



#VoteWithPride

How to Organise a Voter Registration Drive

Guide for LGBT people,
networks and community
groups for the 2019
General Election





CONSORTIUM
for stronger lgbt+ communities

LGBT
foundation

ORGANISE A VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE

In 5 Easy Steps

LGBT+ Voices matter

9.4 million eligible voters were missing from the electoral roll at the last election.

Your LGBT+ Group can help make sure that more LGBT+ people get a say at this general election by organising a Voter Registration drive in 5 easy steps:

1

Pick a Date for the Drive - maybe one of your regular meetings or events.

2

Promote the Event - make sure everyone your group works with knows when and where to be.

3

Check the WiFi - on the day of the drive you are going to need to get online.

4

Check the Facts - use this guide which includes information for trans people registering
www.lgbt.foundation/election2019

5

Register! - it's a simple process but if folk aren't confident, sit with them while they register at
www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

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What is a voter registration drive?

A voter registration drive is an opportunity or event to support the people who use your services or are members of your group or network to register to vote.

Why do it?

On 12th December, the United Kingdom will head to the polls for another general election, the outcome of which could determine the kind of country we live in for decades to come.

At the last general election in 2017, there were 9.4 million eligible people not on the electoral roll. Only 68.8% of eligible people turned out to vote. Every vote counts.

It is important that LGBT people have our voices heard, and that LGBT people and our allies register to vote.

This matters because MPs decide on issues relating to LGBT people's health care, hate crime legislation, what's taught in schools, policy which affects LGBT asylum seekers and LGBT people's rights, such as reform of the Gender Recognition Act.

There is still some way to go, but there has been momentous progress for LGBT communities over the past few decades: victories on equal marriage, the repeal of Section 28, and the Equality Act among others. None of this could have been accomplished if we hadn't spoken up – particularly at the ballot box. Our vote is more than just putting a cross on a piece of paper; it is a fundamental democratic right.

In these turbulent political times, it can be easy to forget that the everyday business of government must continue and that the fight for a fair and equal society where all LGBT people can reach their full potential is not yet over.

Organising a voter registration drive is an effective way to ensure that LGBT people and our allies have the voice we deserve. Voting not only determines the next Government, but decides who will stand up for our rights locally. This election matters because with the margins being so close, national vote share is still important in determining the views of the electorate and shaping the direction of the country.

If we're not counted, we don't count. Apathy and disengagement can be hard to break through, but it is vital that we do so. On 12th December it's time to come out voting and

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How to organise a voter registration drive

Organising a voter registration drive is an easy way to make a massive difference. In just one hour, one volunteer can get twelve people registered to vote. That's twelve people empowered to go out and make a difference at the ballot box—more if you have several people available to help and laptops for them to use.

Helping people to register to vote is not about being party political. It's about empowering LGBT people and our allies to shape our society and have our voices heard – something which is part of our core work as LGBT groups and networks. It's important we don't tell people how to vote, simply encourage them to do so.

FIRST – Pick a date and a time

The easiest way to organise your drive is to add a voter registration drop-in or stall to an existing meet-up, group, or event that you're running.

You can register to vote at any time up to the deadline at 23:59 on 26th November. Having a specific event/s can also help to draw more people in and serve as a reminder that it's something they need to do.

SECOND – Promote your event

Be sure to share the details of the event far and wide! Post the details on your social media, text and email reminders, print flyers, whatever it is you're able to do to get the word out.

THIRD – Check your WiFi!

When your event comes round, you don't want any last minute technical hitches. Most voter registration is conducted online, at:

www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

This, of course, requires an internet connection. Be sure you have a laptop or tablet connected to the internet ready. You can also guide people through the registration process on their phones.

Some people may prefer to complete a paper form to register to vote. These can be downloaded at the link above.

FOURTH – It's time to register!

The process of registering to vote is simple, but if people are less confident it's helpful to sit with them as they go through it. This process also enables you to select to receive a postal voting application – this is particularly useful for people who be studying or working away from home or would find it difficult to get to the polling station.

Be sure to remind people that all you need to register to vote is their current address and national insurance number.

Students who study in one place and live in another during the holidays can register in both places, but only vote in one. You don't need to have a fixed address to be able to register to vote. Crisis have information here for people who are homeless or in temporary accommodation:

www.crisis.org.uk/get-help/information-for-crisis-members/member-news/how-to-register-to-vote-if-you-re-homeless

Remember – some people may not want to register online so be sure to have some paper forms printed out just in case. To register to vote by proxy (to appoint someone to vote on your behalf), you have to fill in a separate paper form and cannot register online. These can be found at www.gov.uk/voting-in-the-uk#voting-by-proxy

If someone selects to receive a postal voting application, this will be posted to their home. They need to then complete and return this by 26th November at 5pm to receive a postal vote.

FIFTH – #VoteWithPride

Don't forget to actually vote! Be sure to tell your friends, family, everyone you know that you're voting and encourage them to vote too. Many social media platforms now have ways of telling people that you've voted, and this works well at reminding other people to vote!

VOTE

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The facts

Make sure you're aware of all the key voting facts about the upcoming election in case you're asked any questions whilst registering people to vote.

WHO CAN VOTE?

To vote in the 2019 General Election, you must:

- Be 18 or above on 12th December 2019
- Be a British citizen, or be a citizen of a Commonwealth nation living in England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland
- Be registered to vote on the electoral roll

VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE

In order to be eligible to vote in the 2019 General Election, you must be registered to vote by

23:59 Tuesday 26 November 2019

HOW DO I REGISTER TO VOTE?

