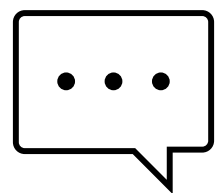
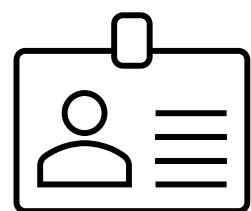


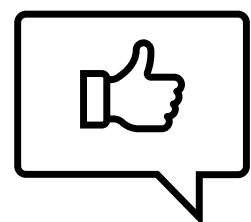
Please make sure you are on mute



Introduce yourself in the chat with your name and organisation



This session will be recorded, feel free to turn-off your camera



Use the chat function for any questions or comments

*A national charity and an advocate for Black and
Minoritised Ethnic voluntary, community and
enterprise sector (BME VCSE)*

A stronger and more inclusive civil society to meet the
needs of BME and other disadvantaged communities



We promote racial equality, advocacy, influence policy and build community resilience

- We give out grants and provide free infrastructure support for the BME voluntary and community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector (Catalyst Prog, match-trading with SSE)
- Increase BME VCSE sector opportunities by working in partnerships with SSE, SEUK & DCMS to deliver groundbreaking support to increase public sector procurement through Contract Readiness Programme
- Campaign on topical issues, influence policy and promote democratic rights e.g., GLA Voter ID campaigns and Your Voice Your Democracy Campaign – beyond election in London.
- Collaborate in ground-breaking research on racial equality, e.g. Home Truths and Home Truths 2 in partnership with ACEVO, Testing Times produced by Reframing Race
- Horizons London Programme addressing systems change in health, housing, education and environment, building an united movement with BME communities to tackle race inequality affecting systems, influence political/economic/social changes necessary for more equitable, inclusive systems
- V4CE Environmental Strategy – exploring climate justice through the lens of anti-racism, to understand the barriers to BME participation in the climate justice movement
- Energy Resilience Fund working with Key Fund to empower BME VCSE sector to retrofit energy saving technology.

OUR STRATEGY

2022-2025



"A stronger and more inclusive civil society to meet the needs of BAME and other disadvantaged communities."





BECOME A V4CE MEMBER - ITS FREE!

Full BME
Organisational
Membership

Full BME Individual
Membership

Associate non-BME
Organisational
Membership

Associate non-BME
Individual
Membership

Exclusive Benefits:

Priority booking on
V4CE workshops and
events

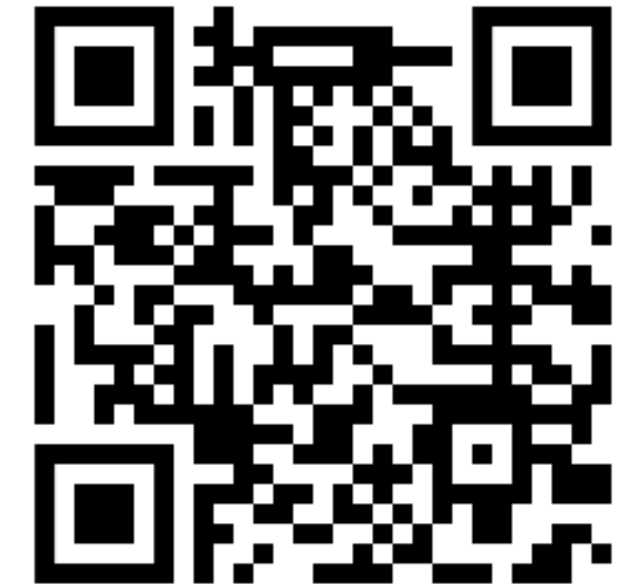
Exclusive cultural and
sector event
invitations

Members networking
opportunities

Sector insights
and news

Priority promotion
and features in
V4CE comms

Special offers and
discounts



<https://www.voice4change-england.org/membership>

Voice4Change England

Your Voice, Your Democracy Campaign

Community Resilience Building

Political literacy, engaging effectively in democratic and civic life and influencing decision makers

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Building community resilience

Involves a combination of:

Power

Voice

Resilience



Driving Change in Your Community

Political literacy

The knowledge, skills, and confidence to understand and actively participate in the political system and decisions that affect your life and community.

It's like being fluent in how power works — so you can use it.

1. Understanding how government works

- Local vs national government
- How policies are made
- Who holds power (MPs, councillors, civil servants, committees)

2. Knowing your democratic rights and responsibilities

3. Recognising how change happens

- Petitions, lobbying, public pressure, partnerships
- Elections and between elections

4. Being able to critically think about political information

- Spot misinformation
- Understand bias
- Make informed decisions

Political literacy turns passive citizens into active changemakers — and that's essential for community resilience, equity, and progress.



How Political Literacy Build Community Resilience?

