Voter Registration
Campaign Pack

Introduction

At the last General Election we saw huge numbers of people vote and get involved in politics for the first time. We know that because of the positive change we proposed that people who were voting for the first time were overwhelming likely to support the Labour Party.

The challenge for us all now is to build that momentum and enthusiasm outside of a General Election campaign and to try and ensure that as many people as possible are registered to vote.

You could be forgiven for thinking that the Tories don't want people to vote. Cynical moves like the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration and continuing failed Voter ID trials threaten to disenfranchise tens of thousands of people, people who are often already some of the most marginalised and forgotten in society. It is incumbent on all of us to fight these moves and get as many people on the register as we possibly can; not just to advantage us at election times put to ensure that as many people as possible are able to exercise their democratic rights, have a voice and a choice in the decisions we make as a country and play a full part in a vibrant and dynamic civic society.

Encouraging people to register to vote can be challenging in terms of identifying unregistered people, communicating with them effectively and persuading them to take action. In this booklet we'll look at some of the methods that can be employed to improve registration rates and while we might wish for some "silver bullet" to maximise registrations the reality is that the best approach is to use all of these methods in combination with each other. Deploying a joined-up campaign which combines digital channels, printed communications, door-knocking, and relationship building with key institutions with which unregistered voters interact, is the key and while this may represent a significant amount of work the rewards for our movement and for wider society are immeasurable.

The good news is that the actual registration process is pretty simple and straightforward; it only takes five minutes and all people need is their national insurance number. Go to *www.gov.uk/register-to-vote*, fill in a few details and you're registered, it's that easy. The challenge for us is getting people there to do it and removing as many barriers as possible, we'll go through some of the ways you might do this in the subsequent pages.

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Building Relationships and Working with Institutions and Businesses

The best thing any of us can do to improve voter registration rates is to work with the institutions and businesses with which unregistered voters often interact. Identifying individuals who are not on the electoral register can be difficult but we can all recognise some of the places they are likely to frequent and some of the institutions with which they have existing relationships. The "ask" on these organisations needn't be large but over time and with a combined approach the results can be significant.

Local Council

Local Councils have an obligation to register people to vote and should deploy teams to sign people up to the electoral register at certain points in the year or electoral cycle. Your first point of call should be the Electoral Registration Officer within the Democratic Services Team (or equivalent) at your local council to try and arrange a meeting to talk about their current activity and the steps they are taking to drive-up registration. There's a handy checklist to go through to make sure they are doing all they can and the answers to these questions may help guide your activity to ensure you are complementing the local authority's strategy.

Schools and Sixth Form Colleges

One of the main groups who are unlikely to be registered to vote are those who have only recently turned 18 or those that are about to. Large number of these people will still be in full-time education so it's worth getting in touch with any schools or colleges with sixth forms in your area and arranging a meeting. Young people can register to vote from the age of 16 although, for the time being at least, they can't actually vote until they're 18.

If you have an enthusiastic Youth Officer or group of younger members it would be worthwhile to ask them to take responsibility for this part of the campaign. Try to organise visits from local Labour elected representatives to schools and colleges and ask for permission to hand out voter registration leaflets. Encourage schools and colleges to engage in mock elections where students need to register in order to participate, or hold open days for all political parties to attend in order to increase debate and engagement with politics and act as a motivator to increase voter registration.

Universities

Many university students aren't registered to vote where they study and are probably not aware that they can register both at home and where they live during term-time. They can legally vote in both of these locations in local elections but only one at a general election so while it might be worth identifying if their home address is within a marginal seat for the general election it's definitely worth encouraging as many students as possible to register at both addresses to vote in locals and give them a choice at the next general.

Again; building relationships directly with the academic institutions concerned can often yield the best results. Ask to meet with the registrar and/or the students union to try and encourage them to include voter registration materials in their induction packs. Running stalls at Fresher's Fairs can also be extremely productive and you'll find a guide to delivering a successful Fresher's event on the following page. Bear in mind though that most students will change address multiple times during their studies so all of the advice around building relationships with letting agents, identifying households where people have dropped off the register, and building campaigns in specific areas with high concentrations of students in rented accommodation apply to increasing registration rates among students.

Letting Agents

Many unregistered people are not in full-time education and can fall off the register because they move frequently, often in rented accommodation and regularly moving every year or two. These people can be difficult to track down individually so one of the best approaches is to try and form good working relationships with letting agents and landlords in your area and attempt to persuade them to encourage their tenants to register to vote.

