



**LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT**  
**INDIVIDUAL ELECTORAL REGISTRATION**  
**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

# INDIVIDUAL ELECTORAL REGISTRATION PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Individual electoral registration, which comes into effect in June 2014 when local authorities will begin confirmation data matching, has been described as the biggest change to the process of electoral registration for over 100 years. While it is a major change for electoral services staff, a major part of the challenge will be to inform the public of what changes are taking place and what they must do in order to register to vote or remain registered to vote.
- 1.2 This strategy identifies the means by which the necessary messages will be conveyed and in particular what approaches will be adopted for those groups who are known to be less likely to be registered.

## 2.0 Confirmation Dry Run

- 2.1 Brent's registration data was matched against the Department of Work and Pensions database in July 2013. Overall 67.6% of the electors in the register were successfully matched. This was just under the London average of 68% where matching rates ranged from 46.9% to 83.3%.
- 2.2 There was a wide variation in the results in Brent's individual wards. The highest match (79%) occurred in Kenton ward while the lowest (56%) was in Mapesbury and Willesden Green wards.

Alperton	70%
Barnhill	71%
Brondesbury Park	61%
Dollis Hill	74%
Dudden Hill	68%
Fryent	73%
Harlesden	62%
Kensal Green	61%
Kenton	79%
Kilburn	58%
Mapesbury	56%
Northwick Park	70%
Preston	72%
Queen's Park	62%
Queensbury	76%
Stonebridge	73%
Sudbury	69%
Tokington	68%
Welsh Harp	74%
Wembley Central	67%
Willesden Green	56%

- 2.3 The 2011 census results present wide-ranging data about the nature of the wards in Brent which may help to explain differing confirmation rates and inform the strategy for publicising IER to those residents who were not successfully matched. The results of the 2011 census show that Kenton ward has the highest proportion of owner occupation and the largest percentage of people aged over 65. 58% of the population described themselves as of Asian origin and 30% as white. Both Mapesbury and Willesden Green wards on the other hand had a much smaller percentage of over 65s and owner occupation. Additionally there were a larger number of one person households in these two wards.
- 2.4 The outcome of the dry run in each ward mirrors the response rate in the canvass. Harlesden is consistently one of the lowest responding wards and in 2012 was the lowest despite having improved on previous years. Mapesbury has become the next poorest responding ward and showed a drop in the response rate in 2012 from the previous year. Kensal Green, Kilburn and Willesden Green are consistently amongst the lowest responding wards but have all showed significant improvement over the last few years. Queens Park is another low responding ward which has shown a slight improvement over the last few years. Brondesbury Park fell below the borough average for the canvass last year for the first time.
- 2.5 A breakdown of census results for each ward is set out in Appendix A.
- 2.6 One factor emerging from the dry run that is likely to give rise to confusion among the electorate is the degree to which electors in the same household had varying results in the data matching.

Green and red matches	19,783 (17%)
Green and amber matches	2,816 (2.5%)
Red and amber matches	1,923 (1.7%)
Green, red and amber matches	1,368 (1.2%)

These results are likely to create a number of calls to the Council seeking an explanation and staff will need to be trained and prepared to respond to queries when they occur.

### **3.0 Demographic Characteristics of the Borough**

- 3.1 The 2011 census results demonstrate that Brent is a highly diverse borough. Less than half (45%) of the borough's residents were born in the United Kingdom, the smallest percentage in London. More than 10% of the population were born in the European Union, a slightly smaller number in Africa and 20% in the Middle East and Asia. Nonetheless almost a third of the population has been resident in the United Kingdom for more than 10 years, which is the highest proportion in England and Wales. Fuller information on the social composition of the borough can be seen at <https://intelligencehub.brent.gov.uk>

3.2 As shown above, those wards that had a lower than average match rate also have a lower than average response rate to the annual canvass. The wards in question are:

Brondesbury Park  
Harlesden  
Kensal Green  
Kilburn  
Mapesbury  
Queens Park  
Willesden Green

With the exception of Brondesbury Park which featured amongst the lowest responding wards for the canvass last year for the first time, not surprisingly all these wards have some common characteristics:

- Higher than borough average levels of deprivation
- Significant black and/or Asian communities with Harlesden having a black and Asian majority
- Significant muslim communities
- High number of single person households
- High rented sector, both private and public

#### **4.0 Public Engagement**

4.1 The racial composition of the borough alone suggests that a varied strategy will be required in order to convey the appropriate messages about IER to the local community. In addition, other groups in society are known to be less likely to be included in the electoral register – the 18-24 age group, those living in rented accommodation and frequent movers. People in these categories are less likely to achieve a positive data match and to this group can be added those who are living in residential institutions such as homes for elderly people or hostels for people with disabilities. Elderly people who are normally registered to vote may also be challenged by the new arrangements replacing a system to which they have long been accustomed.

