

Empowering Immigrant Voters: Political Engagement and Electoral Participation in England



Unleashing
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Potential



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Abstract

This report provides a qualitative analysis of survey and discussion responses assessing political engagement among individuals in England. The survey explored awareness of voting rights, participation in local elections, sources of information, barriers to voting, and suggestions for improvement. Findings indicate high awareness of voting rights but varied participation, with barriers such as logistical issues and lack of understanding hindering engagement. Key insights include the effectiveness of personal networks in disseminating information and a strong interest in educational initiatives. Recommendations to enhance political engagement include providing multilingual information, organising community events, addressing logistical barriers, and conducting targeted awareness campaigns. Implementing these measures can foster a more engaged and informed electorate, contributing to a more inclusive democratic process.

Introduction

This report aims to provide a comprehensive qualitative analysis of political engagement among individuals in England based on a detailed survey and discussion capturing a wide range of responses. The research focused on critical aspects such as awareness of voting rights, participation in local elections, information sources, voting barriers, and suggestions for improvement. By examining these responses, the report identifies common themes, patterns, and insights that reflect the respondents' current political awareness, participation, and sentiment. The analysis highlights the strengths and areas for improvement, offering a nuanced understanding of the factors influencing political engagement. This report aims to inform efforts to foster a more engaged and informed electorate, addressing the identified challenges and leveraging existing strengths to enhance democratic participation in England.

Methodology

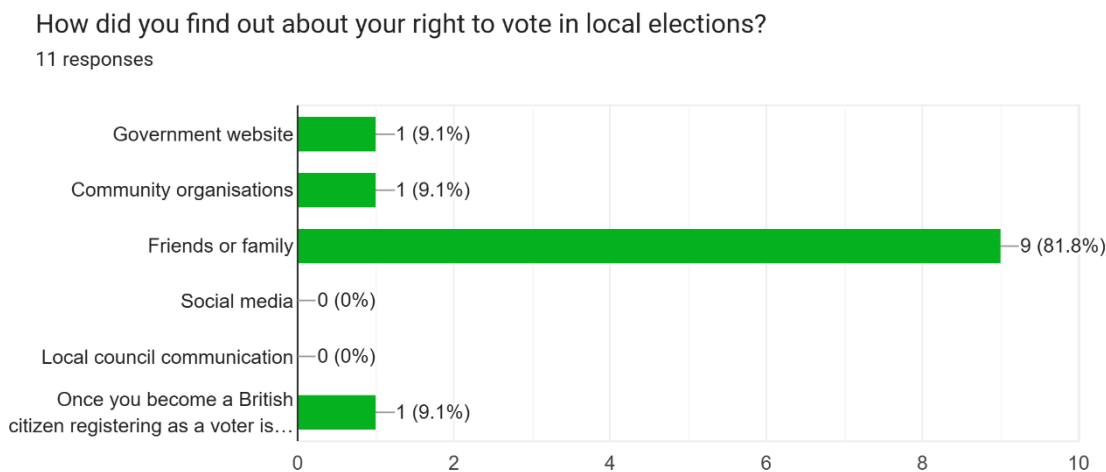
The data was collected through a Google Sheet survey (eleven participants) and an online discussion (ten participants), capturing responses from a total of twenty-one individuals regarding their awareness of voting rights, participation in local elections, sources of information, barriers to voting, and suggestions for improvement. The responses were analysed qualitatively to identify common themes and areas of concern.

Analysis and Findings

Awareness of Voting Rights

High Awareness: The majority of respondents are aware of their right to vote in local elections. This indicates a good level of awareness among the participants.

Sources of Information: Friends and family, community organisations, and government websites are the primary sources of information about voting rights. This suggests a reliance on personal networks and community resources for information dissemination.



Graph: Sources of information about voting rights.