Political literacy = Knowing how decisions are made, who holds power, and how to influence it.

- Resilient communities aren't just reactive — they're informed, organised, and connected to decision-making.
- It enables communities to:
 - Mobilise effectively
 - Hold systems accountable
 - Secure resources

Resilience isn't about bouncing back. It's about bouncing forward — with power



Why Participate in Democracy and Civic Life?

- Decisions happen that affect you with or without your input eg housing, funding, education, policing, and social care.
- You're already leaders — your influence doesn't have to stop at project delivery.
- Civic engagement helps translate lived experience into systemic change.

If we're not shaping the agenda, someone else is — and they might not share our values.



KNOW YOUR DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS...



Register to vote

Vote in local, regional and national elections

Voice opinions to your representatives

Stand for elected office

Take part in deliberative and participatory democracy

YOUR VOICE, YOUR DEMOCRACY



& YOUR CIVIC RIGHTS!



Start and sign petitions

Take part in peaceful, legal protest

Get involved in community organising

Give your time to volunteer

UNDERSTANDING BOTH IS KEY TO BEING AN INFORMED LONDONER!

Find out everything you need to know on the GLA Democracy Hub



Democracy doesn't stop at the ballot box. As a VCSE sector leader, your voice is vital in shaping local systems — let's dive into how

□ **Your Democratic & Civic Rights:** *These rights give you the power to participate, challenge, and shape the systems around you — from your street to the city to the country.*

1. The Right to Vote
2. The Right to Freedom of Expression
3. The Right to Protest & Assemble Peacefully
4. The Right to Petition and Contact Elected Officials
5. The Right to Access Public Information
6. The Right to Participate in Local Decision-Making
7. The Right to Stand for Office or Campaign

Your rights are your tools. The more you use them, the stronger they become — for you and your community.



QUIZ!

Quick show of hands from the audience:

- **Who has ever contacted their local councillor or MP? Signed a petition? Attended a local council meeting?**
- **How many London boroughs are there?**
- **How many London constituencies are there?**
- **Do you know the different roles of different elected officials?**

How old do you need to be to register to vote?

- 16 years old or over
- 18 years old or over
- You can register to vote at any time

What happens if you have an out-of-date form of accepted photo Voter ID?

- You will need to apply for free photo ID document (known as a Voter Authority Certificate)
- You may not be able to use your photo ID, as it is no longer valid
- You can still use your photo ID, as long as it looks like you

How can you register without a fixed address?

- By providing an address where you either have the most local connection or spend most of your time, by making a declaration of local connection
- You cannot register to vote without a fixed address
- You must use a friend's or family member's address to register



London Boroughs

London boroughs

- **32 boroughs** run by **local borough councils**
- Each borough is **divided into smaller areas called wards**
- Borough councils provide **a range of services for residents** through elected councillors



What are local councils responsible for?



Borough Council Elections

Councillors are elected every 4 years. Councillors can represent political parties but also be independent.

LEGEND

- London Boroughs
- Westminster Constituencies



Role of a local councillor

Councillors serve and represent the community in many ways, for example:

- Talking to constituents by phone, email and letter, social media, home visits, drop-in sessions, street or community meetings, and local events.
- Responding to queries and issues from local people, investigating concerns, helping with solutions (this is called casework).
- Keeping the community informed about local issues and events - for example through email, newsletters, blogs, social media and in person.
- Reading council meeting agendas and reports, research and evidence to understand issues and participate in discussions and decisions.
- Attending formal council meetings as well as meetings with local partners and organisations.
- Working collaboratively with local people, voluntary and community organisations, police, health partners, and businesses to shape the future of the local area. Building strong relationships and encouraging people to get involved and share their views and ideas.
- Some councillors have extra responsibilities, for example specific council projects, or positions in the cabinet, committees or regulation boards.



Roles of a civic Mayor and council elected Mayor

- Many councils have a civic mayor or chairman of the council. They carry out ceremonial duties and chair meetings, but cannot make decisions about council business.
- Some councils have an elected mayor. They're responsible for the day-to-day running of local services.
- Councils can have both elected and civic mayors.

<https://www.gov.uk/understand-how-your-council-works/decision-making>



Role of a Member of Parliament (MP)

An MP's role includes

- Voting in debates
- Asking ministers questions
- Managing conflict
- Representing constituents
- Attending meetings
- Helping local people

Constituencies are the areas represented by individual **Member of Parliament** (MPs).

MPs are elected every 5 years in a general election.

There are currently **75 constituencies** in London



LEGEND

- London Boroughs
- Westminster Constituencies

Role of the Mayor of London and the London Assembly

The Mayor of London

- The biggest mayoral democratic mandate in the UK, and one of the biggest in the world
- Londoners vote on a mayoral candidate's manifesto.
- Responsibilities in the areas of Transport, Policing, Fire and Rescue, Economic development, Housing, Planning, Skills and Culture
- The Mayor can pursue further policy developments in other social justice areas, such as migrant rights and the climate crisis.

