# OPEN SOURCE GUIDE TO THE 2021 ELECTION CYCLE

UK LOCAL ELECTIONS
6 MAY 2021

LAST UPDATED: 16/03/2021

### WHAT?

This guide compiles accessible information on the postponed 2021 election cycle.

### IT WILL:

- help you understand your rights as an EU citizen voter
- explain how administrative structures in the UK work
- empower you to use your vote

# WHO?

As an open source document anybody is free to use, study, suggest modifications (click here), and distribute the guide for any purpose.

# HOW?

Each slide acts as a stand alone infographic explaining a different aspect of the election cycle and your rights.

**Hint:** Slides are specifically designed for sharing on Facebook and Instagram and we would LOVE for you to share them!

### ALL ABOUT...

Your rights as an EU citizen in these elections

Mayors

London Assembly

Councils

Councillors

### HOW TO...

Become a councillor

Self-organise

Vote during a pandemic

### EVENT CALENDAR

Live calendar compiling all upcoming partner election events

### YOUR VOICE

Why are you voting?

Submit your thoughts

# ALL ABOUT...

# YOUR RIGHTS AS AN EU CITIZEN IN THESE ELECTIONS

The UK government has confirmed that EU citizens will be able to vote and stand in the 2021 local elections.

#### To be eligible to vote you must:

- be registered to vote
- → be 18 or over on the day of the election
- be registered at an address in the area you want to vote in
- not be legally excluded from voting

The deadline to register to vote in the elections on 6 May 2021 is midnight on Monday 19 April.

# BILATERAL VOTING RIGHTS

The UK government is working to form new bilateral agreements on the right to vote and stand in elections with EU member states after these elections/going forward. Some are already in place.

### Agreements made in 2019

SPAIN / PORTUGAL / LUXEMBOURG

Agreements made in 2020

POLAND

# THE MAYOR OF LONDON

Elected every 4 years

The executive of London's strategic authority

Sets the budget

#### THE BUDGET

£17 billion annual budget financed from a mixture of:

- central government grants,
- transport fares and charges,
- business rates and
- council tax

#### RESPONSIBILITIES

Art & culture

**Business & economy** 

Environment

Fire

Health

Housing & land

Planning

Policing & crime

Regeneration

**Sport** 

**Transport** 

Young people

Social integration

# MEET THE MAYOR

#### Mayoral events open to the public include:

#### 1x a year

#### **The State of London Debate**

Held following the publication of the Mayor's Annual Report.

#### 2x a year

#### People's Question Time meetings

Held at venues across the capital give Londoners the chance to question the Mayor and London Assembly about their plans, priorities and policies for London.

#### 10x a year

#### **Mayor's Question Time**

Held at City Hall, where Assembly Members question the Mayor on behalf of Londoners. You can suggest a question to them by emailing <a href="mailto:suggestaquestion@london.gov.uk">suggestaquestion@london.gov.uk</a>.

Contact the mayor at london.gov.uk/contact-us-form

# LONDON COUNCILS

'All out' elections take place in London every
4 years. This means all council seats in London's
32 boroughs are up for election on the same day.
These elections are separate to the elections for the Mayor of London and the London Assembly, which take place on a different 4 year cycle.

Local councils provide services and facilities in your area. Boroughs are divided into wards.

Local residents can cast votes for as many council seats as there are being contested in each ward.

# WHO IS RUNNING FOR MAYOR IN LONDON?

#### Luisa Porritt

"Take London forward"
Liberal Democrats
What does Luisa believe in?
www.luisa4london.co.uk
@LuisaPorritt

### Shaun Bailey

"A fresh start for London"
Conservatives
What does Shaun believe in?
www.shaunbailey.uk
@ShaunBaileyUK

#### Sadiq Khan

"Standing up for London"
Labour
What does Sadiq believe in?
www.sadiq.london
@SadiqKhan

#### Sian Berry

"The time is now for a Green Mayor"
Green Party
What does Sian believe in?
<a href="https://www.sianberry.london">www.sianberry.london</a>
@sianberry

# MAYOR OF LIVERPOOL

#### Elected every 4 years. Responsible for:

- the council's executive functions,
- leading the city,
- building investor confidence,
- directing new resources to economic priorities.

