Appendix C

‘VoteScotland’ Public Awareness Campaign Evaluation Report

Following the combined public awareness campaign for the 2007 Scottish parliamentary and local government elections, an evaluation of its effectiveness was commissioned by the Electoral Commission.

This evaluation report was compiled by Colin McDonald and submitted to the Electoral Commission on 13 July 2007. It is included in the report of the Scottish Elections Review as supplementary information to Chapter 7.0 Public Information.

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Executive summary

1. The VoteScotland campaign of 2007, besides motivating people to think about voting, had specific information to deliver. It had to tell people about the need to register and where they could get help to do so before the deadline on April 18th, and, most importantly, it had to explain the new voting procedures, AMS for the Scottish Parliament and STV for the local council elections, which were to be run together for the first time on May 3rd.

Previous research indicated that it would be best to build this campaign in stages, focusing on the voting processes in the last weeks before the election so that they would be fresh in mind, after the need to encourage registration was over. A multi-media campaign was planned accordingly. Public relations activity had been going on since November 2006, with co-operation from local councils. On March 3rd the media campaign started, involving television, radio, national and local press, internet and posters. Up to early April, this focused on awareness of the election and the need to register. After that point, the campaign increased in intensity, while the focus changed to how to vote. The centrepiece of this part of the campaign was a leaflet explaining the voting processes, which was delivered to every household in Scotland during the weeks beginning April 16th and 23rd. Other media, and intensified PR, backed up by field marketing teams and a truck roadshow visiting key town centres, supported the leaflet, featuring the same illustrations of the ballot papers.

This phased approach, and the use of many different media together with PR to build each campaign stage, appear to have been a very sensible and thorough strategy which it would be difficult to fault. The leaflet drop on every household, and the use of the other communication channels to draw attention to it, ensured that every household had at least a good opportunity of being informed about the new voting processes.

The campaign was thoroughly researched during development. Based on this research, it was decided to keep the messages as simple as possible, merely illustrating the voting processes without going into more detailed explanations of the electoral systems. This was also clearly a sensible decision which minimised confusion. All the media used referred people to a website and a call centre helpline if they wanted more detail or other help. On polling day, further poster information was visible at polling places, and there were information officers available to help.
2. Tracking surveys were used to assess response to the campaign in three waves (before, during and after). Tracking is a common procedure for monitoring campaign effects on a target audience and how they build over time. The three waves were put into the field before the campaign started (late February), at the end of the first phase (late March), and immediately after the election. Visits to the website and calls to the helpline were also recorded on a daily basis, and these provide further evidence of campaign effects.

Comparing Wave 2 with the pre-wave, the campaign showed modest increases only in awareness of the election and little or no increase in understanding of the need for registration and how to do it, including among the key target group, young people. However, in interpreting this it should be borne in mind that the PR campaign had already been in action for some months before the pre-wave. The website and call-centre visitor records, on the other hand, provide clear evidence of a rapid increase in registration enquiries during March and early April; in particular, referrals to Aboutmyvote.co.uk, the link from which registration forms could be downloaded, increased to a level 30 times above normal before dropping back sharply after the registration deadline date on April 18th. This shows that the media campaign and the PR together did stimulate registration, although the tracking does not clearly show it.

The website and call-centre records continued to show sharp increases during the second phase of the campaign centred around the information leaflet, and the tracking survey, at Wave 3, showed substantial increases in correct understanding of the two voting processes, compared with Wave 2 (before this phase of the campaign began). Unfortunately, because of the timing of Wave 3, for reasons discussed below, it is impossible to attribute these improvements clearly to the campaign. Wave 3 contained positive evidence of reception of the leaflet, but somewhat disappointing recognition figures for other media, especially television; however, this is likely to be at least partly explained by the change in copy which took place at the beginning of April. Other evidence from surveys conducted after the election suggest that some voters did find the on-site materials and the information officers helpful.

There is thus circumstantial evidence that the multi-media campaign together with PR was well-designed for its purpose and did achieve its aim of delivering the messages about registration and voting, the leaflet drop being especially important for the latter. However, the evidence is less clear-cut than one would like, and there would be benefits in re-thinking the evaluation of campaigns of this kind, especially how tracking surveys are used.
3. The decision to put Wave 3 of the tracking survey into the field after the election was a serious error. It meant that one cannot be certain to what extent the increase in knowledge of the ballot papers and the voting procedures during April, as measured in Wave 3 compared with Wave 2, were due to the leaflet and other communications as opposed to the more recent experience of the election itself, and exposure to the actual ballot papers as well as the advertising at polling places. It also made it impossible to measure any change occurring up to the election itself in awareness of the election and attitudes to voting. The rationale for this decision was that there would not be time before the election to capture effects from the final campaign boost. However, this difficulty could be overcome by a `double wave' partly before and partly after the election date, using enlarged samples if necessary to compensate for lack of time. This would enable one to compare responses to the campaign communications both before and after people had seen the ballot papers `for real' and this would provide instructive learning. It would also enable us to assess the in-station materials and information officer help, etc., without the need for the `fourth wave' which was conducted later for this purpose.

Apart from the timing, it is recommended that further thought should be given to the design of pre-election tracking surveys. Some of the questions did not seem well-designed for capturing whether respondents had really grasped the messages, and there is scope here for some imaginative re-thinking (for instance, getting respondents to actually complete dummy ballot papers). Also, more consideration should be given to the ways in which motivation to vote is measured. Recognition questions should also be adjusted and perhaps extended to take account of changes in copy such as occurred between the campaign phases 1 and 2.

The use of a survey sample based on a national omnibus should also be reconsidered. Whilst it is true that the communication was intended to be nation-wide, there is no doubt that its reception was likely to differ between areas and groups of people, some of which would be more difficult to target than others. The fact that ballot rejection levels proved to be strongly correlated with areas of relative social deprivation is evidence of this. Consideration should be given to tailor-making the sampling rather more, possibly with boosts in certain areas or of certain target groups. Provided such boosts are analysed separately, they do not compromise the national picture, but they would make possible a clearer understanding of where and how the messages fail to get through.
4. Analysis of the tracking data between constituency groupings with relatively high or low rejection levels failed to show evidence that high rejection was due to campaign failure to convey the messages about the voting process: if anything, the reverse appeared to be true in that respondents in higher rejection areas seemed to be more confident. Various reasons might explain this unexpected finding, but they can only be speculative at this stage, and further research is recommended. Whatever the reason, we can say with some confidence that high rejection has not been driven by a lack of exposure to the advertising or failure to understand its core messages.

5. It would also be advisable in future to put in place some means of separating out effects from PR (which was clearly important to this campaign, but we cannot be sure how much), and from ancillary operations such as the field marketing teams and the roadshow.
1. Introduction

1.1. A public awareness campaign was run during the months leading up to the Scottish Parliamentary and council elections held on May 3rd, 2007. This campaign was the joint responsibility of the Scottish Executive and the Electoral Commission, and had multiple objectives. One aim was motivational: to encourage people to vote and inform them of the need to register, if they had not already done so, by the final registration date and show them how they could do this. A second, very important, aim was to communicate the new voting systems that were to be employed for the first time, on different ballot papers, for the two elections.