This group of unregistered people are far more prevalent in larger metropolitan areas and are often very likely to be Labour supporters if they vote. Start by making a list of all the letting agents in your area and try and get a sense of the size of their portfolios from their websites and other sources (local

CHECKLIST FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

1. Has your local authority analysed the last annual household canvass and compared the results on a ward by ward basis to the previous year's canvass?

2. Has your local authority analysed the results of the last annual canvass to see which areas have high numbers of people moving in and out of the area, and used that analysis to drive the pattern of your voter registration activities?

3. Does your authority maintain a database of electors who have confirmed their electoral registration details via the "No Change" method, and will it be using this database to ensure people who have been previously registered but haven't been re-registered are contacted?

4. In addition to your Council Tax, Housing Tenancy and Benefits databases, are there any additional databases that your local authority is using to match elector data for electoral registration purposes? If not, are there additional databases that your authority could be using for this purpose?

5. Is data held by your local authority, such as your Housing Benefit database, being used to identify residents who are not currently registered to vote and to encourage them to do so?

6. How is your local authority targeting its doorstep canvass? Are HMOs and other properties associated with lower rates of registration being prioritised?

7. Does your authority have a strategy for communicating with ethnic minority communities, and in particular those who don't use English as a first language? Are there translated versions of electoral registration leaflets and forms available for these residents?

8. What is your authority's communication strategy for encouraging local residents to register to vote? If your authority has a regular publication, is it being used as part of this strategy?

9. Does your authority prompt local residents with electoral registration reminders at other points of contact with the council, such as when residents apply for Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit or any other council service?

10. Does your authority have a specific strategy for residents in the private rented sector and residents in houses of multiple occupation? Are local private sector landlords being liaised with to ensure electoral registration information is included in tenancy packs and other communications they have with their tenants?

11. Are council officers present at citizenship ceremonies to encourage newly eligible electors to register to vote straight away?

12. Will officers from your local authority be visiting schools and colleges in the area to encourage over 18s to register to vote and over 16s to register as attainers (people who will soon turn 18) on the electoral register?

RUNNING A FRESHER'S FAIR VOTER REG DRIVE

Fresher's Fair

Using your University's Fresher's fair is a great and simple way to get new students registered to vote, as it provides a venue and a large student populous for you to get to register. It can be very effective, but you should follow a few steps first:

- Make sure you have a laptop or tablet displaying the www.gov.uk/register-to-vote site for students to register directly. It's important that they register directly and that you don't store the data they use to do so. Data gathered as part of students signing up to your club should be dealt with separately.
- Display our Labour Party 'register to vote here' board prominently so students know they can sign up at your stall.
- It's worthwhile speaking to your Students' Union beforehand to make sure you're not blocking a thoroughfare as students sign up at your stall. Some SUs might be unsure about voter registration activity, so be sure to make clear that what you're doing is fully compliant with electoral and data protection legislation.

Plan your drive

Before you start your drive, it is important that you plan well ahead so that it is executed efficiently and successfully. Contact the Labour Students National Office for help and past examples is a good place to start. First identify where, when and how you will be doing the drive:

- Will it be on campus or by accommodation blocks? (make sure this is allowed by contacting your SU) Putting you stand in the most common area for student congregation is a good way to get attention.
- Do you have the means to do it on your own? (Laptop, signs, tables etc.)
- What time is most effective to be able to attract students? (E.g. maybe focus on times in-between lectures or around lunch.)
- What will the weather be like? It could be effective to bring a gazebo or Umbrellas just in case of bad weather.

On the day – How to make it effective

Once your event is planned and ready, time to begin rolling it out. A few key tips:

· Make sure the stall always has at least two people staffing it at all times, to make sure that you're attract students to the stall and one to run them through what they need to do to register.
· Laptops should be well charged or have portable chargers; you don't want to have to pause the stall to plug it in elsewhere!
· Remind students they can register at both their home address and University address. They can vote in both home and University addresses in local elections, and in one of the two at General Elections.
· Post as much as you can about it on social media – it could be a great way to get people to the stall, and make sure to keep linking them to the website in case they don't know where to go: https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote.

Keeping it legal

You are perfectly entitled to encourage students to register to vote, and to do so with Labour Party materials and branding. When encouraging students to you must ensure:

1. They complete the online registration form themselves. You cannot complete the registration form on their behalf.

2. That you do not collect or retain any data they submit when registering to vote. Any data you collect signing students up to your Labour Club or a campaign must be dealt with separately.You should make every effort to work cooperatively with your University and Students Union. If they ask you to move your stall to improve ease of access to or through an area you should respect this. Some institutions may be nervous about voter registration activity taking place under a Party political brand, so it's important you reassure them that by adhering to points 1 and 2 above you're acting fully within electoral and data protection law. Universities and SUs should be taking their own action to encourage students to register, so if you can support their efforts this is also encouraged.