#### A City Plan for Liverpool 2021

A thriving, sustainable, fair city for everyone

#### Source

# LIVERPOOL MAYOR'S CABINET

Wendy Simon (Acting Mayor of Liverpool)

Culture, Tourism and Events.

Lynnie Hinnigan (Deputy Mayor of Liverpool)

Children's Services

**Barry Kushner** 

Housing and Regeneration Projects

**Paul Brant** 

Cabinet Member for Adult Health and Social Care

**Pam Thomas** 

Inclusive and Accessible City

**Liz Parsons** 

Communities and Partnerships

**Barbara Murray** 

Education

**Sharon Connor** 

Regeneration and Highways

Laura Robertson-Collins

**Environment and Sustainability** 

# MAYOR OF GREATER MANCHESTER

#### Responsibilities cover:

- Representing the people of all 10 boroughs in Greater Manchester.
- Leading on issues such as the economy, transport, police and fire services.
- → Overlooking a
  £300 million housing
  investment fund and the
  creation of a spatial
  framework for the whole
  of Greater Manchester.
  The spatial framework
  must be approved by the
  10 councils.

- Being the chair and eleventh member of Greater Manchester Combined Authority.
- → Overlooking the transport budget the region receives from the Government, as well as the future of bus services in Greater Manchester
- → The responsibilities of the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- The responsibilities of the Fire & Rescue Authority.

# WHAT IS A COMBINED AUTHORITY?

A combined authority (CA) is a type of local government combining two or more councils set up based on the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 in order to collaborate and take collective decisions across council boundaries.

There are ten CAs established in the UK, Greater Manchester being one of them.

# VOTING SYSTEMS IN UK LOCAL ELECTIONS

Voting systems are methods by which we elect representatives. There are four different voting systems in UK local elections:

- → Supplementary Vote (SV)
- Single Transferable Vote (STV)
- -> Additional Member System (AMS)
- Closed Party List

# SUPPLEMENTARY VOTE (SV)

Voters are asked to make the first and second preference choice by marking a cross in two separate columns next to the candidate's name.

If a candidate receives more than 50 per cent of the first preference votes, they are elected.

If no candidate reaches 50 per cent, the top two candidates with the highest number of votes remain.

The second preference votes for the eliminated candidates are counted. Any made for the two remaining candidates are transferred.

The candidate with the most votes at the end of the process is elected.

The SV system is used for elections for:

- Mayors in England and Wales
- Police and Crime
   Commissioners.

# SINGLE TRANSFERABLE VOTE (STV)

Voters rank candidates in **order of preference** by marking 1, 2, 3 and so on. A voter can mark **as many** or **as few** candidates as they like.

Each candidate needs to reach a quota - a minimum number of votes according to the number of seats and votes cast.

The first preference votes are added up. Candidates who achieve this quota are elected.

Surplus votes from candidates who hit the quota go to the second preference candidates.

The candidates with the fewest first preference votes who do not achieve the quota are eliminated. Their votes go to the second preference.

The STV system is used in constituencies which elect more than one candidate:

- Elections for Deputy Speakers in the House of Commons
- Northern Ireland Assembly Elections
- Local elections in Scotland and Northern Ireland

# ADDITIONAL MEMBER SYSTEM (AMS)

Voters are given two votes on separate ballot papers.
One vote is for a constituency and one vote is for a party list.

Constituency votes are counted first and the candidate with the highest number of votes gets elected to represent the constituency.

Additional members are then elected by counting the party list votes in each region.

This is designed to make the result proportional to the number of votes cast - the number of elected members is based on the percentage of votes cast but also on the number of representatives already elected in the region.

The ASM system is used by:

- The Scottish Parliament
- The National Assembly of Wales
- The London Assembly

# CLOSED PARTY LIST

The Closed Party List system was used in England, Scotland and Wales to elect Members of the European Parliament between 1979 and 2019.

Parties get the number of seats in proportion to the votes it receives in each constituency.

Voters choose parties not candidates.

Under this system, a voter marks a cross on the ballot paper next to the party's name.

The parties determine the order in which candidates appear on the list.