1.2. This report has been commissioned by the Electoral Commission to be an independent evaluation of the campaign and its effectiveness in achieving its objectives.
2. Plan of the campaign

2.1 Objectives

The information which the campaign had to communicate was complex. Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) are elected by the Alternative Member System (AMS), which requires voters to place one cross in each of two columns, one for individual constituency members and one for the party, or independent individual, they would like to represent them regionally. Although this method had been used in the previous elections (1999 and 2003), research evidence from the survey conducted in mid-2006 for the Electoral Commission (by GfK NOP Social Research) showed clearly that over three quarters of their sample did not know what system was used to elect MSPs. Also, the procedure to be used for AMS in 2007 was new, since for the first time both regional and constituency votes were to be put on the same ballot paper. Local authority councillors, on the other hand, were to be selected by a new system, Single Transferable Vote (STV): this required the voter to number his/her choices in order of preference, with no restriction on the number chosen. Both AMS and STV methods were to be used, with two different ballot papers, at the same time when voters visited the polling places on May 3rd. One of the most important objectives of the campaign was therefore to make people aware of these new and complex procedures and help them to understand clearly what they had to do to cast their votes.

Information about postal voting procedures was not an objective of this campaign. The decision not to include this as part of the brief was a conscious one, due to the significant number of other messages being communicated. Information on postal voting was, however, available on the campaign website and via the telephone helpline.

Besides communicating this information, the campaign had the general aim of raising awareness of the election date and encouraging registration where it was needed, especially among certain target groups where registration and participation tend to be especially low: young people, ethnic minorities and recent home movers. There was evidence from the GfK NOP survey that many people were unaware of the need for registration, believing, for example, that they were ‘automatically’ registered to vote because they paid their council tax. Also, being poorly informed about registration adds to the sense of intimidation and worry that some people feel about the process of voting. The campaign would include aids to registration such as an advice helpline and a website from which the registration forms could be downloaded. The final date to register to vote in the May 3rd elections was 18th April.

To address these multiple objectives required attack from several different quarters. The key vehicle for communicating voting information was an explanatory leaflet which would be delivered to every household. This would be supported by extensive PR and by relevant media, especially national and local press, posters and radio.
There would also be a website, a helpline to field enquiries, and special posters on the day outside polling places and inside the polling booths, together with an information officer at each polling place from whom voters could seek help on how to vote. Television, recognised as less useful for detailed information, would be a prime medium for motivation, alerting to the date and need for registration. All the media would be co-ordinated to support the leaflet and the registration drive and to direct people to the helpline and website.

An important requirement was consistency between communication channels. With such a complex message, it would be all too easy for different people or groups to receive inconsistent or conflicting messages, without careful control.

IAS Smarts (formerly Citigate Smarts) was appointed as the agency to create and co-ordinate the media campaign. Media planning was undertaken by Mediacom and media were bought through COI Communications. The Big Partnership was appointed to run the PR campaign. Civic Computing Limited was responsible for creating and maintaining the public information website.

To boost interest in voting and registration among the key target group of young people (18-24), field marketing teams and a truck-based roadshow visited town centre sites across the country during March and April. The field marketing was organised by Bob Marketing and the truck-based roadshow through The Union. The call-centre helpline to deal with information requests, especially about registration and voting procedures, was provided by The Essentiagroup.

Besides the national media and PR campaign, there was considerable local activity. It was recognised at an early stage that campaigning at a local level would be needed, especially to bring the key campaign messages to some of the harder-to-reach groups. Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers have a statutory duty to promote participation in elections. Local councils were involved at an early stage, and all but one sent out an early version of the leaflet with their council tax mailings (the one council which did not do this issued the leaflets in a free newspaper instead). The advertising and PR agencies also worked closely with council staff to help generate local coverage. Other organisations (colleges, universities, businesses etc.) participated in a wide range of local initiatives.

2.2 Planned rollout

The media campaign was planned to build in stages up to the election itself, first to increase awareness of the coming election date and the need to register, and then, after the final date for registration was passed, a more intense effort to convey understanding of the new voting procedures.
The rationale for this build-up, based on earlier research and experience of election campaigns, was that exposure to the detailed voting procedure too early would be counter-productive: it would not stick in people’s minds, continuous repetition would be a turn-off, and at worst it would frighten away the more vulnerable and unconfident (particularly the young and the elderly). People would need to be encouraged and coaxed, helped to feel that taking part was important: thus enthused, they would be more likely to absorb what they needed to know about the voting process. This was undoubtedly sensible reasoning, and borne out by the campaign research. The encouragement to register had to climax at an earlier point, before the final registration date, and this had the further benefit that the two messages would be less confused together, since the registration message would have finished before advertising started to feature the voting process.

The media campaign did not come completely fresh, of course, since the PR campaign, which featured the voting procedure in a large number of press editorials, continued steadily from November 2006 onwards. There were also some leaflet deliveries earlier, as an insert was included with all local authority council tax bills (although this leaflet, unlike the later doordrop, did not illustrate the ballot papers). The campaign can therefore be seen as building awareness of the voting procedure slowly through three-four months, but with concentrated focus only in the last two weeks. Besides the paid-for media there were also editorial feature platforms supplied by the Scottish Executive, which were also deployed at the same times as the media campaign.

2.3 The evaluation plan

Tracking research was the main method used to monitor responses of the general public and their understanding of the campaign messages at various stages. In addition, visits to the website and calls to the helpline were recorded, so that we can track how these grew as the campaign developed. Evaluation of the PR coverage and local responses to the field marketing efforts and the roadshow, etc., are further supporting evidence.

Tracking research is commonly used to monitor the effects of an advertising campaign over time. By ‘tracking’ is meant survey research conducted either continuously or at intervals during the course of the campaign, with an initial wave of interviewing before the campaign begins to provide a baseline. Such research can measure the extent to which a target population is aware of a campaign, has been in fact exposed to it, and absorbs and responds to the various messages, ideas or feelings it is intended to put across. It can also measure how these outcomes grow over time during the course of the campaign.
The tracking research for the VoteScotland campaign was provided by TNS System Three. It was designed in three waves, with a nation-wide target sample of 1000 in each wave (plus some booster sampling of certain ethnic minorities). The first wave took place before the campaign began, between 22nd and 27th February, thus providing a baseline for the media campaign (though not for the PR, which had already been happening since November 2006). The second wave took place from 20th to 27th March, before the Easter holiday fortnight and before the media campaign started to alert people to the forthcoming leaflet drop: it thus gives an opportunity to assess the effect of the campaign in meeting its motivational and registration aims. The third and final wave took place from 4th to 9th May, immediately after the election day.

The decision to put the final tracking wave into the field after election day was taken for two reasons: first, due to campaign timings, there would not be sufficient time to fit in the fieldwork between the final launch of the informational advertising and polling day; secondly, because it was expected that most people would find out information about how to vote in the final few days before the election, as is borne out by the website statistics and the call centre volumes. Placing the fieldwork later would allow time to capture this late increase in knowledge. The agency’s request to carry out Wave 3 between 26th April and 1st May, just before election day, was not accepted because it did not allow sufficient time for the public to take in the late messaging about how to vote.

However, for reasons to be discussed more fully later, this report concludes that this timing was a mistake, because it meant that estimates of the effect of the communications about voting procedure were contaminated by the experience of seeing and handling the real ballot papers, and it made it impossible to separate out the additional effects of the experience of being in a polling place, seeing the advertising material there, speaking to information officers etc. It is therefore not possible to obtain a clear picture of the final effects of the communication, separated from other influences. This was the reason (in the view of this report a correct one) for the agency’s request. Accepting the reasoning on both sides as valid, the problem could have been overcome by an enlarged Wave 3 (or a Wave 3 plus 4) with fieldwork both before and immediately after polling day. This would have been a better solution than the eventual fourth wave, which was set up simply to measure the effects of the polling place materials, but took place two weeks after polling day, by which time memories would have somewhat faded.
3. Development and progress of the campaign

3.1 Getting the branding right

All the media used in the campaign had to fulfil two tasks consistently: to communicate information clearly and simply without causing confusion or alarm, and at the same time to stimulate interest and involvement in the coming election. It was therefore clearly important that the advertising designs proposed should be tested to ensure that they met these requirements. This involved colours, typefaces, straplines, and the use of logos or other devices signalling the Electoral Commission and Scottish Executive partnership. An additional concern here was the avoidance of any appearance of political bias; for example, use of particular colours.