Further action after event

After the event is over, reflect on how it went: Was it effective? Did you sign up as many as you'd hoped? Was there anything you'd do differently?

If you were successful, then it might be good to look at pushing you SU and University to implement automatic voter registration, a guide being available on the Labour Students website. If you did not do so well, perhaps look at where you encountered challenges and make sure on the next drive you do, that those issues are acted on.

councillors are often a good source of information). Prioritise the larger agencies and try and arrange a short meeting. Ideally we'd like them to put pre-printed voter registration forms in their new tenant's packs, this will lead to the best return. Failing that; asking them to include some voter registration cards in their packs and having some in their offices would be a good outcome.

Building a campaign in specific areas
Unregistered people often congregate in similar areas, use the same businesses and frequent the same places. Use the process of identifying unregistered people through Contact Creator to attempt to select certain areas with high numbers of suspected unregistered people. Alternatively; knowledge of your local area will probably lead you towards certain areas, trust your instinct and experience- you're are almost definitely correct.

Once you've identified areas of higher levels of unregistered people talk to the businesses there and try and build your relationships. Explain what you're trying to do, increase voter registration, and see if they'd be willing to help. With campaigns like this it's better to try and deploy a "big hit" in an area for a month or two then move on to a different area than to attempt a prolonged, sustained campaign which will see diminishing returns.

Try and get some posters up in local businesses and combine these with voter registration cards, street-stalls, advertising on social media and direct mail if you can afford it. Once you've done this for few weeks move on to the next area.

Door-knocking to increase voter registration
While we wouldn't recommend door-knocking with the sole purpose of increasing voter registration, apart from in a few isolated areas with exceedingly high levels of unregistered people, is it important to include some voter registration materials in your normal door-knocking packs and to brief your volunteers on what to do if they encounter unregistered people.

It is common while door-knocking for people to return from a door and feedback that the people we had on our sheets have moved. In these instances we need to brief our volunteers to ask the new residents in they've registered to vote, hand them a voter registration card or form, or encourage them to register online there and then.

Things to include in your door-knocking packs:
• **Voter Registration Cards**
• **Voter Registration Forms**

Digital Assets to support your voter registration campaign

Social media is a good way to communicate your voter registration message. The following content can be used to encourage people to register to vote:

1. Posts and tweets for instant sharing

Please click on the links below to share UK Labour's voter registration content

Facebook: *https://bit.ly/2urT0BB*

Twitter: *https://bit.ly/2OnRFVG*

Please click on the Twitter intent below to instantly tweet your own voter registration content
https://bit.ly/2WlBDyf

2. Download graphics and content that can be used to create your own content

A range of assets can be downloaded from our Campaign Hub
https://labour.org.uk/members/campaignresources/campaignmaterials/2019localelections/2019-local-elections-digital-assets/

3. Model copy for tweets and posts

Twitter

The more of us that vote, the more we can achieve.Local elections are coming. Make sure you're registered to vote before 12 April: gov.uk/register-to-vote #RebuildingBritain

This May, you can elect councillors who put your local community first. But first, you need to be registered to vote. Register now: gov.uk/register-to-vote #RebuildingBritain

Local elections are coming. Take two minutes to register to vote now: gov.uk/register-to-vote #RebuildingBritain

Facebook

The more of us that vote, the more we can achieve. Local elections are coming. Make sure you're registered to vote before 12 April: gov.uk/register-to-vote
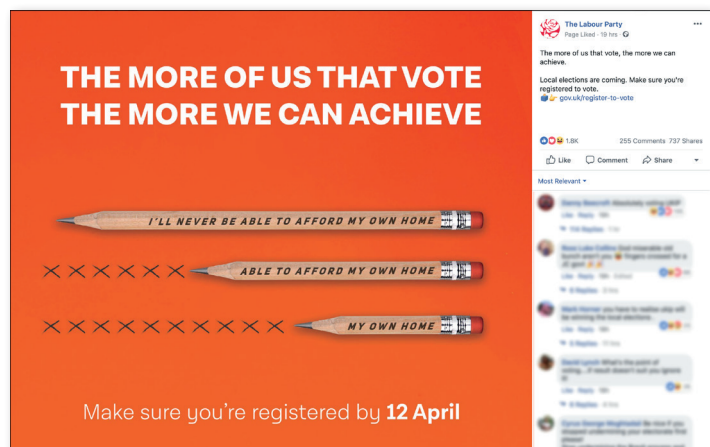
This May, you can elect councillors who put your local community first. But first, you need to be registered to vote. Register before 12 April: gov.uk/register-to-vote