# THE ASSEMBLY

Made up of 25 Assembly Members

11 represent the whole capital

14 are elected by London's constituencies

(see all Assembly constituencies)

#### **HOW IT WORKS**

Questions the Mayor 10x year

Examines strategies, decisions and actions

Has the power to reject strategies and make changes to budgets with a two-thirds majority

#### REMEMBER:

It is the 32 Boroughs and Councils of London, rather than the Mayor or the London Assembly, that are responsible for the day-to-day services like:

- council housing
- schools
- social services
- rubbish collection
- street cleaning
- parking permits
- council tax collection
- birth, death and marriage certificates

# LONDON COUNCILS

In 28 of the 32 boroughs, the leader of the council is normally decided by the political party group with the most council seats.

4 London boroughs (Hackney, Lewisham, Newham, and Tower Hamlets) are governed by an executive mayoral system, meaning local residents vote directly for who leads the council.

#### Interesting:

2 short films exploring the history of London Boroughs over the past 50 years

50 Years of the Boroughs on Film

# WHAT DOES A COUNCILLOR DO?

A councillor is a member of a team, shaping the district's future in consultation with the community by:

- passing on electors' views
- supporting initiatives
- reporting complaints and problems
- proposing legislation e.g. planning
- > voting on issues which are important to your town/ area
- being an Ambassador for your community
- working in partnership with local partners and agencies

Decisions are not made by the individual councillor alone. They are made by the whole council.

# CASE STUDY: MEET MICHAL

Michal Siewniak is a former Welwyn Hatfield councillor. He is originally from Poland and has been living in the UK for almost 16 years. Michal is a teacher by profession, however he has been working in a community and voluntary sector for the last 11 years.

In the last few years, Michal has managed a lot of local, county wide and regional projects. Michal is the founder of the **Welwyn Hatfield Polish Community Forum**, Honorary Trustee of the Polish Saturday School, Trustee of New Europeans UK.

"I absolutely loved being a Councillor. An opportunity to serve the residents and make a difference was a huge honour. I can't wait to stand again"!



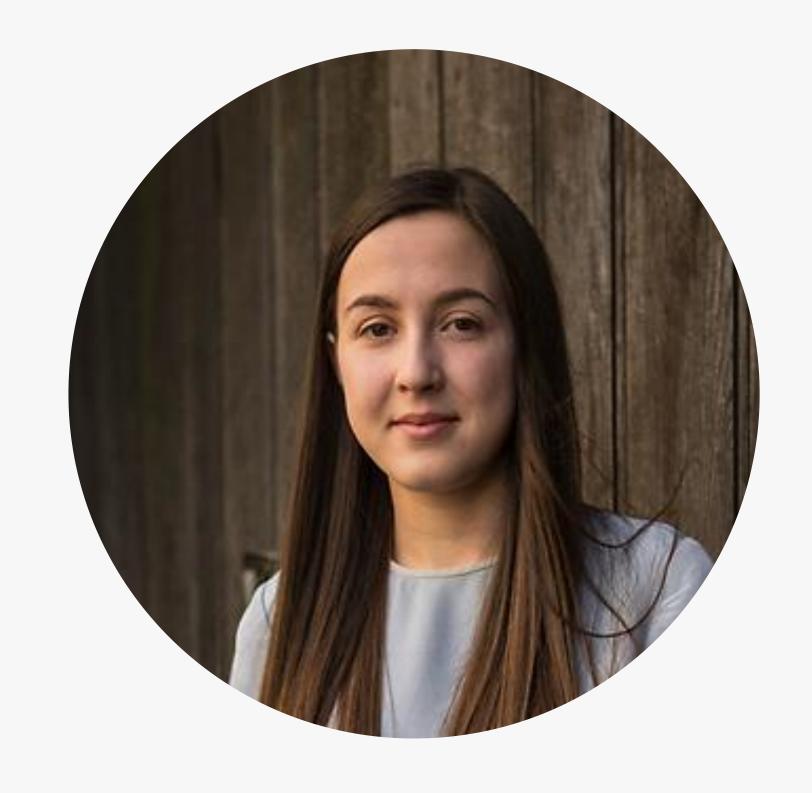
# CASE STUDY: MEET ALEXANDRA

Alexandra Bulat was born in Romania, is 26 years old and has been in the UK for 8 years. She is standing in the 2021 elections as the Labour Party candidate for the Abbey division, Cambridgeshire County Council.