IAS Smarts proposed testing design ideas on focus groups, which were conducted by TNS System Three. The group discussions explored reasons for apathy among voters, and found that many felt voting was a duty and tended to feel guilty if they failed to vote. The testing of alternative designs produced a number of firm suggestions which were adopted in the final designs, including:

- Clear signalling of the election date in a `calendar’ format
- Selection of the name `VoteScotland’
- Strengthening it by putting it in a multi-coloured format (which had more appeal for younger and less active voters), against a dark background to make it stand out and prevent it appearing childish
- Inclusion of the votescotland.com website address
- Choice of strapline
- Choice of the One Scotland logo for Scottish Executive with the modified saltire design.

This testing was thorough and resulted in definite improvements in the clarity and impact of the advertising.

3.2 Creative development

TNS System Three also carried out focus group research to help identify which creative ideas would have the best potential to achieve the campaign objectives. These focus groups were conducted with key target groups: young people, lower social grades, certain ethnic minorities (using triads). The focus group format enables different creative approaches to be discussed so that obstacles to comprehension may be revealed and better ideas may surface.
The research confirmed that voting is seen more as a duty than a desire, and that non-voters often feel disengaged. A key objective would therefore be to motivate them on an emotional level, and one way of doing this would be to put the voter centre stage, give them a feeling of importance and pride. This led to the concept ‘ whatever matters to you, your vote matters’, which was used in the television and radio executions.

It also confirmed that the informational aspect of the advertising was best served by avoiding complex descriptions of how the voting would work and focusing on a simple exposition of the process, what they had to do.

Again, this research clearly added value, especially with regard to creating television and radio advertising which would communicate the campaign messages effectively.

3.3 The leaflet

The leaflet was the key element in the ‘how to vote’ aspect of the campaign. It was thoroughly tested by TNS System Three in two versions, using hall tests. The first, longer, version contained full page designs of the ballot papers, the second, shorter, option contained smaller images. The second version was strongly preferred by most testers for being shorter, more concise and easy to follow. This was adopted with certain amendments, especially relating to how the STV system for council voting was explained, and strengthening the perceived purpose and importance of the leaflet.

In the final version, voting procedure was explained simply as the process of what the voter had to do with each ballot paper: for any more detail on how the system worked, they were referred to the website. The election date was clearly signalled. Readers were told they needed to be registered to vote, and referred to the call centre number and website address for instructions. The leaflet also contained a reinforcing message about the importance of being involved in voting for both Parliament and local council.

The hall test research was clearly valuable for arriving at an effective design for the leaflet.


3.4 Progress of the campaign

The PR campaign generated opportunities to see/hear messages from November onwards, delivering 4-5 million opportunities in November, January and March, but fewer in December (around Christmas/New Year) and February. Finally, in April, there was a big increase in opportunities to nearly 12 million, coinciding with the push to deliver the how-to-vote information. These opportunities to see/hear were about equally divided in each month between print and broadcast media, except in February when the broadcast component fell to zero (this was because of a focus of PR activity around the Chinese New Year, as well as a number of sponsored editorial platforms in that month and preparation for the media campaign). The media campaign was thus launched against a long-running PR background, which continued to support it in its various stages.

Timings for the media campaign are shown, approximately, on the attached chart. The first tracking wave took place before it began, with fieldwork between 22nd and 27th February. During March and the first week of April, media activity continued on television, radio, newspapers, outdoor and online, concentrating on motivational copy and encouragement to register, leading up to the final date for registration (to take part in these elections) on April 18th. This advertising referred people to the website and call centre, both for general information about the election and specifically for help with registration: registration forms could be downloaded from the Aboutmyvote.co.uk link and also sent out on request from the call centre. The second tracking wave, to measure the effects of this activity, took place at the end of March (20th to 27th).

In April, the focus of advertising changed to informing people about the new voting processes and how to vote. The centrepiece for this phase was the leaflet, redesigned after hall testing to show the two ballot papers with instructions in a simplified and unthreatening way. The leaflet was dropped on every household in Scotland during the two weeks beginning April 16th and 23rd, and advertising in all media carried warnings about it during the weeks beginning April 9th and 16th. The trebled PR activity during April also heavily featured the leaflet, and many local press articles and inserts gave detailed explanations and illustrations of the voting procedures.

The final tracking wave by TNS System Three took place after polling day from 4th to 9th May. A subsequent fourth wave, from 24th to 29th May, looked for effects from the advertising materials and other help available in polling places. There was also a post-election survey by GfK NOP (fieldwork 4th to 16th May) covering attitudes to voting and electoral fraud, but including some information about how people responded to the in-place help available.
4 Campaign results: awareness of election publicity

4.1 Tracking research evidence: spontaneous awareness

The first question asked at each wave (after excluding any non-residents) was:

`Have you seen or heard any advertising, publicity or other information recently about voting in elections? By voting, we mean the process of voting, rather than whom to vote for from political parties.'

This question, asked without prompting before any other discussion, indicates how far the campaign has made an impression to the extent that it comes easily to mind. It does not of course measure the full reach of the campaign, since many of those who answer `no' to such a question will merely have forgotten it, but will recognise advertisements if shown them again.

At Wave 1, 31% claimed to have seen publicity. Allowing for the fact that there are always some false claimers, this is a high result for a pre-wave, and must reflect the PR which had been going on since January. At Wave 2, after the initial phase of the campaign, claimed awareness rose to 50% and at Wave 3 (after the intense focus on the voting process) to 66%. The Wave 3 figure could have been inflated by the experience of election day itself and the in-place advertising materials.

This was a good result compared with the Northern Ireland registration campaign of 2002, where spontaneous awareness reached a post-campaign level of 52%. This is a relevant comparison, since this campaign informed people about a change in the registration process. The spontaneous awareness of the VoteScotland campaign is similar to that achieved by the Commission’s 2004 European Parliamentary election campaign in Scotland, which also reached 66%; both were campaigns at a similar level of `newness'. It compares less well with the Commission’s 2005 general election campaign in Scotland, which reached 86%, but this is not a fair comparison because the same campaign had already run in 2004 and election `noise' was particularly high.

When asked where they had seen or heard this advertising, several said television, a few newspapers, and a very few named other media. This is a notoriously insecure question, however, because people’s unprompted memories are faulty, and there is often a tendency to think that it `must be' television simply because this is the most viewed medium. There were increases in all media between Waves 1 and 2, and again between Waves 2 and 3, those for TV and newspapers being statistically significant.
There was also substantial increase in mentions of the leaflet: any leaflet from 15% at Wave 1 to 27% at Wave 2 to 40% at Wave 3, and ‘leaflet through door’ from 13% at Wave 1 to 24% at Wave 2 to 38% at Wave 3. The Wave 2 to Wave 3 shift was statistically significant. Presumably the Wave 1 level reflects the PR campaign, and the increase at Wave 2 shows some effect of the distribution of the leaflet by local authorities, since the wave 2 interviews preceded the start of the advertising featuring the leaflet before its distribution.

Unfortunately, we cannot interpret the Wave 3 figures with perfect clarity, because the interviewing took place after the election itself, for the reasons already discussed above in section 2.3. The recent experience of handling the ballot papers ‘for real’ could have led to overstatement by stimulating peoples’ memories of the leaflet and/or its advertising (perhaps even with some false claiming); alternatively it could have led to understatement because experiences on polling day ‘crowded out’ such memories. We have no way of knowing. However, it does seem clear that the significant increase in awareness of the leaflet at Wave 3 was indeed caused by the leaflet itself, even if we cannot be sure of its precise extent.