4.2 Messages about IER will need to be delivered to the following groups

- The whole population
- The whole electorate
- Those electors who are positively matched with the DWP in 2014
- Those electors who do not positively match
- Residents who are not currently registered to vote

4.3 In order to deliver these messages, the Electoral Services team will rely on the help of partners inside and outside the local authority.

- The Electoral Commission who will be producing templates for use by local authorities and carrying out a nationwide campaign which the Council will accompany with its own publicity
- Council Communications team for design of materials, assistance and guidance on publicity

- Council Consultation team for its network of local community groups and access to local authority forums
- Council Children and Families department for data on school 6<sup>th</sup> form students
- Brent Housing Partnership for information houses in multiple occupation and register of landlords
- Council Customer Services
- University of Westminster accommodation managers
- Victoria Hall of Residence accommodation managers
- Northwick Park Hospital residential accommodation managers
- Secondary schools
- Local NUS offices
- Local media
- Council canvassers

## 5.0 Evaluation of Strategy

5.1 The clearest sign of success for the strategy is the number of electors included in the electoral register remaining at previous years' levels. An additional criterion will be the extent of reach achieved by the various components of the strategy. The number of properly completed and incomplete Household Enquiry Forms and Invitations to Register returned during the canvass will also be monitored.

## 6.0 Partners – Internal and External.

Partner	Contact Person	Contact Details
Electoral Commission	London Office	020 7271 0500 londonofficeinbox@electoralcommission.org.uk
Communications Team	Cheryl Curling	x 1063
Consultation Team	Owen Thomson	x 1055
Children and Families	Greg Smith	x 3184
Brent Housing Partnership	Gerry Doherty	gerry.doherty@bphhousing.co.uk
Customer Services	Margaret Read	x 1521
University of Westminster	Amanda Edwards	020 7911 5000, ext 66152 a.edwards06@westminster.ac.uk
Victoria Hall of Residence		0845 404 4300 wembley@victoriahall.com
Northwick Park Hospital residential accommodation	Maria Moriarty	020 8782 4891 maria.moriarty@londonstrategichousing.com
Local National Union of Students		020 7911 5000 uwsuadmin@westminster.ac.uk

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<b>Target Group</b>	<b>Channels and Purpose</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Partners/internal depts.</b>	<b>By Which Means</b>	<b>Responsible Officer(s)</b>	<b>How to evaluate</b>
All electorate	Information disseminated through the Brent Magazine	May to June 2014	Communications Team	Articles and ads in magazine	Sean O'Sullivan	Monitor responses to office
All electorate	The attention of local media drawn to key changes and milestones	May to August 2014	Communications Team	Press releases and press briefings in lead-up to CLR and canvass	Sean O'Sullivan	Monitor responses to office
All electorate	Notices in Council reception areas raising public awareness	May to June 2014	Libraries, Housing offices	Poster	Matt Willis	Monitor responses to office
All electorate	Letters to residents' associations and community groups plus offer to address meetings to raise awareness of IER	May to June 2014	Consultation Team	Written communication and leaflet	Ermine King	Monitor responses to office
All electorate	Develop web pages on IER to provide ongoing information through each stage of the transition and include link with instructions to online portal	May 2014	Web Team	Council website	Matt Willis	Monitor number of hits on website pages
All electorate	Social media using short specific messages on actions required, timescales etc	June 2014	Communications	Social media and emails to electors on ER database	Matt Willis	Monitor responses to office
All electorate	Issue raised at local forums	May to June 2014	Consultation Team	Attendance at meetings, written briefings/flyer for attendees	ER Team	Level of interest at meetings

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All electorate	Incoming telephone calls dealing with general inquiries and specific questions	May to June 2014	Call Centre & Customer Services	Training and written materials for staff meeting/speaking to callers on regular basis	ER Team	Number of calls to office, hopefully fewer if call centre can manage queries
Residents in institutions	Letter to Officers in Charge urging they assist those under their care	June 2014 and August 2014	Managers of residential institutions	Written communication	Ermine King	Residents in institutions successfully registered
Students	Poster for common areas raising awareness	June 2014	NUS, accommodation managers	Poster (as in Council reception areas)	Matt Willis	Monitor responses to office
School students	Letter to schools raising awareness	June 2014	Children & Families, Head Teachers and Heads of 6 <sup>th</sup> Sixth Form	Written communication	Ermine King	Monitor registration of school students against schools data
School students	Notice in 6 <sup>th</sup> form common rooms raising awareness	June 2014	Children & Families, Communications	Poster (as in Council reception areas)	Sean O'Sullivan	Monitor registration of school students against schools data
BME Groups	Letter to community groups plus poster for display encouraging registration take-up	June 2014	Consultation Team	Written communication and poster (as in Council reception areas)	Sean O'Sullivan & Ermine King	Registraton rate in areas with large BME groups is at pre-IER levels
BME Groups	Offer to attend meetings of community groups to explain implications of changes	June 2014	Consultation Team	Written communication and attendance at meetings	ER Team	Number of meetings attended
Private Rented Sector	Letter to landlords requesting they ensure awareness raised among their tenants	June 2014	Private Sector Housing, Brent Private Tenants Rights Group	Written communication	Sean O'Sullivan	Registraton rate in areas with large number of private tenants is at pre-IER levels