Most voter registration is conducted online, although it can be done over the phone or in person.

To register to vote, visit www.gov.uk/register-to-vote. If you are trans, still try to register at this website. If it doesn't work, see extended advice overleaf.

If you are having difficulty, contact your local Electoral Registration Office, which can be found at www.gov.uk/get-on-electoral-register

DO I NEED ID TO VOTE?

No. You may have read that the current government has introduced proposals requiring people to present ID in order to vote. These proposals will not be in effect at the 2019 General Election. The only thing you will need when voting is to say your name and address. Nobody should be asked to provide proof of this.

HOW CAN I VOTE?

There are three ways that you can vote:

- In person, by going to your designated polling station between 7am and 10pm on 12th December. Find out where your polling station is at www.wheredoivote.co.uk
- By post (you will need to complete a paper form which allows you to vote by post). You can download a postal vote form at www.gov.uk/voting-in-the-uk#postal-voting
- By proxy, in which you designate another person to vote in person on your behalf (the process for registering to vote by proxy is separate). You can download a proxy voting form at www.gov.uk/voting-in-the-uk#voting-by-proxy

Guidance for trans voters

If you're trans and attempting to register to vote, you may experience some issues. But don't worry, we've got your back!

Some trans people encounter issues when trying to register to vote under the online system. This may be because:

- **You've changed your name and are attempting to vote under your correct name**

If you've changed your name by deed poll, HMRC may not yet have processed your name change. As voter registration is linked to your National Insurance number, the system may detect that your name is different to the one HMRC has on file for you. The online registration does allow you to submit if you have ever lived under a previous name, however this is entirely optional and we understand that many trans people do not wish to declare this.

If you choose not to give previous name(s) or if your National Insurance number doesn't match your current name, the automated system may refuse your registration.

- **Your National Insurance number is protected**

The National Insurance numbers of some people are protected for privacy and security reasons. Some trans people have previously indicated to HMRC that they wish for their National Insurance numbers to be treated in this way. The automated system will be unable to access information and process voter registration for individuals with protected National Insurance numbers.

NEXT STEPS

- Try the online system first of all - it may very well work!
- If it doesn't, contact your local Electoral Registration Office, which can be found at www.gov.uk/get-on-electoral-register
- Ask for the contact details of whoever is responsible for the administration of the electoral roll. State that you have a sensitive matter to discuss about registering to vote but don't feel pressured to disclose your trans status or your dead name on the phone if you don't want to.
- When you have the contact details for the administrator, contact them directly explaining briefly that you are eligible to vote but wish to vote under your correct name or that your National Insurance number is protected.
- They will probably ask you for documents showing your name change and use of your new name for verification purposes. Examples of this include your driver's licence, passport, utility bill or bank statement in your correct name at the address you wish to be registered at.

The arguments

Convincing people to vote can be challenging. After years of turmoil and gridlock around Brexit, people may feel more alienated with, and exhausted by, the political process than ever before. It is important to counter that feeling. So here's some lines and stats that you can use to counter typical arguments.

“MY VOTE DOESN'T MATTER”

Absolutely not true. ‘Every vote for the political party you’re aligned with shows support for their policies. If you want politicians to represent your views, vote, no matter who you’re voting for. The number of LGBT people in the UK is estimated at 4-6 million. The gap between the two largest parties in the last election was 758,224. Sometimes margins can be very close. For example, in 2017, the seat of North East Fife was won by two votes. Since 1945, there have been fourteen occasions where the winning majority in a constituency seat has been twelve votes or less. Individual votes can, and will, count for something.

“POLITICIANS DON'T REPRESENT ME”

No political party will ever represent a person fully on every issue. Look at who is standing in your area. Look into the core values of these parties and at some of what they have accomplished when/ if they have been in office. Think about the issues that matter most to you, then go to the political party's websites and see their stance on the issues. See which one most resonates with you.

“THEY WON'T LISTEN TO ME”

If we're not counted, we don't count. Politicians pay the most attention to those who regularly turn out to vote. If you want to make change, vote for it.

“I DON’T LIKE ANY OF THEM”

It’s unlikely that any one parliamentary candidate or political party will perfectly align with your views. In reality people make a decision on who to vote for based on all kinds of reasons - sometimes because of the local candidate, sometimes because of the party, sometimes because we don’t like the other options. Whatever your reasons or your feelings about the candidates, by voting, you are making your voice heard.

There is no limit on the number of parties that can stand in an election. Look into all the parties and candidates that are standing in your seat. See what they stand for, and you might find one that really speaks to you.

“I LIVE IN A SAFE SEAT, MY VOTE DOESN’T REALLY COUNT”

With this election being so important and the margins being so close, national vote share (the percentage of all votes cast received by each party) is still important in determining the views of the electorate and shaping the direction of the country. On top of this, given the current political instability, it’s possible there will be large, and unexpected changes in the vote in many seats.

Voting at a general election is an important way to stand up and be counted, but there are many other ways to campaign for LGBT equality all year round. Voting is just the beginning. You can contact your MP, whether or not you voted for them or voted at all, once they are in office. **They work for you!**

FINAL REMINDER!

Thursday 12 December 2019
is the date of the next general election

The polling stations will be open from
7am to 10pm

Tuesday 26 November 2019 at 23:59
is the deadline for registering to vote in the 2019
General Election

9.4 million
eligible voters were missing from the electoral roll
at the last general election

758,224
was the gap between the two largest parties at the
2017 General Election

4 - 6 million
is the estimated number of LGBT people in the
United Kingdom who are eligible to vote