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Attitudes to voter registration research report You are in the Our research
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Participants were positive towards the routes to registration Enablers to
registration Barriers to registration Motivational mindsets Methodology Objectives
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Public attitudes to registering to vote Public attitudes to registering to vote This
qualitative research looks at public attitudes to registering to vote, with a
particular focus on barriers to registration faced by people who are eligible to vote
in the UK. There were a total of 133 interviews. 93 were 30-minute pre-recruited and
40 were 20-minute hall-test depth interviews, exploring attitudes across a range of
different groups. The interviews focused on awareness about the process of
registering to vote and enablers and barriers to registration. Participants were
positive towards the routes to registration Participants who were registered to vote
were more likely to recall receiving information about registering and recall the
registration process than their unregistered counterparts. Letters were a primary
prompt for participants, reminding them to register to vote and to provide
information about the registration process. This was particularly the case among
registered participants. Registered participants recalled the process of registering
as simple, and unregistered participants assumed the process would be easy. Overall,
participants were positive towards the routes to registration and reported that they
would go online if they wanted to find more information about registering to vote.
Enablers to registration The primary enabler and motivation for registering was
having your say and being able to vote. Participation in the democratic process
emerged as important across both registered and unregistered participants. Social
norming played a prominent role with participants often echoing behaviours and views
of family and friends. Influencers in educational settings were often noted as
promoting registration and voting amongst younger people. Individual benefits, such
as improvements to credit ratings, were appealing as they were considered practical
and tangible. Data collection via voter registration for local councils and the
Government was generally understood to be beneficial but held limited motivational
impact. Barriers to registration Three groups of barriers to registration were
identified: mindset towards voting knowledge barriers practical barriers Participants
with mindset barriers included those who expressed apathy (disinterest in voting) and
disillusionment (distrust in the political system and politics). Where a mindset
barrier existed, this was a primary barrier to registration. Knowledge barriers
included a lack of awareness of eligibility, lack of knowledge and confidence to make
an informed vote, lack of understanding of the registration process and incorrect
assumptions about registration status. Practical barriers focused on a lack of
urgency or priority to register to vote. Other practical barriers included concerns
about required documentation, privacy of personal information and the time it would
take to register. Motivational mindsets Application of the COM-B behavioural
framework highlights that the primary barrier or enabler to registration is
motivational. The research has observed three motivational mindsets which act as the
primary building block in registration behaviour. Two of these are barrier mindsets
and include disillusionment in the political system or politicians, and apathy
towards voting. The third is an enabling mindset focusing on engagement in having
your say or voice heard. The research suggests that there are a range of
motivational, capability-based and opportunity-based hooks which could encourage
registration across these mindsets. Methodology A total of 133 depth interviews were

carried out across pre-recruited and hall-test depth interviews. This sample size was developed to allow the research to engage and explore attitudes amongst different groups that had been identified as less likely to be registered to vote in previous Electoral Commission research . These groups included: Younger people aged under 34 years. Whilst there was a focus on this age group, the research also included a sample of those aged 35+ years to ensure inclusion from those across age groups Recent movers (those who had moved home within the last two years) People from an ethnic minority background. The research included at least five depth interviews with participants from each of the following backgrounds: Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black African and Black Caribbean Private renters A sample plan was developed to focus on these groups and include both registered and unregistered participants. This enabled the research to explore both reasons for registration and barriers to registration. Participants for the pre-recruited depth interviews were recruited from across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The hall tests took place in Wolverhampton and Leeds. Both locations include constituencies with a low turn-out in the 2019 General Election and were therefore identified as areas that may have lower levels of registration. Given the scope and timeframe for this study, registration status for each individual was based on self-reported registration status. Screening questions were developed to gather as close to an accurate report of registration status as possible. This included questions about ways in which people had registered, any receipt of a poll card and participation in voting. Objectives This research set out to explore attitudes towards registration amongst the public. Specifically, the research sought to explore: Barriers to registration. Understanding why people are not registered to vote and what could encourage unregistered people to register. Enablers to registration. Understanding why people are registered to vote. Awareness around registration. Understanding current knowledge levels around how to register and any misconceptions about the process of registering. Download the full report Electoral Commission Report Attitudes to voter registration If you would like to receive a copy of the report in Welsh, please send us a request .