Identifying Unregistered People through Contact Creator

Many of the Labour Party's database systems are, understandably, geared towards identifying and communicating with electors, which presents us with a problem when attempting to identify and communicate with unregistered people. This is not a problem unique to the Labour Party and is shared by local councils, credit agencies and the like. Indeed, one of the reasons people may be reluctant to register to vote is that they believe, correctly, that this will make it easier for these types of organisations to locate them.

What we can do through Contact Creator though is create reports of all electors in a given area and use this as an exclusion against another data-set (e.g. a Facebook audience), thus creating a pool of people that we think live in a given area but are not currently on the electoral register.

Contact Creator provides several new pieces of functionality to help you and your campaign focus your efforts on finding and registering electors as part of your usual Voter ID work. It allows you to focus both on electors who might be missing, and also on households where no-one is currently on the register, such that:

• you can now output Voter ID sheets from Contact Creator which tell you, in house number order and among the information about electors, **which properties in a street have no electors in** them at all;

• we've made it easier to output information about **former electors** (people who are no longer on the register at a particular address) on the sheets - if this option is enabled, these people are marked on the sheets with an F (former elector);

• we've used **commercial data** to identify people who aren't yet on the electoral register but seem to have moved in recently - if this option is enabled, these people are marked on the sheets with a **'P'** (potential elector);

• we've **revised the runtime filters** so that you can control easily what electoral statuses for residents (current elector, former elector, potential elector) are on your Voter ID sheets;

• we've created a **new direct mail report for electoral registration,** which combines the potential elector information, where we have it, with all the addresses where we don't have anyone on the electoral register, with name fields replaced with "New Occupier".

• we've started to store information about **how many electors are living in a property now** and how many have lived there before, so that in the future we'll be able to compare the number of electors currently resident at a property with the highest number who have ever lived in that property.

Properties in a street with no electors

When you are running a Voter ID sheet, or similar PDF outputs, you'll see a new little box on the first page of the report wizard:

If you tick it, you will then see on the printed sheets a note against each household where at the moment no-one is on the electoral register, flagging that these are the properties where registration activity needs to be concentrated.

This means that when you are running a slightly restricted selection on your Voter ID sheets (for example, excluding people who you spoke to in the last few weeks, people who have told you they vote Conservative since May 2015, and people who've asked us never to contact them again), you can differentiate between properties where you walk past the door because you've already spoken to the electors, and properties where there may be residents, but there aren't any electors.

☑ **When this box is ticked, there are fewer options for how to order properties on your sheets**
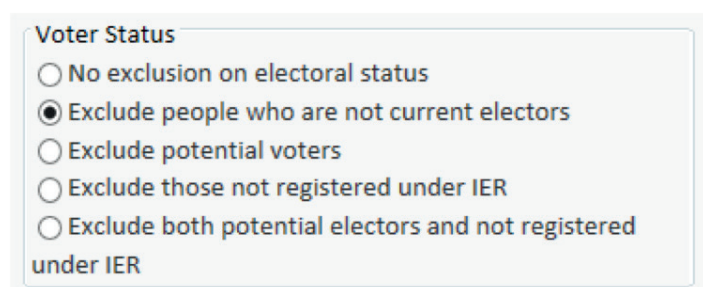
For obvious reasons, if you do tick this box, electors cannot be arranged by polling number, so the default is instead that electors are arranged by the numbering of the properties they live in.

By default this will be 1,3,5,...2,4,6, but you can change this on the runtime filters screen (use the **Advanced Options** button) to 1,2,3,4,5 if that's more convenient – for example, if you are printing a report for blocks of flats.

Former and potential electors

You can now include both **former electors** (people who used to be on the electoral register at that address, and whom we haven't traced to a new address yet), and **potential electors** (people who aren't on the electoral register, but whose presence at an address is indicated by commercial data) on your Voter ID sheets.