#### Why get involved?

"There have been over 800,000 applications to the EU Settlement Scheme from Romanians living in the UK. I wanted to see how many Romanian councillors are in the UK and only found one Borough and one Parish councillor. I believe local representatives should reflect the diversity of the communities they represent. If elected, I will probably be the first Romanian County councillor"

"I'm not standing for election only because I would like to see more Romanians in politics. I am also a young person, a private renter, someone who cares about education, community safety and many more local issues. If you think about it, you'll likely find out that one of the issues you're most passionate about is something that local councils have a say on!"



# HOW ARE ENGLAND'S COUNCILS STRUCTURED?

Many parts of England have 2 tiers of local government:

- county councils
- district, borough or city councils

In some parts of the country, there's just 1 (unitary) tier of local government providing all the local services.

#### The 3 main types are:

- unitary authorities in shire areas
- London boroughs
- metropolitan boroughs

# HOW MANY COUNCILS ARE THERE?

There are 343 local authorities in England made up of 5 different types:

- county councils
- district councils
- unitary authorities
- metropolitan districts
- London boroughs

# DISTRICT, BOROUGH AND CITY COUNCILS

These cover a smaller area than county councils. They're usually responsible for services like:

- rubbish collection
- recycling
- Council Tax collections
- housing
- planning applications

# UNITARY AUTHORITIES AND LONDON AND METROPOLITAN BOROUGHS

In some parts of the country, 1 tier of local government provides all the local services.

In London and metropolitan areas some services, like fire, police and public transport, are provided through 'joint authorities' (in London by the Greater London Authority).

# PARISH, COMMUNITY AND TOWN COUNCILS

They're elected and can help on a number of local issues, like providing:

- allotments
- public clocks
- bus shelters
- community centres
- play areas and play equipment
- grants to help local organisations
- consultation on neighbourhood planning

They also have the power to issue fixed penalty fines for things like:

- → litter
- graffiti
- fly posting
- dog offences

# WHO ARE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS?

They are elected every 4 years by the public to represent their views on policing and crime locally.

There are 40 force areas in England and Wales represented by PCCs, except London and Greater Manchester where the responsibilities of PCC lie with the Mayor.

# KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF PCCs

- Provide support services to crime victims
- → Keep communities safe by ensuring crime prevention services in place
- Consult local communities to create a Police and Crime Plan for the local area
- → Work with national and local policing and Criminal Justice system to reduce crime

- → Work with local authorities, health, education and voluntary sectors and local businesses to generate a joint response to local problems
- → Set the police budget, including the amount of council tax going to the police
- Appoint the Chief Constable responsible for the operations of the local policing and holds them accountable
- → Some PCCs are also responsible for their local Fire and Rescue Services

# CONTACTING YOUR PCC

#### Contact your local PCC about:

- how your area is policed
- the police budget
- the amount of Council Tax charged for the police
- the information you get about what the local police are doing

PCCs are represented by a national body of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners

### NATIONAL CENSUS

### The next census takes place Sunday 21 March

- Takes place every 10 years
- Helps with generating data needed to provide appropriate public services to local communitites
- Completing the census is a legal requirement (you may face a fine if you do not)
- → If you live in England or Wales, you need to submit you census by 21 March 2021

- Census can be completed
   either by post or <u>online</u>
- Data collected from the census is anonymous. No personal data from census can be published
- Census is carried out by the independent body Office for National Statistics
- → ONS provides a range of services to help with filling out the census including materials in multiple languages, Braille Alphabet, phone and online chat support

# HOW TO...

# WHAT IS SELF-ORGANISATION?

Community self-organisation is an active form of citizenship in which members of the public engage in informal, bottom-up, and loose structured organisations with the aim of advancing their policy agendas or amplifying their collective voice.

Usually, community self-organisation emerges when the government withdraws due to budget cuts, or in domains that have "slipped" from government attention.

## HOW TO BECOME A COUNCILLOR

You can stand for one of the **political parties** or as **an independent**. Make sure you are officially nominated as the election date draws nearer.

You will need **10 registered electors** in the ward where you wish to stand to sign your nomination papers. These papers are available from your local council democratic services department.

All the necessary documents must be submitted 19 working days before the day of the election.