4.2 Recognition: reach measurement

At the end of the interview at Waves 2 and 3, respondents were shown or played the newspaper, TV and radio ads and asked if they recognised them, and similarly for the leaflet at Wave 3. This is always the best measure one can get of true reach, since recognition usually overcomes memory failure. One therefore expects the recognition question to produce a higher level of recall than the spontaneous memory question, or even than a prompted awareness question, especially when, as in this case, commercials could be played in their entirety on the interviewers’ CAPI system.

In this light, the response seems a bit disappointing. Overall recognition at Wave 3, including all paid media and the leaflet, was 67%, no greater than the spontaneous level of 66%; without the leaflet, it was only 55%. This may be a little misleading, however, since the spontaneous memory included recall of the PR campaign, which the recognition question specifically excludes.

Recognition of specific media was no greater at Wave 3 than at Wave 2: television dropped from 43% to 38%, radio stayed the same at 21-22%, press stayed the same at 17%-16%. Again, it is disappointing that there was no further improvement at Wave 3, especially for television, but again this measure could have been contaminated by the measurement being taken after election day. In the Northern Ireland campaign study, considerably higher numbers claimed after prompting to have seen television, newspaper and poster advertising.
Another factor which is very likely to have affected these figures is that the advertisements shown to respondents at Wave 3 were different from those shown at Wave 2: they were the new ones since April 23rd focusing on the voting procedure, not on registration. These ads had only been on air for a week or two before polling day. It is very likely that some respondents said, truthfully, that they had not seen that advertisement before, when they had in fact seen the previous advertising. This possibility adds to our uncertainty in interpreting the final reach figures. It would have been possible to adjust the questionnaire to reduce this confusion, though perhaps at the expense of a longer interview for some respondents.

Whatever the reasons, the television recognition levels at Wave 3 compare badly with some other campaigns: the 2004 European Parliamentary campaign (52%), the 2005 general election campaign, post measurement (69%), and the Northern Ireland 2003-3 registration campaign (prompted awareness 74%). Recognition of other media was a little better than in the general election campaign but worse than the Northern Ireland registration campaign (but these differences do not seem important).

At Wave 3, 35% said they had seen the leaflet and 22% claimed to have read it. This is a positive result compared to most direct mail recall. But, considering the imminence of the election, the large amount of surrounding media and PR coverage and the fact that this leaflet was delivered to every household in Scotland, it seems a disappointing result. But again, people could well have been confused by all the other stimuli to which they had been exposed, including those seen on polling day, when the measurement was taken. Certainly, there were many who both read and acted on the leaflet, since it was the claimed source of nearly 5,000 calls to the call centre.

Recognition of these media differs little between demographic subgroups. However, older people (especially 65+) were more likely than younger to recognise the television advertising at Wave 3, whereas the reverse was the case for radio; newspapers were read about equally. This of course confirms the wisdom of using a mix of media to reach the population. The leaflet was `seen and read' more by ABC1s than C2DEs, and more by older than younger people: the difference between 65+ (31%) and 18-24 (11%) was statistically significant. Conversely, though, more younger people than older people claimed to have seen the leaflet but not read it.

In general, apart from minor differences between specific media as noted above, all the media used reached all demographic subgroups to about the same extent. No subgroup was missed out by the campaign as a whole.
5. Campaign results: evaluation of the motivational and registration campaign

5.1 Awareness of the election date

At Wave 2 (at the end of March), 24% of tracking survey respondents were aware of the May 3rd election date. This is double the proportion at Wave 1, but still only a quarter of the population. 67% knew the election was some time in May, without knowing the precise date, again an increase from Wave 1 (59%). 30% did not know any date (down from 36%).

Those aged 18-24, were much less aware: only 13% knew the 3rd May date at Wave 2; 50% knew it was sometime in May (up from 39%), 47% (down from 57%) did not know. Thus the youngest age group shifted by about 10 percentage points, but from a lower level than the total sample.

Those who had not registered to vote were the least likely to be aware of the date. 15% knew May 3rd (up from only 5%), 42% said any May, and half did not know (little change from Wave 1).

We do not know from the tracking study how this knowledge continued to build as the date got closer after Wave 2, because Wave 3 was not conducted until after the election was over. It would have been interesting to learn to what extent people, especially people within certain categories, were less than 100% aware of the election date immediately before it. However, we do know from the website and call centre records that activity built up before both the registration deadline and the election date, demonstrating that as each of these dates approached awareness grew rapidly as media and PR activity increased (see section 5.4).

5.2 Awareness of whom the election was for

32% at Wave 2 knew that the elections were for both the Scottish Parliament and local councils. This is again a significant increase from the pre-wave (17%), but still only a third of the electorate. Others said one or the other, with more awareness of the Parliament than of the local elections. The campaign increased knowledge of the local election (from 24% to 40%, again significant) but not of the Parliamentary election (about half at both waves). Over a third said ‘don’t know’ at both waves.

Again, those under 24 showed a lower level of knowledge at Wave 2, with 14% naming both elections (up from a tiny 4% at the pre-wave).

Again, we have no knowledge of how this awareness built towards 100% by election day, because Wave 3 was conducted after polling.
5.3 Knowledge of eligibility to vote and the need to register

Young people were least likely to have registered. While nine tenths of the general population said they were registered (definitely or probably) at both waves, only two thirds of young people said they were (again at both waves).

The campaign by Wave 2 made only a small difference to the knowledge of how to register. Nearly two thirds at the pre-wave survey said correctly that only those who were registered in advance could vote; most of the remaining third thought that all you had to do was turn up on the day with proof of identity. The campaign by Wave 2 only shifted this proportion by four percentage points. Again the youngest age group showed less awareness, and shifted by the same amount. By Wave 2, 45% of those who had not yet registered understood what to do, almost the same level as Wave 1 (48%).

It has to be remembered that the PR campaign could well have made a substantial difference to the baseline levels of awareness at Wave 1.

The campaign appears to have made virtually no difference to general understanding of how to go about registration, again comparing Waves 1 and 2. At both waves, about a quarter said they didn’t know (just over a third of 18-24s), and small percentages mentioned the helpline, the website or contacting the Scottish Executive. Unregistered respondents (or those who were not sure if they were registered or not) responded similarly at both waves, with higher proportions saying ‘don’t know’ (40% in Wave 1, 37% in Wave 2, a small improvement). However, a better idea of how well the campaign stimulated registration can be obtained by looking at the evidence from website visits and calls to the call centre: this shows that the campaign was effective in leading to relevant activity.

5.4 Website visits up to registration day

Website visits increased at an accelerating rate during the course of the registration campaign, and referrals to the Aboutmyvote.co.uk site, from which a registration form could be downloaded, increased even faster. Table 1 compares the two sets of visits and referrals month by month, in numbers and indexed against the January level.

While the PR campaign was operating during February, it is clear that the decisive upward shift (up to registration date on 18th April) coincided with the media advertising. In the final weeks before the registration deadline on 18th April, referrals to Aboutmyvote.co.uk built to a level 30 times above normal, as shown in January. After the deadline, from April 19th onwards, visits to Votescotland.com continued to increase as interest grew in the voting procedure, but average referrals to Aboutmyvote.co.uk dropped sharply. This can only reflect the fact that there was no need any longer to access a registration form.
Appendix C

Table 1. Website visits by date

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Votescotland.com Average daily visits</th>
<th>Aboutmyvote.co.uk Average daily referrals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 1-15</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 16-30</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 1-15</td>
<td>885</td>
<td>805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 16-31</td>
<td>937</td>
<td>852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 1-18</td>
<td>1337</td>
<td>1215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 19-21</td>
<td>2877</td>
<td>2615</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was confirming evidence from the call centre analysis, which showed a peak of calls on April 18th. Over the whole two months from 3rd March to 4th May, the call centre registered 9501 enquiries. In comparison, the three months run-up to the 2005 general election produced 1845 calls from Scotland. Thus, calls to the helpline were up more than five times from a `normal’ pre-election period, which certainly must have reflected the publicity. Calls were almost equally split between men and women, and 7% of them came from the 18-24 age group (which was the most likely to be unregistered).