You'll see the following new options on the runtime filters page: by default all non-electors are excluded from the sheets, as they have always been, but you can change the exclusions show (or not show) former electors >> potential electors.

```
Voter Status
○ No exclusion on electoral status
● Exclude people who are not current electors
○ Exclude potential voters
○ Exclude those not registered under IER
○ Exclude both potential electors and not registered
under IER
```

Again, for obvious reasons, if you do tick this box, electors cannot be arranged by polling number, so the default is instead that electors are arranged by the numbering of the properties they live in, and you can use the **Advanced Options** button to control this.

People who aren't electors obviously don't have polling numbers. For these electors, instead of polling numbers, you'll see F for former electors, P for potential electors and U for electors who came off the register at the end of the transition to IER in December 2015.

Do be sensitive about how you use this information – most people who used to be at a given address and aren't there any longer have moved or died rather than failed to fill in a form, so be careful about how you use this information when you're on the doorstep.

Electoral registration direct mail

You can now run off a special report, in CSV format, for mailmerging letters to people who may not be on the electoral register. Pick any selection from the run report screen (whichever you pick doesn't matter) then press **Create new report,** then pick **Electoral registration direct mail** from the drop down list of report types (it's right at the bottom), and pick the geography as you normally would.

This generates a direct mail file with two sorts of record in it, and the **selection identifier** field allows you to see which is which. There are records for properties with no-one on the electoral register, with the name fields replaced with "New Occupier"; and people whom we reckon from commercial data have moved in recently (with the names we have been able to obtain). This way you can run off a set of letters, and then go round door to door with the letters and either explain them on the doorstep or post them through the letterbox.

Make sure when you do write to people about the importance of being on the register, here's a model letter for that purpose:

Model Copy - Letter to unregistered people

Dear Neighbour,

Time is running out to register to vote in May's elections

There are important elections taking place on Thursday 2 May.

There is so much at stake at this election. The Tories have failed communities like ours with savage and unnecessary cuts while their incompetence and divisions have led to a botched Brexit.

But it doesn't have to be like this. Labour will stand up against Tory cuts to protect the services that people depend on.

Labour will give our council the funding it needs, invest in our high streets and put police back on the street. We will put fairness at the heart of everything we do and build a fairer country, where everyone gets a share in its rewards.

In the last few weeks I've spoken to lots of people in our community who are registering to vote to make sure their voice is heard.

To have your say make sure you register to vote by visiting gov.uk/register-to-vote or fill in the attached form and send it back to the council for free. All you need is your name, address and National Insurance number.

The deadline to register is midnight on Friday 12 April.

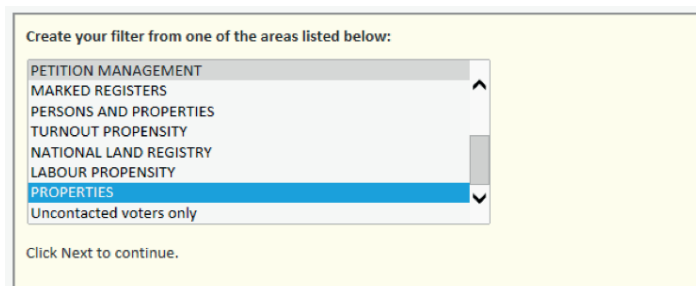The more people that vote, and vote Labour, the more we can all achieve.

Yours faithfully,

New fields in the selection builder: how many people now, and how many people before?

As well as the immediate problems of the transition to electoral registration, we will want to be able to spot underregistration issues in the future – especially the problem of within-household under-registration, where one person is on the register (who may well be also the person who answers letters addressed to the occupier, and answers the door) but it is apparent that there are also electors in the household who aren't on the register

So we now store the information on (1) what the maximum number of electors in that household has been since summer 2015, and (2) what the current number of electors is.

To use this information in the selection builder, tick the top level selection box, press **Add,** and then pick **Properties** as an area to create a filter from.
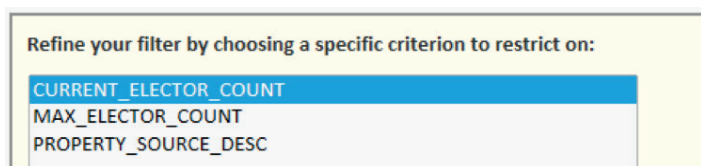

You can then use the **Current elector count** and **Max elector count** fields, as shown below, to build a selection looking for (for example), all households that used to have four or more people in them, and now have two or fewer. They are stored as numbers, so you can set a range or pick a particular figure.

Obviously people can leave a household for reasons unconnected with electoral registration, and the the best use of your time is to concentrate on households where several people are missing rather than where just one person has dropped off the register.

Labour