## WHY SELF-ORGANISE?

- Feel empowered to make a difference in your community
- Gain a better understanding of politics and the democratic process in the UK
- Join a community of like-minded individuals
- Successfully engage with elected representatives
- Campaign for something you really care about

## GOT GREAT IDEAS BUT DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START?

It's important to know that no group is too small to make a difference. Organising a breakfast club or taking up empty ground and setting up a gardening group is as political as joining a political party. A common entry point is setting up or joining a tenants' and residents' associations (see here).

## But there's so much else you could do on your journey to self-organising:

- Search for and join Facebook groups
- Join a political party
- Set-up a community group

## FINDING AND JOINING FACEBOOK GROUPS

The rapid emergences of mutual-aid groups online during the COVID-19 pandemic shows the willingness of people to engage and a suitability of Facebook as a platform for self-organising

## JOINING A POLITICAL PARTY

Researching a political party is the first step to making your mind up. You could also try volunteering on the ground or during a campaign.

## FORMALISING A GROUP

If you are growing beyond a small group of people wishing to get together to organise something on a small budget you might want to consider how to formalise your group.

See the different kind of groups you can form:

Guide for Voluntary and Community Groups

#### Polonia Głosuje

is a non-partisan, informative campaign aiming at galvanising the voter turnout amongst the Polish nationals living in the UK. Started in 2019 before the Polish General Election, through the 2020 Polish Presidential Election it is now to start its third round in the run up to the UK Local Elections.

#### Polonia Express

Amidst the electoral chaos during the Polish presidential elections in June and July 2020, a group of people set up their own courier company to pick up ballots free of charge at almost 30 pick up points in the UK and deliver them to Polish consulates in London and Manchester. Consulates only accepted ballots if delivered by Royal Mail or a courier company.

#### **Dziewuchy London**

is a Polish **feminist collective** formed in March 2016 in repsonse to the near-total abortion ban bill proposal in Poland. Until present Dziewuchy London organised numerous **protest actions** and spoke out about the lack of reproductive justice in Poland at **Women of the Word Festival** at the Southbank Centre and the **Festival of Choice** at the Amnesty International UK amongst other occasions.

#### The Sensible Garden

Norwood residents who started organising on a local Facebook group. With mutual efforts and several partnerships emerging in the process, including the **Croydon council**, they have turned an uninviting, derelict area into a lovely **community** garden.

## STAND FOR A POLITICAL PARTY

Step 1 Joining a political party. You do not need to be a British citizen to be a member of a UK political party.

Step 2 Get noticed. Become active in the party by attending party meetings and canvassing. Once you become a member, you will get regular updates on party activities.

Step 3 Candidate selection. Before every election, parties will select candidates. This process usually consists of a written application form, followed by a regional selection interview and then local selection meetings for the particular division or ward you want to represent. Usually, candidates must be a party member for a certain amount of time (depending on party) and live within the electoral boundaries of the Parish, City, Borough, District or County Council where they are standing.

Step 4 Campaign. Once selected for a division or ward, you will work with a local team of candidates on the campaign. This will include phone and door-to-door canvassing (COVID restrictions permitting), leafleting, social media work, residents' meetings & more!

Step 5 Win! Once you are elected, you will choose various committees that you can be part of and put together a plan on how to bring the views of your local residents to the council.

## HOW TO APPLY FOR A POSTAL VOTE IN THE 2021 ELECTIONS?

#### STEP 1: Register

To apply for a postal vote in the local elections 2021 you must be registered to vote by **April 19**. Register to vote <a href="here">here</a>.

#### STEP 2: Apply

To apply for a postal vote you need to fill an application form and send it by post to the local electoral registration office by **April 6 in Scotland** and **April 20 in England and Wales.**Download the form <a href="here">here</a>.

#### STEP 3: Send

Find your local electoral registration office <a href="here">here</a>. Some of the electoral registers accept electronic postal vote applications. You can also check with them if you are already registered to vote at the address you intend to vote at.

## WHEN WILL I RECEIVE MY BALLOT PAPER?

Ballot papers are printed after the deadline to become a candidate has passed - approximately 3 weeks before the polling day. Once it is printed, it will be posted to you. If you don't receive your ballot paper on time, contact your local electoral office.