April 18th was also the final date for postal voting applications, which would also have contributed to the upsurge in website visits. According to the call centre, 42% of items despatched in answer to enquiries were registration forms, 41% were applications for postal vote, and 8% were applications to vote by proxy.

5.5 Attitudes to voting

Between Wave 1 and Wave 2 of the tracking survey there were only modest increases in the percentages claiming they would be likely to vote. Overall, 53% said they would be certain to vote before the campaign started, and this rose by four percentage point to 57% at Wave 2. Additionally 14% (13% at Wave 2) said they would be very likely to vote. As usual, levels for the 18-24 age group were lower, quite substantially (14% certain to vote, rising to 20% at Wave 2).

Those who were aware of the campaign were significantly more likely to vote at Wave 2 than those were unaware. However, this is not a clear proof of cause and effect, since it is probable that respondents who were already alert to the election and intending to vote would have been more likely to notice the advertising.
There was virtually no movement in the specific attitudes towards voting which were measured, relating to the messages in the campaign: that it was important people should vote, that voting shows you care about Scotland and about your local community, and disagreement that one’s vote would make little difference or be a waste of time. Improvements in all these measures were one or two percentage points at best.

While this may seem disappointing, it should be borne in mind that the base position at Wave 1 is already high. Over half the population, before the campaign, expressed firm intentions to vote. In the event, higher percentages than this actually voted, including among the target group of younger people. It is questionable how much weight one can put on expressed intentions of this kind. There is a hard core who will not be persuaded, and a larger group who would rather not admit that they would take such a campaign seriously. With these considerations, the modest improvements in voting intention we see here could well be the best one could reasonably have hoped for.

As for the measured attitudes to voting, at Wave 1 (before the campaign) the proportions agreeing that it was important people should vote, that voting shows you care about Scotland and about your local community were already very high, nearly nine tenths, and the proportions disagreeing that one’s vote would make little difference or be a waste of time, though not quite so high, were around 70%. Scope for increase in these measures was therefore very small, even with the most powerful campaign.

There is some doubt, however, about the value of this kind of standard agree-disagree scale for measuring emotional impact. Many people will tend, in front of an interviewer, to put a ‘positive spin’ on their answers to make themselves appear acceptable. It tells us nothing about the degree to which people feel enthusiastic or apathetic, and whether the campaign increased their excitement or ‘engagement’ (to use a fashionable word), for example in Scottish pride. Emotional measurement is an area undergoing intensive development these days in market research, and it would be good to apply some of this new learning to election campaigns.
6. Campaign results: evaluation of the information on how to vote

6.1 What people had to learn

Development research had made it clear that the message should be kept as simple as possible: just to show voters that there were two ballot papers, what they would look like and the different ways each should be filled in, in one case with two crosses, in the other with a series of rank order numbers. There was no attempt in the campaign to explain the workings of AMS or STV, which would certainly have confused many people. Anyone who wanted more information was referred either to the call centre number or to the website. The website included an animated game which people could play with dummy candidates, to illustrate how the systems worked; it was hoped these would appeal especially to young people and first-time voters. In total, the voting games were played almost 10,000 times and the polling place walkthrough visited almost 13,000 times. The campaign kept away from theory and concentrated on showing the process, what people would have to do.

The leaflet, dropped on every household between 16th and 29th April, was the key element in this demonstration. It was supported by the PR coverage (especially in national and local newspapers and their websites), by the media campaign lead-in after April 9th, by more detailed explanations in the media (mirroring the leaflet) after April 23rd, by the field and truck operations, and by on-site posters and information officers in the polling places. Also, more than half of the coverage in March and April (when it trebled) featured information on how to vote, up from lower proportions in January-February. The informational part of the campaign thus built to a crescendo during the final 2-2.5 weeks before polling day. The logic behind this was very clear: the information people needed to know would be fresh in their minds when they came to vote; earlier peaking would have run a considerable risk of being mentally filed away (at best) and forgotten in the face of other new interests.

As far as we can tell from the evidence, both the creative and media strategies for this phase of the campaign, centring on the leaflet, were effective. But this is shown more clearly by the website and call centre records than by the tracking survey.

6.2 Evidence from the website and the call centre

Table 2 shows the average numbers of site visits and also page views in different time periods. It shows how interest gradually built during March, increased rapidly up to registration day (April 18th), and then more than doubled after the leaflet distribution began.

Following the leaflet distribution, nearly 5,000 enquiries were received by the call centre quoting the leaflet as their source. This was far more than any other medium.
During the whole two months from March through to May, the leaflet was given as the media source by callers far more frequently than television or other media.

Clearly, therefore, the leaflet stimulated people to action, to find out more. But, unfortunately, the proportion responding by taking action were, as always, a tiny proportion of the electorate as a whole, and we have no means of knowing who they were or how many of them came from the target groups the planners were most anxious to reach. Nor do we know from these data how the large majority who did not visit the website or call the helpline reacted to the information.

Table 2. Average daily visits and page views to Votescotland.com

|                | Votescotland.com |                 | Votescotland.com |                 |
|----------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
|                | Average daily visits | Average page views |
|                | Number | Index | Number | Index |
| January        | 110     | 100   | 492    | 100   |
| Feb 1-15       | 154     | 140   | 853    | 173   |
| Feb 16-30      | 208     | 189   | 733    | 149   |
| Mar 1-15       | 885     | 805   | 992    | 202   |
| Mar 16-31      | 937     | 852   | 3639   | 740   |
| Apr 1-18       | 1337    | 1215  | 6018   | 1223  |
| Apr 16-May 3   | 2,859   | 2599  | 13,161 | 2675  |

The field and truck teams, who were targeting young people especially, issued a large number of leaflets both on voting procedures and registration. But again, we do not know how many of their visitors were the apathetic ones whom the campaign most needed to reach.

6.3 Responses from the tracking study

Unfortunately, as already explained, the evidence from Wave 3 of the tracking study was compromised because the questions were asked after respondents had actually cast their votes. We can only guess at the contribution the leaflet and advertising had made to their ability to do so correctly. However, in spite of this source of confusion, it seems at least likely that the publicity, and especially the leaflet, did make a significant difference in conveying information.

First, consider what respondents knew at Wave 1 and Wave 2, before the informational advertising started (but after the PR campaign had been going for some weeks).
Two points are clear from Table 3. First, there was virtually no change in understanding between Waves 1 and 2. Secondly, misunderstanding was widespread. For the Scottish Parliament, half the sample knew the correct answer (2 crosses). But a third wrongly thought that the rank order method would be used for the Parliament. A third rightly understood that the two systems would be different, and a quarter thought that a new system was being introduced; although the AMS method was not strictly new, having been used in the previous Scottish Parliament election, 2007 was the first time both regional and constituency votes had been put on the same ballot paper, so people would see it as a new process. For the council elections, only a third got the right answer (rank order). This is understandable, since the introduction of STV for the council elections was the real change. Only a quarter (rising slightly) were aware that a new system was being introduced here. And a huge three quarters still believed that the old method (cross beside candidate chosen) would be used for the council elections.

