

Local Elections 2023 communications approach

Campaign approach

In order to support the changes outlined for May 2023, a comprehensive communications and engagement campaign is required from January 2023, following the launch of the VAC application portal (expected to go live on 16 January 2023) through to polling day on 4 May 2023.

The Electoral Commission (EC) has responsibility for promoting public confidence and participation in democratic processes, to ensure their integrity and to ensure that voters have all the information they need to vote.

Ahead of the local elections in 2023 and once the VAC application portal is in operation, the EC will be running a high-profile national campaign focusing on raising awareness on voter ID, as well as their usual registration and local elections campaigns.

Electoral Commission campaign

The EC will be running a two phased campaign focusing on four key campaign strands:

1. Voter ID campaign aimed at all adults aged 18+ in England.
2. Voter ID campaign aimed at adults 18+ in England where local elections are taking place.
3. GOT 5?' register to vote campaign.
4. Voter ID campaign targeted specific key groups that are likely to have no form of photo ID and need proactive targeting. These have been identified as:
 - People aged over 85
 - Trans and non-binary people
 - People with disabilities
 - Ethnicities with low ID ownerships, including the Gypsy, Roma and Traveler communities
 - People registered as anonymous voters
 - Homeless people and people living in refuges

Campaign timings

Phase 1: Mass awareness phase

A 6-week full channel campaign between 9 January – 19 February 2023 in line with the launch of the voter ID online portal.

Phase 2: Local urgency phase

4 x two-week bursts of campaign activity between February and early May 2023, in areas where there are elections in May 2023.

- Burst 1: 27 February – 12 March 2023
- Burst 2: 20 March – 2 April 2023
- Burst 3: 10 April – 23 April 2023

- Burst 4: 1 May – 4 May 2023

Got 5?’ will run alongside phase two of the voter ID campaign, utilising different channels so they are not competing for space with each other.

Campaign channels

The EC will be rolling out their campaign through a mixture of 60% online channels and 40% offline, utilising:

- TV advertising and Video on Demand (ITV, Sky and Channel4 and ads between videos on You Tube for example)
- Outdoor advertising sites
- Digital display
- Radio advertising
- Adverts on Spotify
- Regional newspapers
- Social media
- Gaming advertising
- Google search

For Manchester, the EC has confirmed that they will be booking:

- Advertising space in the Manchester Evening News
- Advertising on bus rears
- Roadside 48 sheets and 6 sheets (both digital and static).

Electoral Commission assets/literature

The EC will be providing partner packs for use by local authorities that will include:

- A printable leaflet for voters (available in Urdu, Punjabi, Romanian & Polish, plus easy read)
- Summary 2-sided insert leaflet
- A guide for staff and volunteers
- Posters (formatted for professional and in-house print)
- Template web copy and social media assets
- Press materials, including a template press release

Wider partner materials are also being developed which are aimed at specific demographic audiences – those most at risk of not having acceptable photographic ID and so needing to be aware of the free voter ID option, such as 85+, the homeless, people with sight-loss or learning disabilities – which have been co-created with key charities and NGOs.

The EC is working with the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) and the Deaf Association to produce information on the changes to ensure greater accessibility for voters.

Translations

The EC will be translating their local authority information pack into Polish, Romanian, Punjabi and Urdu. These languages have been chosen as they reflect the most common main languages identified by the 2021 census.

In addition, the information pack targeted at the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities will be translated into Slovak, Czech and Bulgarian providing a suite of literature in following seven languages:

1. Polish
2. Romanian
3. Punjabi
4. Urdu
5. Slovak
6. Czech
7. Bulgarian

The EC will also be producing their voter ID booklet into Easy Read, large print, Braille and will be producing short videos in British Sign Language

Manchester / Greater Manchester campaign

Campaign approach and timings

To ensure that the key messages are consistently disseminated widely across Greater Manchester and for use at a local level, it is proposed the 10 local authorities in Greater Manchester work together on a joint campaign with each local authority contributing a proportion to purchase GM wide advertising channels to supplement Electoral Commission messaging at a local level.