## HOW TO FILL IN YOUR BALLOT

- 1. Read the instructions carefully. Different types of election call for either a cross next to a candidate's name or to rank candidates in numbers. Make sure you do it correctly to cast a valid vote.
- 2. Complete your ballot paper alone and in secret.
- 3. Once you have completed your ballot paper, place it inside the smaller envelope and seal it.
- 4. Fill in and sing the postal voting statement.
- 5. Place both the smaller envelope and the postal voting statement in the larger envelope and seal it.
- 6. Post the ballot paper to your local registration office. It needs reach them by **10pm on the polling day**. Find your local electoral registration office <a href="here">here</a>
- If you cannot post the ballot paper on time, you can bring it to your polling station on polling day.

Find more information about voting by post <a href="here">here</a>.

## 'VOTE LIKE YOUR LIFE DEPENDS ON IT!'

Here is how to vote in the pandemic and minimise the risk of Covid-19 transmission.

**Vote by post.** It is by far the safest option to choose. Check out our <u>guide on how to apply</u> for a postal vote.

If you choose to vote in person, make sure you take all the necessary precautions:

- Avoid using public transport to get to and from the polling station
- Wear a face covering

## STAY SAFE AT THE POLLING STATION

- Maintain physical distance from others
- Sanitize your hands just before entering and immediately after leaving the polling station
- Bring your own pencil to minimise contact
- Come prepared so you can reduce the amount of time you spend at the station

- → Avoid bringing children with you to reduce their risk of transmitting the virus
- Avoid touching too many surfaces whilst in the polling station
- Cover your mouth with the inner side of your elbow when coughing or sneezing

## YOUR VOICE

#### TELL US WHY YOU ARE VOTING!

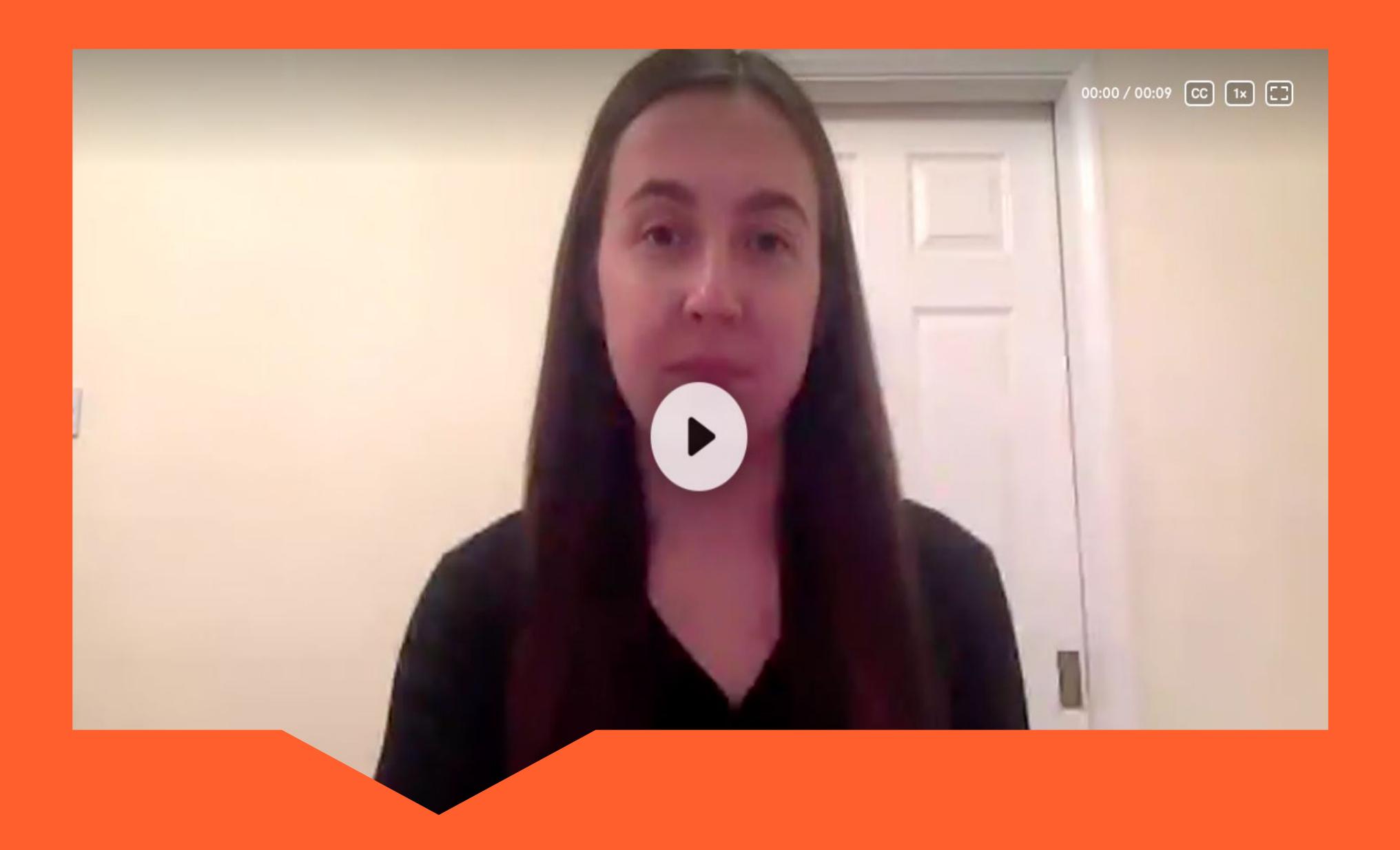
Why do you vote?