The London Assembly

- 25 London Assembly members in total
- 14 Assembly constituencies, which represent two or three London boroughs
- 11 Assembly Members elected from a London-wide list of candidates selected by each party and have a pan-London remit
- The Assembly scrutinises the work of the Mayor via committees and plenary sessions
- The Assembly can initiate and vote on their own Motions, which thus become policy statements.



Your voice matters

How can you continue to have your voice heard by representatives beyond an election?

Engage with them by:

- Writing to them – the emails and addresses are publicly available
- Talking to them - MPs often have surgery hours where you can meet them and discuss issues that matter to you
- Following their record – the voting records of your representatives are publicly available

Find out who represents you:

MP - members.parliament.uk

Mayor of London - london.gov.uk

London Assembly - london.gov.uk

Local councillor - gov.uk

Find your representatives' contact details: www.writetothem.com

Follow what is being said & voted for in parliament:

hansard.parliament.uk



Elections Act (2022) Explained

Voters in London now need to show photo ID to vote at polling stations.

This applies to:

- Local/ borough elections
- Mayor of London and London Assembly elections
- UK General/ Parliament elections
- UK parliamentary by-elections
- Recall petitions

Make sure you have an
accepted photo ID to vote in:

The infographic features a central map of London with several boroughs highlighted in purple. To the left is an illustration of Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament. To the right is an illustration of the London City Hall. Small tree icons are placed between the map and the building illustrations.

General / parliamentary elections

Local / borough elections

Mayor of London and London Assembly elections

Your voice matters, so get heard.

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#NO VOTE NO ID

SOUK SHOUT OUT UK


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Benefits of Registering to vote

- **You could pass credit checks more easily and improve your credit score** (this is because lenders often use the electoral register to check your identity)
- **You are eligible to be called up for jury service** (jury members are drawn randomly from the electoral register, diverse juries are more likely to result in fairer verdicts)
- **You are a key part in decision-making** by electing local and national representatives

Did you know that being registered to vote can improve your credit score?



It takes a few minutes, so register now at:
gov.uk/register-to-vote

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Registering to Vote

You can register to vote in London at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

You must be:

- **Aged 16* or over**

You must also be one of the following:

- **A British or Irish citizen**
- **A qualifying EU citizen or an EU citizen with retained rights**
- **A qualifying Commonwealth citizen**

Are you a British or Irish Londoner, a qualifying Commonwealth or EU Londoner, or an EU Londoner with retained rights, and over 16 years old?

Then grab your National Insurance number and head to www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

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*Please note that you can register to vote at 16, but you must be 18 to vote

Registering to Vote

- If you are a **British, Irish or qualifying Commonwealth citizen** who is over the age of 18 and residing in London, then you can vote in all elections, including the UK General/ Parliamentary elections and referendums, London local/ borough council elections and the Mayor of London/ London Assembly elections.
- If you are a qualifying **European Citizen (EU) citizen** or an **EU citizen with retained rights who is over the age of 18 and residing in London**, then you are only able to vote in local elections, such as London borough council elections and the Mayor of London/ London Assembly elections.

By registering to vote, you will be added to the **electoral register** and can **vote in the local, regional and national elections** that you are eligible for. You will also **have a voice** and a **vote in decisions impacting you and your community**.

Remember that, if you **move address, change your name or nationality**, you will have to **re-register**.



No Fixed Address

You **can still register to vote even if you do not have a fixed address.**

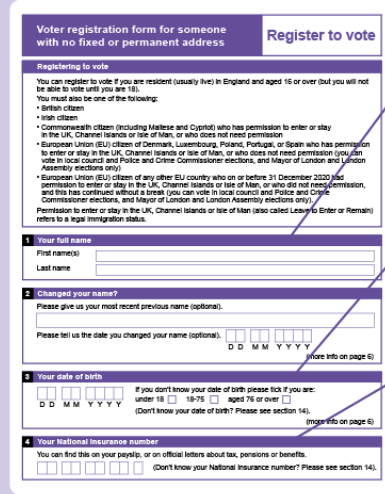
This could be because you are:

- homeless or without fixed address
- a patient in the mental health institution
- in custody but not yet convicted of an offence

To register to vote, you will need to:

- provide an address where you either have the most local connection or spend most of your time; by making a declaration of local connection, this could be
 - **an address where you would be living** if not for the situation or your **previous address**
 - if you are homeless, provide **an address where you spend a substantial part of your time** e.g., shelter, church, hostel etc.

You don't need a fixed or permanent address to register to vote.



