

Annex B

Methodological notes

Measuring publicity and communications campaign impact

In order to measure the impact of wide reaching publicity and communications campaigns, certain assumptions and modelling techniques have been applied to approximate the number of resultant registrations. These have been based on more easily collectable data relating to reach and engagement. Such methods are necessary where these campaigns, even if targeted, have had a large audience which is difficult to monitor (for example reaching across several local authority areas) and where there is also no option for supplying registration forms alongside the activities which would ordinarily enable a strict count of how many registrations resulted from the activity.

In these cases, LAs provided details of how many people they reached through their activities. This included radio listenership for particular groups (based on market figures), unique website visits, online click throughs, and social media activity. In approximating registrations, the first stage is to establish how many of those reached were likely to be already registered – with publicity and communications campaigns it is harder to target only those who are unregistered. Two methods have been used given the variability of the ‘reach’ data provided. Calculations here have on one instance used the Electoral Commission’s youth registration rate estimate of 56% and social renter estimate of 78 per cent, given the target groups of the activities. In another an assumption is made that those visiting the campaign website are likely to be unregistered; they have interacted with the campaign and sought out the website’s registration information. It is then necessary to make an assumption on the propensity of a young person/social renter to register to vote given they have been targeted and reached by a maximising registration project. There is very little evidence and data available on this so a conservative estimate of 45 per cent has been adopted. This has been modelled to fall between the average success rate of the maximising registration activities presented in the report and the Electoral Commission’s own estimates for registration among young people and social renters. Adopting an assumption that those who are not already registered are likely to have lower propensity to register than the average young person or social renter, the figure has been set towards the lower end of the range.

There is arguably the potential that this estimate will be quite high – those not already registered are likely to be less engaged and therefore their propensity to register, even when targeted by activities, possibly lower than the UK’s youth or social renter average. However, given the reach of publicity and communications activity will typically go beyond the target group – it is difficult to control who sees a billboard, for example – we would expect there to be some additional registrations which would balance this out.

Table 1 Publicity campaign registration estimates and calculations

LAVJB	Number reached	Estimate number reached who were unregistered	Estimate number of unregistered reached and now registered (45%)
Manchester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33,937,286 digital media impressions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25,799 (unique website hits) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11,610
Cornwall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 69,799 young people (YouTube video watches, website hits, and cinema advert reach) • 19,107 social renters (various newsletter distributions) • Total: 88,096 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30,703 (44% young people reached) • 4,204 (22% social renters reached) • Total: 34,907 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13,816 (young people) • 1,892 (social renters) • Total: 15,708

Estimating electors registered per canvass form

Where LAs have been unable to provide data on the number of registrations secured by their activity but have supplied data detailing the number of new household canvass forms received – often colour coded or marked to distinguish them – it is possible to estimate how many new registrations will have been achieved. The method adopted here draws on one which was used by some of the LAs in their own evaluations and therefore is consistent across the figures produced among the 24. Data from the 2011 Census has been used to establish two key pieces of information; how many individuals living in the LA are aged 16 years or older, and how many properties are inhabited by at least one resident. From this it is possible to calculate the average (adult) household size. (While individuals under 18 years are ineligible to vote, 16 and 17 year olds can be eligible to register and reasonably be included on the household canvass form.)

It is assumed that where a household form has been returned, this will include all those eligible electors resident in the property. Therefore the figures provided in the

report where only LAs could provide only household form data reflect the number of forms multiplied by the average eligible electors per household.

Evidently, not all individuals aged over 18 will be eligible to vote. The figures do not, for example, consider nationality. They do however provide an approximate figure of how many electors are likely to be covered by a single form received under the household system.

Data for these calculations can be found here via the Office for National Statistics:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census/key-statistics-for-local-authorities-in-england-and-wales/rft-table-ks102ew.xls>

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census/key-statistics-and-quick-statistics-for-local-authorities-in-the-united-kingdom---part-1/rft-gs406uk.xls>

Similarly, age, household population, and household tenure data from the 2011 Census has been used to estimate the number of electors targeted by the activities where LAs/VJBs have provided only the number of non-responding properties they aim to canvass.

Estimating number of target URG(s) unregistered prior to activity

Where LAs do not know the registration rate of the URG(s) they were targeting in their area prior to any activity – and upon which any improvement can be measured – this report uses the Electoral Commission's rates of registration for URGs and the LAs' corresponding URG population estimates. If they do not have up to date figures here, reference has again been made to data from the 2011 Census, for example on number of attainers, young people, or social renters in a given area. Once more, these can only provide a rough figure – not all individuals in these categories will be eligible to register. Where more there was more than one target group, calculations have been made for each URG with these totals being combined to produce an overall number of unregistered individuals targeted by the activities.

Given all LAs report having achieved at least some new registrations through their activities, these have been added to the number estimated as being already registered at the start of the activity period. This permits some comparison of register completeness before and after, and provides indicators which can be viewed against those LAs which provided this information.

This method will always assume, and therefore show, an increase in target URG registrations since the new registrations are added to the Electoral Commission base

levels. The figures must therefore be viewed with this in mind. While not ideal, this nonetheless provides an indication of the likely impact the activity type might have on particular URGs based on national average. The *potential* of the activity can therefore be assessed.

To ensure consistency across the analysis the target figure used in this report always relates to an aim for 100 per cent completion. All unregistered individuals in an identified URG or ward are assumed to be targets for the activity.

(Note: some LAs set their own targets within these figures, for example a total completion rate of 75 per cent.)

Accounting for improvements in accuracy

In the run up to IER, there appears to have been an increased effort to ensure the accuracy of the existing register and so remove any duplicate, ineligible, deceased, or home mover (out of the LA/VJB) electors from the register. Consequently, some LAs have reported a fall in the total number of registrations. If and where LAs have been able to provide figures as to how many electors they themselves have removed from the registers, for the purposes of this analysis these have been subtracted from the 1 October 2013 figure to support comparison between this and the 17 February 2014 figure.

Total registration rate

At the time of analysis, not all LAs had provided the total number of registrations in their local area at the beginning and end of the activity period, as published on the electoral register 1 October 2013 and 17 February/10 March 2014 respectively. Where this data was lacking, data provided by the Office for National Statistics has been used. This only includes Parliamentary electors so excludes peers and EU citizens but does include overseas electors.