**Table 3. Knowledge of voting procedures before the how-to-vote advertising (%)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TRUE Wave 1</th>
<th>Wave 2</th>
<th>FALSE Wave 1</th>
<th>Wave 2</th>
<th>DON’T KNOW Wave 1</th>
<th>Wave 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scottish Parliament</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark choices with 2 crosses, one for constituency vote and one for regional vote</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank candidates in order of preference</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New system being introduced</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System different from voting for councils</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local councils</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank candidates in order of preference</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put cross beside candidate you support</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New system being introduced</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compare now against Wave 3, after the informational advertising and the leaflet (Table 4).
Three quarters or above now knew the correct procedures for both elections, that the two systems were different, and that the system for local councils was new. People also spotted (perhaps not until they entered the polling booth) that the AMS voting system for the Scottish Parliament was a new process, using a single ballot paper, and thus different from AMS as previously used.

But there is still much confusion. Although improvement in understanding is large (and statistically significant), there are still 15% or so who `don’t know’. These are of course predominantly those who did not vote.

An analysis of the Wave 3 answers by whether respondents had or had not voted (the latter were a quarter of the sample) is interesting. Correct answers were given by around 85-90% of voters, but only about half of non-voters, only a little better than the levels at Wave 2 (actually worse in the case of the Scottish Parliament method). Similarly, voters were more likely than non-voters to recognise the false statements as false; again, the non-voters gave answers little better than Wave 2. These are big differences, but how far they are due to the experience of voting or simply to the general apathy of non-voters remains uncertain. It is salutary to note that at Wave 3, even among those who claimed to have voted within the previous week, 29% gave the wrong answer for the Scottish Parliament procedure (i.e. said the wrong method was true) and 31% gave the wrong answer for the local council procedure, plus 7% in both cases saying `don’t know’.

Table 4. Knowledge of voting procedures after the how-to-vote advertising (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TRUE Wave 2</th>
<th>Wave 3</th>
<th>FALSE Wave 2</th>
<th>Wave 3</th>
<th>DON’T KNOW Wave 2</th>
<th>Wave 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scottish Parliament</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark choices with 2 crosses, one for constituency vote and one for regional vote</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank candidates in order of preference</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New system being introduced</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System different from voting for councils</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local councils</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank candidates in order of preference</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put cross beside candidate you support</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New system being introduced</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This shows the degree of confusion that can lie behind apparently clear-cut answers, because the correct answers among voters (84% for the Parliament and 89% for the local council saying the correct system was true) are not consistent: it means that 13% (for the Parliament) and 20% (for the council) of those who had actually voted gave both the right and the wrong answer as ‘true’.

The youngest age group (18-24) were least likely to have voted, but even so, 44% of them claimed to have voted.

Another interesting analysis compares these answers between those who said they had and had not seen the advertising (a third of the sample). Correct answers were given by about 10% more when people had seen advertising: two thirds or more of those who had not seen advertising still gave correct answers. Again, we cannot be sure how far these findings were affected by people’s experience of actually voting or by the PR campaign, but they do suggest that the advertising had some effect.

### 6.4 Did the publicity affect constituencies differently?

The University of Strathclyde report on ballot rejection states clearly that there is a strong relationship between rejection and the social context within constituencies, in particular relative deprivation. It is reasonable to ask, therefore, whether there is any relationship discernible between ballot rejection levels and the impact of the communication campaign. A possible hypothesis, for example, might be that constituencies with relatively high rejection rates might show less result from the campaign, suggesting that this type of communication, intended to be general across the country, has more difficulty in making an impact in more deprived areas.

We have therefore examined the Wave 2 and Wave 3 tracking study results broken down by constituencies. This is necessarily a somewhat tentative procedure, for two reasons. First, the sample sizes within each constituency sampled are very small (on average around 20-25), so that they have to be grouped together for any meaningful study. Secondly, the constituencies actually covered in the omnibus surveys do not include all the constituencies in the country, and are not an exact match between the waves.

Table 5 compares the waves between two constituency groups, those with rejection rates of 4% or over and those with rejection rates under 4%. Table 6 on another page shows a more detailed breakdown. From Table 6, one can see that even with this level of grouping there is a good deal of variation, and interpretation is not straightforward.
### Table 5. Beliefs at Wave 3 compared to Wave 2, by constituencies grouped by % failed ballots

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of rejects</th>
<th>4% and over</th>
<th></th>
<th>Under 4%</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wave 2</td>
<td>Wave 3</td>
<td>Wave 3 - 2</td>
<td>Wave 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>417</td>
<td></td>
<td>578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scottish Parliament - True</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark choices with 2 crosses, one for constituency vote and one for regional vote</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>51</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System different from voting for councils</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New system being introduced</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scottish Parliament - False</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank candidates in order of preference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local councils - True</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank candidates in order of preference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New system being introduced</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local councils - False</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put cross beside candidate you support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>74</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>-43</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spontaneous awareness of ads</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nevertheless, these tables make clear that the hypothesis that high rejection levels are associated with poor reception of the communication does not hold. If anything, the reverse seems to be the case. Respondents from constituencies where there were high rejection levels were more likely, it seems, to have absorbed the message from the advertising and the leaflet, and they were also more likely to spontaneously remember the advertising (they were not, however, more likely to recognise it). The high levels of rejection cannot therefore realistically be attributed to failure of the campaign to put the message across. There must have been other factors at play.
A possible partial explanation for the apparently greater responsiveness in the constituencies with higher rejection levels could be that these areas were targeted by the field and truck teams. However, there is no clear evidence to support this. Analysis of the field marketing visits shows that of the 26 visits made to city centres serving constituencies in the Wave 3 sample, 14 were to the 18 constituencies with rejection levels over 4%, and 11 were to the 35 constituencies below the 4% level (the remaining visit was Paisley, which had one constituency above and one below). This suggests that field marketers did to some degree target what were thought to be ‘difficult’ areas. The truck and Voyager roadshow covered the country more widely and cannot be matched so neatly to the surveyed constituencies, but here too there were repeated visits to the major cities Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen. However, the field teams have reported that they had great difficulty engaging with members of the public when they visited areas with high deprivation.

When inside the polling place (see next section), voters in the constituencies with higher rejection levels seemed to display more confidence, because they were less likely to speak to an information officer for help. In constituencies with rejection levels of 4% or over, 44% said they spoke to an information officer; in those below 4%, 61% did so. Where rejection was over 5%, 42% spoke to an information officer. There were no differences in claimed noticing of the posters or information stands on display.

How do we interpret this finding? It seems counterintuitive that people in the constituencies with the highest rejection levels (and, as we know, more social deprivation) should display more confidence and knowledge of the advertising and its message. One possible explanation could be that in these places there are more people who are unwilling to admit confusion (certainly to an interviewer) or who think they know what to do without having thought it through properly, or who are simply unaware that they have misunderstood the process, or are slapdash about voting. Without more detailed research this can only be speculation. Whatever the reason, we can say with some confidence that high rejection has not been driven by a lack of exposure to the advertising or failure to understand the core messages.

6.5 Glasgow and Lothian

In the Glasgow and Lothian regions, it turned out that the list of parties and individual candidates to be printed in the regional section of the Scottish Parliament ballot paper was too long to fit into the agreed design. To accommodate the list, the design was therefore changed. The redesign affected the heading of the ballot paper, including removal of the two arrows pointing voters to the two columns where they were to place one vote in each. 19 constituencies were affected by this change.
The decision to change was not made until April 11th, and the Electoral Commission was informed of the change only on April 17th. This was clearly too late to make targeted changes to the advertising materials. The leaflet doordrop was already in progress. Press and TV advertising could not be targeted only to those constituencies where there was a change. Polling place materials had gone to print and it was too late to change those. It was decided that to send out a new PR message at this stage would only confuse voters. There was therefore nothing much the Commission could do apart from using some of the local press advertising (which was being boosted in these final weeks) and relying on the information officers in the polling places plus the public awareness work which was part of the remit of local returning officers.