This will include making EC partner materials accessible to a wider audience, for example, additional language translations and/or accessible formats.

Effective local engagement activity will be required at a neighbourhood level and with different communities to ensure engagement with hard-to-reach cohorts and key target audiences. This will need to be designed and undertaken by each local authority using consistent materials utilising local knowledge and local community networks.

Campaign phasing

It is proposed that the local campaign timings will mirror the Electoral Commission's campaign where possible. It is proposed that local activity take place in phases as follows (exact dates of campaign activity tbc):

Phase 1 – Voter ID: 2023*	16 January–19 February
Phase 2 – Register to vote, how to vote and voter ID:	6 March–17 April 2023
Phase 3 -- Logistics of voting and voter ID:	18 April–23 April 2023
Phase 4 – Voter ID reminder and accessibility:	24 April–4 May 2023

*For Phase 1 in GM this will start once the VAC portal is live and focus on using EC messages in the first instance.

Campaign objectives and sequencing of messaging

The objectives around Voter ID mirror the EC campaign objectives. In addition, the GM/Manchester campaign will focus on registration, election deadlines, logistics of voting and accessibility as outlines below.

Dates	Objective(s)	Audience	Channel(s)
Phase 1 – Voter ID			
16 Jan – 19 Feb 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that electors know that they will now be asked for photo ID when they go to vote on 4 May. Communicate the forms of ID that will be accepted Ensure that electors understand that if they don't an acceptable form of ID, they can apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate How to apply for a voter Voter Authority Certificate via the portal 	<p>All adults aged 18+.</p> <p>Key target audiences without ID.</p>	<p>Social media Council channels Partners channels Paid social media</p>
Phase 2 – Register to vote, how to vote and Voter ID			
6 March - 17 April 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that residents know that the local elections are taking place on 4 May Encourage people to register to vote online before the registration deadline of 17 April via www.gov.uk/register-to-vote Highlight the different ways to vote and the associated deadlines Encourage those wishing to vote by post to apply early Highlight the different ways to vote (postal, proxy) and prompt people who may be working away or on holiday on 4 May to apply. Applying for a Voter ID card - Voter ID portal How to get support to apply for Voter ID Support available at local libraries – free wifi, data and free use of computers How to apply for Voter ID offline 	<p>All adults aged 18+</p> <p>Key target audiences without ID.</p> <p>Electors with disabilities.</p>	<p>Out of home advertising</p> <p>Social media Digital adverts Digital screens Mobile adverts Dax radio Local Newspaper adverts Paid social media</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to apply for Voter ID without a fixed address • Raise awareness about accessible voting and what is available and how to make a request 		
Phase 3 – Logistics of voting & Voter ID			
18 – 23 April 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that residents know that the local elections take place on 4 May • Ensure that electors are aware that 32 seats are up for election, one candidate per ward (different messages for the six GM authorities with all out elections) • Ensure that people know where to go and cast their vote and signpost to the online polling station finder. • Assure electors that polling stations are safe places to vote in • Ensure that electors know what to expect at the polling station in terms of Voter ID • Raise awareness about accessible voting and what is available and how to make a request 	<p>All electors registered to vote.</p> <p>Key target audiences without ID</p> <p>Electors with disabilities.</p>	<p>Out of home advertising</p> <p>Social media</p> <p>Digital adverts</p> <p>Digital screens</p> <p>Mobile adverts</p> <p>Dax radio</p> <p>Local Newspaper adverts</p> <p>Paid social media</p>
Phase 4 – Voter ID reminder & accessibility			
24 April – 4 May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing VAC awareness and particularly around application VAC deadlines • Ensure that electors know what to expect at the polling station in terms of Voter ID • Raise awareness about accessible voting and what is available • Ensure electors know what accessibility/assistance support is available to them at the polling station and how to access it/make a request. 	<p>All electors registered to vote.</p> <p>Electors with disabilities.</p>	<p>Social media</p> <p>Partner channels</p> <p>Website</p>

Key target audiences

For Manchester and Greater Manchester, there will be a focus on key target audiences who may have moved home and may need to re-register at their new address and those that have multiple compounding factors making them less likely to have photographic ID.