Participation in Local Elections

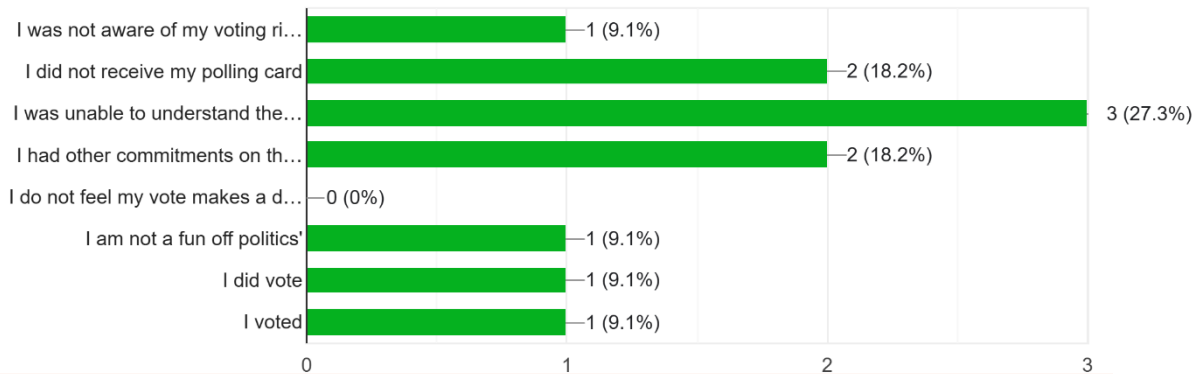
Mixed Participation Rates: There is a mix of respondents who participated in the most recent local election and those who did not. Reasons for non-participation include:

- Lack of interest in politics
- Not receiving a polling card
- Difficulty understanding the voting process
- Absence on the election day

Engagement Barriers: The main barriers to participation are logistical issues (e.g., not receiving polling cards) and a lack of understanding of the process.

If you did not vote, what was the main reason?

11 responses



Graph: Shows the participants reasons not to vote.

Suggestions for Improvement

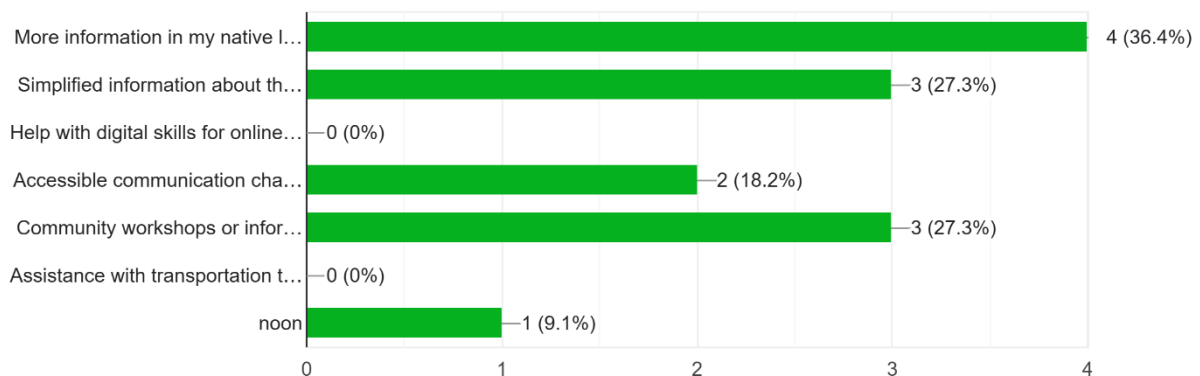
Information Accessibility: Many respondents suggested more accessible information, particularly in native languages, to aid better understanding and engagement.

Community Events: There is an interest in community events focused on educating individuals about their voting rights and the electoral process. This indicates a potential area for intervention to increase political engagement.

Awareness Campaigns: Suggestions include conducting more awareness campaigns to educate people about the importance of voting and how to participate in the electoral process.

What kind of support would help you participate more actively in elections? (Select all that apply)

11 responses



Graph: Illustrates the support needed by the respondents.

Overall Experience with the Electoral Process

Neutral to Positive Experiences: The overall experience with the electoral process ranges from neutral to very satisfied. However, there are notable areas for improvement, particularly in making the process more user-friendly and inclusive.

How would you rate your overall experience with the electoral process

11 responses

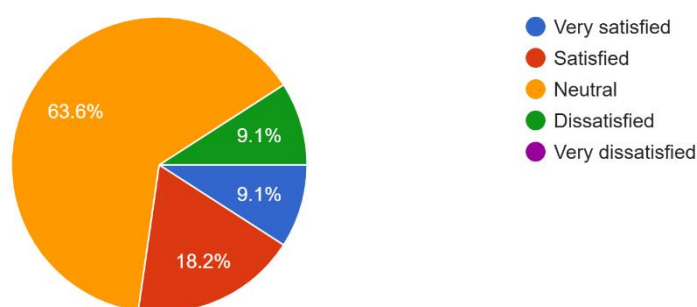


Chart: Overall experience in electoral process

Discussion

The findings from the survey on political engagement among individuals in England reveal several essential insights into the current state of voter awareness, participation, and sentiment. The data highlights both strengths and areas for improvement in fostering a more engaged and informed electorate. This discussion will delve into the key themes and insights derived from the survey and present recommendations to address the identified issues.