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Private Rented Sector	Letter & poster to licensed HMOs requesting they ensure awareness raised among their tenants	June 2014	Private Sector Housing	Written communication and poster (as in Council reception areas)	Sean O'Sullivan	Registraton rate in areas with large number of private tenants is at pre-IER levels
Home Movers	Form and information to be included with new Council Tax accounts raising general awareness	August 2014 onwards	Council Tax	Letter & form	Ermine King	% of forms returned
New Citizens	Produce and distribute leaflet to attendees at citizenship ceremonies	August 2014 onwards	Registrars, Communications	Leaflet	Sean O'Sullivan, ER/Democratic Services	Successful registration of new British citizens
Low registration groups	Target hard to canvass polling districts and increase publicity in those areas	June 2014	Communications	Promotional publicity	ER Team	Registration rate in hard to canvass districts is at pre-IER levels



**APPENDIX A**

**200 CENSUS RESULTS BY WARD**

<b>Ward</b>	<b>Electors</b>	<b>65+</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Xtian</b>	<b>Muslim</b>	<b>Hindu</b>	<b>Jewish</b>	<b>Owned</b>	<b>Private Rented</b>	<b>Social Rented</b>	<b>1 Person H'holds</b>	<b>Low standard of English</b>
Alperton	11026	9.5	18.2	11.3	64.7	27.2	11.9	47.4	0.1	56.7	31.1	12.1	18.5	14.3
Barnhill	11361	12.3	30.3	18.5	37.3	38.5	23.3	18.7	2.3	45.8	27.6	26.6	26.1	7.3
Bron Pk	9284	12.1	56.2	11.6	16.6	42.4	17.1	10.1	0.5	44.8	33.7	21.5	35.6	4.7
Dollis Hill	8984	11.3	35.7	21.3	30.6	43.9	31.3	10.1	0.5	53.2	24.7	22.1	22.8	8.4
Dudden Hill	10326	9.7	44.1	20.2	23.6	46.1	23.5	7.6	1.3	44.7	35.4	19.9	26.0	8.7
Fryent	9660	11.8	37.3	10.9	40.9	41.0	21.2	20.4	1.4	57.9	28.3	13.9	22.4	7.8
Harlesden	10353	8.0	33.0	40.0	14.4	54.6	21.8	3.7	0.2	23.5	32.4	44.0	34.3	9.3
Kensal Gn	9490	9.0	47.7	25.3	14.7	53.7	14.3	5.2	0.7	37.3	36.0	26.7	34.4	7.8
Kenton	9791	17.2	30.0	5.1	57.9	25.7	12.1	36.0	5.5	73.7	20.7	5.6	18.6	6.6
Kilburn	11706	8.6	50.0	24.6	11.4	47.7	16.8	2.0	1.4	25.2	29.8	45.0	39.7	4.3
Mapesbury	10379	8.3	56.6	12.6	17.9	45.5	16.6	3.1	3.3	35.1	45.7	19.2	33.1	5.5
N'wick Pk	10111	13.2	31.2	10.2	51.0	36.7	16.0	25.4	0.9	63.2	20.6	16.2	25.2	5.3
Preston	10898	12.4	30.0	13.7	45.9	34.6	19.5	26.3	2.9	56.6	30.8	12.6	21.6	8.2
Queen's Pk	10463	8.6	63.0	13.2	12.0	47.4	8.7	4.2	2.6	44.8	35.3	19.9	30.7	3.7
Queensbury	11192	12.2	27.1	11.1	54.1	32.8	17.4	35.0	0.5	61.6	23.2	15.3	19.2	9.2
Stonebridge	10934	8.7	23.5	47.2	17.0	49.9	28.2	6.3	0.2	20.8	16.9	62.3	29.1	7.6
Sudbury	10554	10.5	22.7	13.9	55.6	32.4	17.9	34.2	0.2	51.1	33.9	15.0	23.6	9.2
Tokynghon	11188	11.3	23.7	20.9	46.6	38.6	18.9	27.8	0.3	52.8	35.2	12.0	22.5	9.3
Welsh Harp	9685	11.4	38.7	18.2	31.6	48.9	19.8	15.9	0.8	51.4	29.4	19.2	27.1	9.5
Wembley C	11030	9.7	14.0	13.8	66.1	25.1	16.3	45.0	0.1	49.4	35.0	15.6	19.4	12.4
Willesden Gn	9909	7.6	47.3	19.2	21.4	50.4	17.0	6.0	0.8	28.3	44.9	26.8	32.2	8.2

Sources: 2011 census and electoral register as at 1 October 2013.