What does it mean and why is it important?

What do the upcoming elections mean to you?

Submit your response <u>here</u>

and we will include your views in this guide!



# SEE WHY ALEXANDRA VOTES

## Because you can!

## Because voting is taking responsibility for your immediate surroundings.

Because voting is not only a civic right, but also a privilege.

Because democracy is not fixed or given; it is in constant flux and needs to be regularly attended to.

Because voting is making yourself at home rather than having others make it for you.

Because politicians check which groups take part in the elections and tend to prioritise their interests over the interests of those who don't vote.

Because it is a way of having your views represented by the elected DOWEIS.

Because withdrawing from voting means voting for the winner, whoever that might be.

Because it's fun and exciting!

## Because it's part of being adulting.

Because it is an act of care.

# Because it is an exercise of your power.

# Because we all count.

Because the higher the voters turnout, the more accurate the representation of the populations' wishes by the elected officials.

There are fewer councillors in each local council than MPs in the Parliament. That makes every single vote cast on each councillor even more representative.

## Because Vours and everyone's life depends on it.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

View full document below:

Bibliography Google Doc Access

## CONTRIBUTORS













#### BECOME A CONTRIBUTOR!

Suggest document modifications using this form:

Contributor Typeform

Design: Kate Wiliwinska

#### ACTIVE CAMPAIGNS



the3million's **cross-party campaign** #OurHomeOurVote aim is to support political parties in England to engage with and mobilise EU voters in the upcoming local elections. Our toolkit contains a fact sheet, an infographic, a video and visuals for social media with suggested social media messages.

&

the3million is also running a 6-month (Jan-June 2021) campaign funded by the UK Democracy Fund to **encourage and mobilise young EU voters** (between 18-30) to register and vote in the upcoming local elections in England this May.

Website

Resources

### ACTIVE CAMPAIGNS



She Votes/Ona Glosuje is a non-partisan, get-the-vote-out campaign run by POMOC - Polish Migrants Organise for Change and designed by Polish women for Polish women.

The campaign targets Polish hubs in London, Liverpool and Manchester and is funded by the UK Democracy Fund.

The campaign engages voters ahead of the May 2021 elections through digital outreach, voter registration drives, hustings, creative workshops, online fashion action, art contest, an 8-hour live stream.

To learn more, follow **#She Votes** or **#Ona Glosuje** on <u>Facebook</u>, <u>Twitter</u>, <u>Instagram</u>, and <u>TikTok</u>.

## ACTIVE CAMPAIGNS



Promote the Migrant Vote is a collaborative project organised by Migrants Organise with a number of charities and organisations in the migration and race equality sector.

The purpose is to support migrants and BME groups to engage in elections in Britain by providing resources, information and a national framework for mobilisation.

Migrants Organise want to ensure that the experiences of their members facing uncertainty, fear and isolation are on the national agenda and that their interests are properly represented

Website