Key Themes and Insights

Awareness and Information Dissemination: The results indicate a high level of awareness about voting rights among respondents, primarily disseminated through personal networks and community organisations. This suggests that these channels effectively spread information and highlight the potential for leveraging other methods to reach a broader audience. According to recent studies, 79% of people are satisfied with the voting process, which aligns with the long-term average (Public attitudes, 2023).

Barriers to Participation: Despite the high awareness, there are notable barriers to participation in elections. These barriers include logistical issues such as not receiving polling cards and difficulties understanding the voting process. Additionally, some respondents expressed a general lack of interest in politics, hindering participation.

The perception that votes are counted accurately has declined, with only 70% agreeing in 2023, down from 85% in 2021 (Public Attitudes, 2023).

Educational Initiatives: There is a significant interest in educational initiatives, with many respondents indicating a desire for community events that provide information about voting rights and the electoral process. This points to an opportunity to increase political engagement through targeted educational programs. Given the increased awareness of the need for voter ID since the Election Act became law, educational efforts can also focus on informing voters about these new requirements (Public Attitudes, 2023).

Inclusivity: The need for more accessible information, mainly information available in native languages, is a recurring theme. Ensuring that all voters, regardless of their linguistic background, have access to clear and comprehensible voting information is crucial for inclusivity. With 39% of people dissatisfied with how democracy works in England, improving inclusivity could help address some of these concerns (Public Attitudes, 2023).

Overall Experience: The overall experience with the electoral process is generally neutral to positive. However, the feedback suggests room for improvement, particularly in making the process more user-friendly and addressing voters' specific logistical challenges. Despite a majority (73%) of people remaining confident that elections are well-run in England, there has been a decline in the public's perception of the transparency of party and campaign finance, with only 24% viewing party funding as transparent (Public attitudes, 2023).

Recommendations

Enhance Information Accessibility:

- **Multilingual Information:** Provide voting information in multiple languages to cater to the diverse population in England. This can include printed materials, online resources, and community outreach programs.
- **Multiple Formats:** Use various formats such as videos, infographics, and easy-to-read guides to make information more accessible to individuals with different literacy levels and understanding.

Organise Community Events:

- **Educational Workshops:** Conduct workshops and community events to educate individuals about their voting rights and the electoral process. These events can be held in collaboration with local community organisations to ensure wider reach and participation.
- **Interactive Sessions:** Include interactive sessions where participants can ask questions and receive direct assistance with any aspect of the voting process, they find challenging.

Address Logistical Barriers:

- **Improve Polling Card Distribution:** Work with electoral bodies to ensure that all eligible voters receive their polling cards in a timely manner. Implement tracking systems to monitor the distribution and address any issues promptly.
- **Simplify Voting Process:** Provide clear, step-by-step instructions on voting online and at polling stations. Ensure that these instructions are visible and easy to understand.

Conduct Awareness Campaigns:

- **Targeted Campaigns:** Implement awareness campaigns targeting specific demographics less likely to participate, such as young people and minority groups. Use social media, local media, and community influencers to reach these audiences effectively.
- **Highlight the Importance of Voting:** Emphasise the need to encourage more people to participate and the impact of voting on local and national governance. Showcase positive stories and testimonials from individuals who have benefited from being politically engaged.

Conclusion

The data collected from participants on political engagement among individuals in England reveals that while most respondents are aware of their voting rights, significant barriers such as logistical issues and a lack of understanding hinder participation. There is a clear need for more accessible information, particularly in native languages, and a strong interest in educational initiatives like community events. Despite generally neutral to positive experiences with the electoral process, improvements are needed to make it more user-friendly. Recommendations include enhancing information accessibility through multilingual resources, organising educational workshops, addressing logistical barriers like polling card distribution, and conducting targeted awareness campaigns. Implementing these measures can foster a more engaged and informed electorate, contributing to a more inclusive and participatory democratic process.

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