The affected constituencies are among those most affected by ballot rejection (and therefore, since they are correlated, by measures of social deprivation). At Wave 2, the Glasgow and Lothian constituencies measured had an average rejection rate of 6.7 (range between 4.3 and 10.2), whereas for the remainder the average rejection rate was 3.8 (range 1.9 to 5.4). At Wave 3, the average rejection rate for the Glasgow and Lothian constituencies was 6.3 (range 4.1 to 9.8), and for the remainder 3.3 (range 1.9 to 5.0). 11 constituencies in the Wave 2 sample and 14 in the Wave 3 sample were affected by the ballot paper change.
Table 6. Awareness of advertising and beliefs, Glasgow and Lothian compared with other constituencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Base</th>
<th>Wave 2</th>
<th>Wave 3</th>
<th>Wave 3 - Wave 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Glasgow &amp; Lothian</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>Glasgow &amp; Lothian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Base 259</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Base 732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Parliament - True</td>
<td>58 48</td>
<td></td>
<td>77 72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark choices with 2 crosses, one for constituency vote and one for regional vote</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System different from voting for councils</td>
<td>42 42</td>
<td></td>
<td>83 82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Parliament - False</td>
<td>40 31</td>
<td></td>
<td>25 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank candidates in order of preference</td>
<td>34 26</td>
<td></td>
<td>58 63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New system being introduced</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local councils - True</td>
<td>34 32</td>
<td></td>
<td>74 82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank candidates in order of preference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New system being introduced</td>
<td>32 29</td>
<td></td>
<td>84 78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local councils - False</td>
<td>78 73</td>
<td></td>
<td>25 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put cross beside candidate you support</td>
<td>42 52</td>
<td></td>
<td>70 65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spontaneous awareness of ads</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparison between these two groups of constituencies in the tracking waves suggests that Glasgow and Lothian did not suffer any disadvantage in terms of receiving communication. This is consistent with the general finding in the previous section (6.4). Spontaneous awareness of the advertising was lower in Glasgow and Lothian at Wave 2 but grew more, so that by Wave 3 it was if anything higher than elsewhere. Recognition of specific media was much the same at each wave, except that at Wave 3 recognition of the television advertising had improved in Glasgow and Lothian relative to the rest of the country (46% compared with 37%). This is consistent with the thinking which informed the original media plan, that constituencies where there were deprivation problems (and in which fewer people, perhaps, were inclined to read advertising material) would respond better to messages on television.
Knowledge of the voting systems, as Table 7 shows, improved in both groups but, again, somewhat more in Glasgow and Lothian, especially in awareness of which ideas were false.

6.6 The polling place materials

The media and leaflet campaign was reinforced by posters placed outside polling places and also inside, within polling booths. Additionally, at each polling place, information officers were briefed to provide help when asked. The posters carried detailed illustrations of how to fill in the ballot papers, similar to those in the leaflet.

It is difficult to separate out the effect of these on-site materials from the rest of the campaign, because all were measured only after voting. TNS System Three carried out a fourth tracking wave to look specifically at these elements, three weeks after polling day (fieldwork 24th to 27th May). There was also the post-election survey by GfK NOP (fieldwork 4th to 16th May) on attitudes to voting, but including some questions about how easy voters had found the process and whether the on-site materials were useful.

In the TNS Wave 4 survey, 59% had voted (about a third of 18-24s). Of those who had voted (592 unweighted sample), just over half (including among young people) said they had spoken to an information officer. Nine tenths of those who had done so said they had found it helpful. The main reason given by the remainder for not speaking to an information officer was ‘I felt I already knew how to fill out my ballot papers correctly’, which suggests that this was likely to have been the main reason for consultation.

Just over half of voters (56%) remembered seeing the poster in the polling place, slightly fewer (48%) the information stand, and 63% one or the other. Again, there were similar levels across all subgroups, including young voters. This lack of recognition may be at least partly because whether and how the polling place materials were displayed was not controlled centrally, but relied on local authority staff displaying them. The GfK NOP study, which was conducted closer to the election date, found that eight out of ten voters at a polling place (503 unweighted sample) said they had found ‘help and information provided at the polling station’ very or fairly useful. Similar proportions of all those who had voted for the Scottish Parliament and for the local elections also said they had found the process of filling in the ballot papers easy or fairly easy. That meant that a remainder of some 10-15% in both cases did not find it easy, and they said this was because they were confused for various reasons. Three quarters of all voters thought that using the two voting systems was very or fairly easy.

The Glasgow and Lothian constituencies in the TNS sample showed a weaker response to these questions than the others, which contrasts with their apparent reception of the campaign (Table 8).
This would be consistent with a hypothesis that voters in these areas were more confident; but, again, this can only be speculation without more detailed research. In this survey wave, the average rejection rates in the constituencies covered was 7.3% in Glasgow and Lothian (range 4.1 to 12.1, 11 constituencies) and 3.3 elsewhere (range 1.9 to 5.4, 32 constituencies).

Table 7. Effects of on-site materials, Glasgow and Lothian compared with other constituencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-election wave</th>
<th>Glasgow &amp; Lothian</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>155</td>
<td>438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoke to information officer</td>
<td>% 42</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saw poster at polling place</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saw pop-up/information stand at polling place</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Conclusions and recommendations

7.1 Conclusions

7.1.1 Planning

The campaign was comprehensive, thoroughly planned and executed. The creative content and execution in different media was well researched during development. The decision to use many different media together with effective PR was clearly sensible. So was the decision to roll out the campaign in stages, first leading up to the final day for registration on April 18th, and only after that building increasing focus on the central objective of conveying information about the complex new voting procedure. The campaign used television, radio, press, posters, internet, field marketing teams, a truck roadshow, a leaflet delivered to every household, and posters and other information sources at the polling places. Media advertising directed attention to the information leaflet and also to a call centre and a website for those who wanted more information or assistance. The PR campaign, which preceded the media campaign and continued throughout it, was clearly effective in gaining wide media co-operation and providing support.

7.1.2 Creative treatment

Besides generating awareness and interest in the elections, the campaign had two specific objectives: to encourage registration (by those who needed to do it) in time for the deadline on April 18th, and to inform on the voting processes, which were new and being run together for the first time. This important informational objective was the focus of the final 2-3 weeks of the campaign, and its centrepiece was the information leaflet, delivered to every household and supported by all the media activity, special events and increased PR. The design of the leaflet (which was reflected in the other media illustrations) was researched with care. This research confirmed the importance of using a simple, clear illustration which showed people the process (‘what you have to do’) without going into the complex details of the electoral procedures. The evidence suggests that the leaflet was particularly effective as a means of conveying this information as well as stimulating further enquiry.
7.1.3 The tracking research

To evaluate the advertising, tracking surveys were used. These are a common procedure for monitoring the impact of advertising campaigns on the awareness and attitudes, etc., of a target audience. They also measure how these effects build (or not) over time, and therefore the number and timing of tracking measurements is crucial. There were three tracking waves. The first took place, rightly, before the start of the campaign (although there had already been a PR background for some time). The second wave was conducted at the end of March, shortly before the final registration date and before the start of the information campaign, with the aim of measuring growth of interest in the election and understanding of the need for registration and how to achieve it. The third wave took place immediately after election day and was designed to measure the impact of the information on how to vote, by comparison with Wave 2. In principle, this before-and-after design is reasonable and normal practice. The ideal measure, where one can compare before-after shifts against a control sample not exposed to the advertising, was clearly not possible here, since the campaign covered all of Scotland. The alternative of a continuous measure (sampling every week through the campaign) would have been more expensive and would not have given a more clear-cut result.