- University & college students
- Recent home movers
- People aged over 85
- Trans and non-binary people
- People with disabilities
- People who are economically inactive
- People without qualifications
- Groups and communities where we perceive low ID ownerships, including minority ethnic communities, the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities
- Homeless people and people living in refuges

Manchester/GM specific literature and translations

As with all Elections campaigns, MCC will adapt EC literature for our local audience, adding the date of the local election, adapting messaging where required and creating a suite of print ready pdfs that will be shared across GM.

MCC will also translate the Local Authority pack (leaflet for voters, posters, digital and social media resources) into the following languages, providing a suite of literature in 14 languages, including the top 10 languages requested in Greater Manchester.

1. Arabic
2. Urdu
3. Chinese
4. Bengali
5. Farsi
6. Portuguese
7. French
8. Spanish
9. Polish
10. Romanian
11. Punjabi
12. Slovak
13. Czech
14. Bulgarian

Accessibility

As mentioned above, there will be new provisions to ensure greater accessibility for electors in polling stations. A set of accessibility standards is being worked up and will be shared with GM leads. The ambition is to have one set of accessibility standards for GM authorities so that consistent accessibility provisions, equipment and adjustments are in place for all electors across the ten authorities.

Manchester/GM channels

The EC will be buying advertising space with both JC Decaux and Clear Channel in Manchester, providing good visibility across out of home and allowing us to focus campaign spend on other local and GM wide channels.

The Greater Manchester wide paid elements below are subject to all GM local authorities contributing to a central advertising budget.

Channel	Elements
OOH	TfGM Metrolink network across 7 LAs (excluding Wigan, Stockport and Bolton) - tba Outdoor poster sites across the 93km network Internal coving adverts across 120 trams Bus network interchange poster sites across GM Digital adverts on tfgm.com Digital 48 sheets on major roads
	Ocean ad JC Decaux digital screens
	Bus rears – tba (if not booked by EC)
DAX radio	DAX radio adverts (GM wide) - tba
Digital	Digital screens
	Local Facebook groups
	Boosted social posts to key audiences
Mobile phone & App ads	Targeted mobile display to reach the key audiences with demographic targeting to GM
MEN print & digital	MEN Digital Package – tbc (if not booked by EC) Digital adverts In your area native ads Sponsored content editorial Social media promotion Print adverts in MEN publications: MEN (Manchester) Rochdale Observer Saturday Heywood & Middleton Guardian (Oldham) Stockport Express
Local press advertising	Tameside Advertiser Bolton Evening News Bury Times Oldham Chronicle Salford City News Wigan Observer & Wigan Post
Publication	Asian Leader

Council Channels	Social media channels including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.
	Council resident e-bulletins/newsletters
	Insert with and message inside CT booklet
	Internal staff communications with presence in e-bulletins and on the intranet
	Website image on front page of the Council's website and links on other targeted pages.
	Libraries
	Age Friendly Manchester channels
	Disability groups via the Equalities team
Youth Council	Youth Council
Toolkits for Stakeholders	Social care teams, Early Help Hub etc....
	Manchester Covid Health Equality Monitoring Group
	MACC - VSCE organisations
	Citizen's Advice Manchester
	Registered Housing Providers
	Carer's network
	CHEM member networks
	South Asian Sounding Board
	Black, African Caribbean Sounding Board
	Partner networks
Partner publications	MLCO neighbourhood newspapers
Housing Associations	One Manchester Housing Association Northwards Housing Association Southway Housing Association Wythenshawe Housing Association/Parkway Green Adactus
Businesses /business networks in the city	Toolkits and messages to be shared with big employers in the city to disseminate the information to staff.
	CityCo, Chamber, Growth Company
Local networks	Community networks to share toolkits
	Neighbourhood engagement teams
	Parks & Leisure staff
VCSE	OMVCS - Our Manchester Voluntary & Community Sector MACC
Health channels	GP surgeries – screens/notice boards
	Pharmacies – notice boards
Supermarkets	Work with local neighbourhood teams to get posters/literature into local supermarkets in target wards

Media relations	Media outlets
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