality control; conduct internal and external reviews; lead by example with impartial behaviour; and maintain consistent, accurate messaging across all platforms.

✔ Update your knowledge of electoral laws; foster political literacy; use relevant resources; and continuously learn and adapt your approaches.

✔ Embrace challenges by anticipating and addressing potential hurdles. Also, lead by example in upholding impartiality; and empower others to share responsibility.

✔ Adapt existing activities to align with democratic participation; define priority communities and messages; equip staff effectively, and build strategic partnerships while maintaining impartiality.

✔ Share your narrative on various platforms; ensure accessibility and inclusivity; actively seek feedback; monitor your work; adapt to evolving needs; and learn from mistakes.

This image was produced by SOUK and the GLA to explain changes brought about by the Elections Act (2022). The information contained was accurate as of February 2024.

Further information

For an Easy Read version of this manual, BSL videos and accompanying workshop slides please visit the GLA Democracy Hub at **https://registertovote.london/**

On the GLA Democracy Hub you can also find accessible information on who can register and vote; a list of acceptable photo Voter IDs; political and media literacy resources; information on the GLA Democratic Participation grants programme; and much more.

To get regular updates and resources related to civic and democratic rights, you can follow the GLA and SOUK's #NoVoteNoVoice **Whatsapp Channel**.

Alternatively, for personalised guidance on voter registration and Voter ID, including translations into community languages, send a message to the GLA and SOUK's **Democracy Whatsapp Chatbot** on +44 7908 820136.

You can also check the Electoral Commission website (**https://www. electoralcommission.org.uk/**), which has election-related resources.

If you have any questions, you can get in touch with the GLA Democratic Participation team at **democracy@london.gov.uk**. You can also contact us if you want to support the efforts of the GLA Democratic Participation team. In this way, you can help to ensure every eligible Londoner has a voice and a vote; and to build resilience and capacity around impartial civic and democratic participation among civil society organisations.

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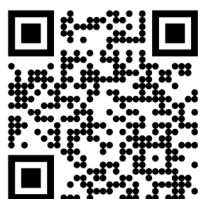
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GROUNDWORK

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