7.1.4 Timing of Wave 3

However, this report concludes that it was a major error to put Wave 3 into the field only after the election itself. It meant that one cannot be certain to what extent the increase in knowledge of the ballot papers and the voting procedures during April, as measured in Wave 3 compared with Wave 2, were due to the leaflet and other communications as opposed to the more recent experience of the election itself, and exposure to the actual ballot papers as well as the advertising at polling places. It also made it impossible to measure any change occurring up to the election itself in awareness of the election and attitudes to voting. The reason for this decision is understood, that there would not have been time to fit in fieldwork between the final build-up of the advertising and the election date, and the difficulty is appreciated, but a compromise would have been possible. Wave 3 could have been put into the field during 1-2 weeks before the election date, and a fourth wave immediately afterwards with additional questions to assess awareness and impact of the materials on-site (a fourth wave was in fact fielded for this purpose, but not until the end of May, after the impact of the polling place advertising might have been expected to fade). These two waves could have been analysed as one for some purposes, but would have allowed a break to see how far the experience of the election itself added to awareness and knowledge; if it made little difference, that in itself would have been important learning for the future.
Appendix C

7.1.5 Election awareness

By the end of March, when Wave 2 was taken, there had been some increases in awareness of the election, its date and what the elections would be for. But these increases were quite modest: high proportions still did not know. The most ignorant group, as expected, were the young (aged 18-24); they too increased in awareness, by about the same proportion as everyone else. There was little or no difference in claimed intentions to vote between February and March, and little apparent change in attitudes to voting. However, there are doubts whether the questions asked on these subjects, which were traditional in form, are subtle enough to capture true feelings about voting.

7.1.6 Registration

From the tracking study at Wave 2, it appears that the media campaign made little or no difference to understanding of the need for registration and how to do it, including among the chief target, the 18-24s. However, it is clear from the record of website visits (including to Aboutmyvote.co.uk, the site from which registration forms could be downloaded) that there was indeed a big increase in interest in registration which coincided with the media campaign. In the final weeks before the final day for registration, visits to this website had increased 30 times. Call centre records confirm this picture, showing an increase of five times the number of calls during March-April compared with the three months before the 2005 general election; from the materials despatched these were as likely to have been about registration as postal voting. It looks therefore as if the campaign did help to stimulate registration, but the tracking study has not measured this effectively. It should be remembered here that nine in ten survey respondents at Wave 2 said they were already (definitely or probably) registered, and even among young people nearly two thirds claimed this.

7.1.7 Knowledge of the voting procedures

The website and the call centre again showed clear evidence of impact of the leaflet and the supporting informational campaign. In the final fortnight before the election, visits to the Votescotland.com website were 26 times the normal level, and there was a clear build-up during March and April. The call centre recorded a large volume of calls quoting the leaflet as source. The tracking study also showed substantial increases in knowledge of voting procedures at Wave 3 compared to Wave 2, whereas there had been virtually no change between Waves 2 and 1. This is highly likely to reflect some success of the campaign in penetrating peoples’ consciousness, although because of the timing of Wave 3 after the election we cannot assess how much.
There was some evidence that voters on the day had noticed the posters and other materials, and/or had spoken to information officers and found them helpful. The study by GfK NOP, which took place immediately after election day (unlike the fourth TNS System Three wave), found that eight out of ten voters had found information at the polling place useful. But still, some 10-15% did not claim the voting process, for either election, was easy and the reasons they gave were various kinds of confusion.

7.1.8 Knowledge of voting procedures in areas with high rejection rates

The possibility has been considered that claimed understanding of the voting procedures, and improvement in these between Waves 2 and Three from the tracking study, might have been less in those constituencies which had higher ballot rejection rates (which, from other evidence, is strongly related to social deprivation levels). This has been done by grouping constituencies from the tracking samples into broad rejection-rate bands and repercentaging, since samples from individual constituencies are too small to look at separately. The constituencies in each wave did not precisely match, so this procedure is tentative. Nevertheless, it seems clear the hypothesis does not hold. If anything, the reverse is true. Respondents from constituencies with higher rejection levels were more likely to have become more aware of the advertising and to have correctly understood the differences between the two voting procedures; they were also less likely to have asked an information officer for help, indicating greater confidence. One can think of various reasons for this at first sight paradoxical result, but without further research these must be speculative. Whatever the reason, we can say with some confidence that high rejection has not been driven by a lack of exposure to the advertising or failure to understand its core messages.

7.2 Recommendations for future campaigns

7.2.1

The campaign as a whole, its creative development, its use of multi-media and PR and its build-up in phases to meet its different objectives were well thought through and thoroughly researched, and there are no recommendations to make here. As far as we can tell, objectives were achieved. The recommendations below concern the evaluation and measurement of the communication results, where we believe some improvements are possible.
Appendix C

7.2.2

The way tracking studies are designed should be re-examined. The use of an existing omnibus survey sampling scheme is economical, but more attention needs to be given to how it represents the area to be covered. Whilst the campaign objectives were indeed country-wide, attention needs to be paid to different voting areas where there is reason to expect differences in response to a campaign and resulting actions. There is nothing wrong with boosting samples for a better coverage of areas or demographic groups about which there are reasons for concern, so long as they are analysed separately from the overall weighted samples.

7.2.3

The timing mistake should not be repeated. The final tracking measurement of the campaign should be conducted in the field before, not after, the election itself. If it is necessary to measure the effects of advertising or other factors in the polling place itself, this should be done in a separate exercise after the election day. A good option could be a double final wave, half just before and half just after the election date, which would enable the election day effects to be separated out in analysis from the pre-election communication effects.

7.2.4

It would be advisable to investigate in further research the accuracy of the apparent finding that voters in constituencies with higher rejection rates were more likely to have correctly understood the information about the voting process (or at least claimed to do so) and were more confident, with less inclination to seek help. It would probably need a qualitative research programme.

7.2.5

It would help also to know more about who the people are who visit websites: are they different and where do they come from? More information would also be useful about those who ring call centres, although in this case demographic details are recorded. The reason for wanting more information about these ‘activists’ is so that we can assess how far they are typical of the doubtless much larger group who may have problems understanding the messages but do not investigate further. Are there groups whom we could identify who are not being effectively reached by these campaigns at all? The evaluation we have does not throw much light on this question.
7.2.6

Attention should be given to questionnaire design and wording, making use of the advances that are being made nowadays (and reported in many published research papers) in the measurement of emotional responses to advertising. The traditional attitude scale type of question, in particular, may not be well suited to capturing how people really feel about ideas such as ‘national pride’. Other methods (projective, ethnographic etc.) are increasingly being used successfully.

7.2.7

This report is also not convinced that the ‘true or false’ questions that were used to measure people’s knowledge of the two voting systems necessarily gave the best picture of what they really knew or how much they were confused, and it is suggested that other approaches might be explored. As an example, one might take, at different stages in a campaign, observations of samples of people filling in a mock-up ballot paper in something approaching real conditions (or even in a CAPI interview), and measuring not only who and how many get it right but how difficult they appear to find it (and why).

7.2.8

If methods such as field marketing teams and truck-based roadshows are used again, some method should be put in place to evaluate their specific contribution. As it is, although they probably had some useful effect, it is quite impossible to know what it was. Such evaluation would have to look specifically at the places they visited and how those places changed before and after, perhaps by local research among relevant groups.