

Public awareness for the 2013 annual canvass

10 September 2013 update

On 26 June we wrote to MSPs to set out our overall approach to delivering our duty to promote public awareness at the Scottish referendum. This note provides further information on the activity we will be undertaking at the annual canvass to encourage 15-17 year olds to register and also gives details of resources we are making available for others to use.

Please support our campaign by using our resources to raise awareness of the need to register to vote amongst 15-17 year olds.

The canvass

The canvass will take place from 1 October 2013 to 10 March 2014. Along with the usual household registration form, a 'young voter registration form' will also be distributed to enable Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) to collect and confirm details of all 15 year olds who will reach their 16th birthday on or before 18 September 2014. Effective public awareness activity to drive response to the canvass will help ensure that the registers are as complete and accurate as possible ahead of the referendum.

Registering young people is the responsibility of EROs. During the canvass EROs will lead direct engagement work locally with the public and encourage people to take the necessary action to ensure they are registered. We have provided them with [guidance](#) and set standards for how they should do this, as well as public awareness resources to assist them in this role.

Our campaign

Our public awareness campaign will launch on 1 October, to coincide with the start of the annual canvass in Scotland, and will specifically target 15-17 year olds. The key messages for this activity will be:

- If you are 16 or over by 18 September 2014 you can vote at the referendum but you will need to be register to vote first
- Look out for the registration form that is coming through your door
- Visit www.aboutmyvote.co.uk for further information.

Because we will be targeting 15-17 year olds during this phase of activity we have focused our advertising on channels which are most likely to reach this age group:

Radio

We have produced a 30 second radio advert targeted at 15-17 year olds. This will run on radio stations Scotland-wide but with a greater emphasis on radio stations with a higher audience share of young people. The radio adverts will run during October and November 2013, to coincide with the issuing of canvass forms by EROs across Scotland. This will ensure that young people hear the advert at the time when they are being asked to take action to ensure they are registered.

Online

Because a high proportion of young people in Scotland regularly use Facebook, we will be running advertising on Facebook to accurately target 15-17 year olds. The adverts will link through to aboutmyvote.co.uk, where users will be able to find all the information they need to register to vote, including downloadable copies of the registration form and the contact details of their local Electoral Registration Officer.

We will also run search engine advertising which targets people with an interest in the referendum.

How you can help: stakeholder materials

The Electoral Commission has a duty to promote public awareness at the referendum, but we are aware that many other organisations and individuals - including teachers, youth workers, campaigners, political parties and MSPs - will also want to undertake activity to encourage young people to participate in the referendum. We welcome and encourage this; we believe it will support young people's right to engage in the referendum on an equal basis to all other voters. However, it is important that the information young people receive on how to register and vote is accurate, neutral and consistent. We have therefore produced a range of materials that can be downloaded and used by organisations and individuals in their work with young people.

These materials include:

- Template poster targeting 15-17 year olds which stakeholders, including EROs, can adapt to include their own logo and contact details
- FAQs on registering to vote at the referendum, including clear information on what the franchise is, how to register and where to go for more information
- FAQs on voting at the referendum, including what the different voting options are and how to vote
- Online tools for sharing information e.g. buttons for websites and e-mail signatures

- Template press releases for local tailoring
- Template text for articles for publications and online communication activities targeted at young people
- Young voters' registration form.

All public awareness materials will be available to download from www.aboutmyvote.co.uk by Monday 23 September. The young voter's registration form will be available from the same website on 1 October 2013.

Young people in formal education

We are continuing to work with educational bodies including Education Scotland, the Association of Directors in Education Scotland (ADES) and School Leaders Scotland so that teachers have access to accurate and neutral information on the referendum. Further information on this work and the resources available was set out in the [joint education briefing](#) issued in June 2013.

For further information:

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