



'Democracy Drive', Patrick Malone, Greenwich Libraries

WHY?

In the 2019 General Election, the voter turnout for the Greenwich and Woolwich constituency was **66.4%** This was slightly below the national average of **67.3%** for that election.

2024 first time voters needed voter ID.

Woolwich, like many areas with similar socioeconomic profiles, faces challenges with both general literacy and digital literacy. The UK Literacy Trust reports that people with low literacy skills often struggle with everyday tasks such as reading signs, filling out forms, or using digital technologies.

What?

- Library staff trained by the electoral department in registering the public for voter ID and checking they are on the electoral register.
- Created a mobile exhibition that toured the area promoting voter registration.
- Six week art therapy programme with WSUP, for an exhibition on the theme of 'Democracy'
- Prior to the start of the programme my colleague and I asked WSUP members (our partner charity) if they voted and if they didn't why they choose not to or why couldn't they.

VOTER ID SUPPORT

Greenwich Libraries are here to support with your voter registration. Our trained staff are on hand to support you to apply for your Voter ID. Please note that you will need your National Insurance number to be able to complete this.

Contact your local library to find out more.



And then?

- 113 members of the public used our services to register for a voter ID and/or check if they were on the electoral register.
- Successful exhibition held at Woolwich Works, with local artists, many sold their works
- in the 2024 General Election, the turnout in the Greenwich and Woolwich constituency was 58.8%

Next chapter...

- Public libraries can and should be political in a neutral and meaningful way. We should treat political literacy the same as we do literacy and digital literacy.
- Where there is a knowledge gap and/or resource gap we plug it.
- Voting has been in decline as more information and news sources have proliferated. 1950s election turnout was 83.9%, 1997 it was 71.4% and now we are at 60%

Political Literacy

- **The role of local and national government** - National Government (through the Department for Work and Pensions, DWP) is responsible for administering and funding national benefits like Universal Credit, Jobseeker's Allowance, and State Pension, which are consistent across the whole country. Local Governments (local councils) administer locally controlled benefits such as Housing Benefit
- **First past the post voting system** - The money that UK political parties receive for securing votes, even if they don't win, is known as Short Money.
- **How the home office operates** - The UK's points-based immigration system was introduced on January 1, 2021, following the end of the Brexit transition period.

Democracy Drive

Do political parties receive funding for votes received in general elections even in they are not the winning party?

Yes they recieve Short Money

No they do not

Finish