

Encouraging responses

Key Considerations

- EROs are required to canvass all households identified as Route 2 properties in their area each year and to make at least three contact attempts if there is no response
- In addition to undertaking the prescribed follow up steps, no response from households can also lead to the ERO having to take further action, e.g. a registration review, to establish who is entitled to be on the electoral register
- Where an ERO becomes aware of an individual in a household being entitled to register to vote they must invite them to do so and to issue two reminders and make a personal visit if there is no response
- The earlier in the canvass or ITR process a household or individual responds, the less resource intensive this is for the ERO
- EROs are utilising their registration stationery and materials to encourage a response as early as possible

Options

- Canvassers leaving 'calling cards' where they have been unable to speak directly to a member of a household
- Amending registration materials, within the limits of the legislation, to encourage response
- Adding key messages to the outside of the envelopes to encourage a response

Considerations for the ERO

- Ensuring that, in utilising any of the options for encouraging a response, they continue to meet all their legal duties, including all follow-up steps for non-responses to canvass communications and ITRs.
- Ensuring that, in utilising any amendments to the materials to encourage a response, all registration materials remain compliant with legislation

Potential benefits

- Improved response rate at an earlier stage in the canvass or ITR process
- Reduced need for reminders and household visits, resulting in greater efficiency and creating the potential for reducing costs
- Improved accuracy and completeness of registers
- Improved experience for electors

Experiences of others



Bradford City Council and Sefton Borough Council

Bradford introduced 'calling cards' attached to registration forms that were delivered to non-responding properties at the time of making personal visits, to encourage a response. Compared to canvassers leaving forms without calling cards, this has increased their response from 5% to between 15-20%.

Sefton have trialled leaving a calling card with ITRs. They have found this to be

successful and it has helped to overcome reluctance to provide personal identifiers on the doorstep.



Swale Borough Council

In 2015, Swale had over 5,000 Invitations to Register (ITRs) that had been sent out during the canvass as a result of canvass responses but not all elicited successful registration applications. Building on the Household Notification Letter (HNL) they had used before the 2015 UK Parliamentary general election and had proved very successful they developed a Household Notification Card (HNC) for the 2016 canvass using a colour coded traffic light system. This postcard-style communication was specifically designed to encourage people who were not already registered to make an application and helped electors who may have been confused about getting an additional form following their canvass response.

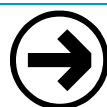
More information about what Swale did with their Household Notification Card is available in this [case study](#).



Bath & North East Somerset Council

Bath have added a line to the covering envelopes used to send registration review letters which says '*Notice of review/deletion*', which has helped reduce complaints and misunderstandings from residents. They have also found this messaging on the envelopes to assist with the administration of any undelivered letters, as it removes the need to open them to establish their contents and allows quicker processing.

Resources



[Part 1](#) of our guidance for EROs contains advice on working with partners in order to maximise registration. Our [example tactics sheets for reaching target audiences](#) contain specific ideas for targeting and communicating with typically under-registered groups, such as young people, BME groups and private renters.

You can also draw on our [resources and templates](#) for any of your communications with residents in your area. These have been designed with impact and accessibility in mind.



Get in touch

We would very much like to hear from EROs on how they use registration materials to encourage a response as early as possible. Please get in touch with your [local Commission team](#). Alternatively if you would like speak directly to any of the authorities referenced in this resource, please let us know and we will be happy to help with this.