Your full name

Your date of birth

Your National Insurance number

Find the form and more info at:
[registertovote.london/faqs](https://www.registertovote.london/faqs)

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What are the accepted forms of Photo Voter ID?

Make sure you have one of these accepted forms of photo ID if you want to vote in person, at the next election.



UK, Channel Islands or EEA driving licence



UK, Commonwealth or EEA passport



Blue Badge scheme card



National identity card issued by an EEA state



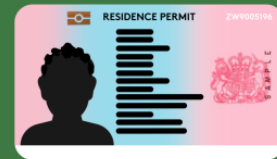
60+ Oyster photocard or a Freedom Pass



Free Voter Authority Certificate



PASS card issued by the National Proof of Age Standards Scheme bearing the PASS hologram



Biometric Immigration Document

- You will only need to show **one form of accepted photo Voter ID**, and it needs to be the original version and not a photocopy.
- You can **still use your photo ID if it's out of date**, as long as it looks like you. The **name on your photo ID should be the same name you used to register to vote**.

Free Voter Authority Certificate

**No photo ID? No problem.
You can apply for a free
Voter Authority Certificate.**



**Grab your
National Insurance number.**



**Find a recent digital photo
of yourself, or take a new one.**



**Submit your application at
www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate**

If you do not have any of the accepted forms of photo ID to vote in person, you can apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate.

When applying for it, you will need to provide your:

- **Name**
- **Date of birth**
- **Address**
- **National Insurance number**
- **A recent digital, passport style photo**

This can only be used for voting purposes, not as a form of ID, and it is valid for 10 years.

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Free Voter Authority Certificate

The deadline to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate for a particular election is 5pm, 6 working days before polling day. **However, it's best to apply as soon as possible to be prepared.** You can apply for one at <https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate>.

You can also apply by completing a paper application form and sending this to your local council's electoral services. You can request the instructions in Large Print, Braille or Easy Read.

You can find their contact details by inputting your postcode at <https://www.gov.uk/contact-electoral-registration-office>



How to Vote



There are 3 different ways to vote:

In person: you will be sent a **poll card to your address**. The poll card will tell you where your local polling station is, and the date and time you can vote.

By post: If an election is coming up and you won't be able to vote in person, at the polling station, on election day, for e.g., because you are on holiday abroad, you can **apply for a postal vote** at <https://www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote>. The deadline to apply for a postal vote is around two weeks before election day.

By proxy: if you cannot vote in person, for e.g., for health reasons, you can **nominate someone to vote on your behalf**. To apply for a proxy vote, go to: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-proxy-vote>



For further information:

GLA Democracy Hub

- info and resources:

<https://registertovote.london/>

Check out the GLA and
Shout Out UK's WhatsApp
Chatbot

Looking for
up to date
information on
voter registration
and Voter ID?



Message us on
WhatsApp at
+44 7908 820136
or by scanning
the QR code.

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Group discussion: (10 minutes)

**Are you currently engaged or involved in local decision-making forums?
(Show of hands)**

**How can you engage in local decision-making forums
and influence them to build community resilience?
Any barriers to engagement?**

Mechanisms of Engagement in Local Decision-Making

1. Local Councils & Ward Councillors

- Attend meetings, join committees, lobby councillors.
- Use platforms like WriteToThem.com to contact reps.

2. Consultations & Citizen Panels

- Councils run open consultations on budgets, transport, regeneration.
- Example: [London.gov.uk/consultations](https://www.london.gov.uk/consultations)

3. Neighbourhood Forums & Assemblies

- Community-led planning and decision making.
- Funding, zoning, business support, and local resilience initiatives.

4. Local Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS) Networks

- Connect through infrastructure orgs like London Plus, Locality, or your CVS

You don't need to be an expert in policy — you just need to speak about your own experience








VCSE sector leader = community influencers with grassroots insight and solutions. Use that power

Influence and Build Resilience

- Coalitions & Partnerships: Link with other organisations to amplify impact.
- Storytelling & Advocacy: Share your impact through blogs, local press, and social media.
- Issue based policy: For example, participatory budgeting, a first step could be to push for transparent local spending, you could even propose how you think funds should be allocated.
- Volunteer on Boards/Committees: Apply to become a school governor, board member, or advisory group member.



Your Civic Action Plan

-  Identify your local councillor and find their contact details.
-  Sign up for your council's consultation alerts.
- Join or attend a local forum or community meeting.
-  Share one story of your work's impact on social media & tag your local representative.
-  Build or join a coalition with aligned organisations to influence decisions.
-  **Challenge: Pick one action to complete in the next 7 days. Share progress with a peer.**

Thank you

Please leave feedback by scanning the QR code below or click the link provided



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Free Membership | 1-2-1 support

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Send Us a Message

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Visit our website

<https://www.voice4change-england.org/>