



London Voices

The journey to full participation

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Project overview

Survey overview

When? June 30th - August 17th 2021

Who? 109 civil society organisations

These organisations represent more than 4,000 full-time employees and 5,600 volunteers

Around 380,000 beneficiaries across London

Main areas of work: health/well-being, equalities/civil rights, advice and support

Main beneficiaries: Black, Asian and minority ethnic Londoners, general public, people with financial needs, women, migrants, Deaf and disabled Londoners, young Londoners

Whose Voices?

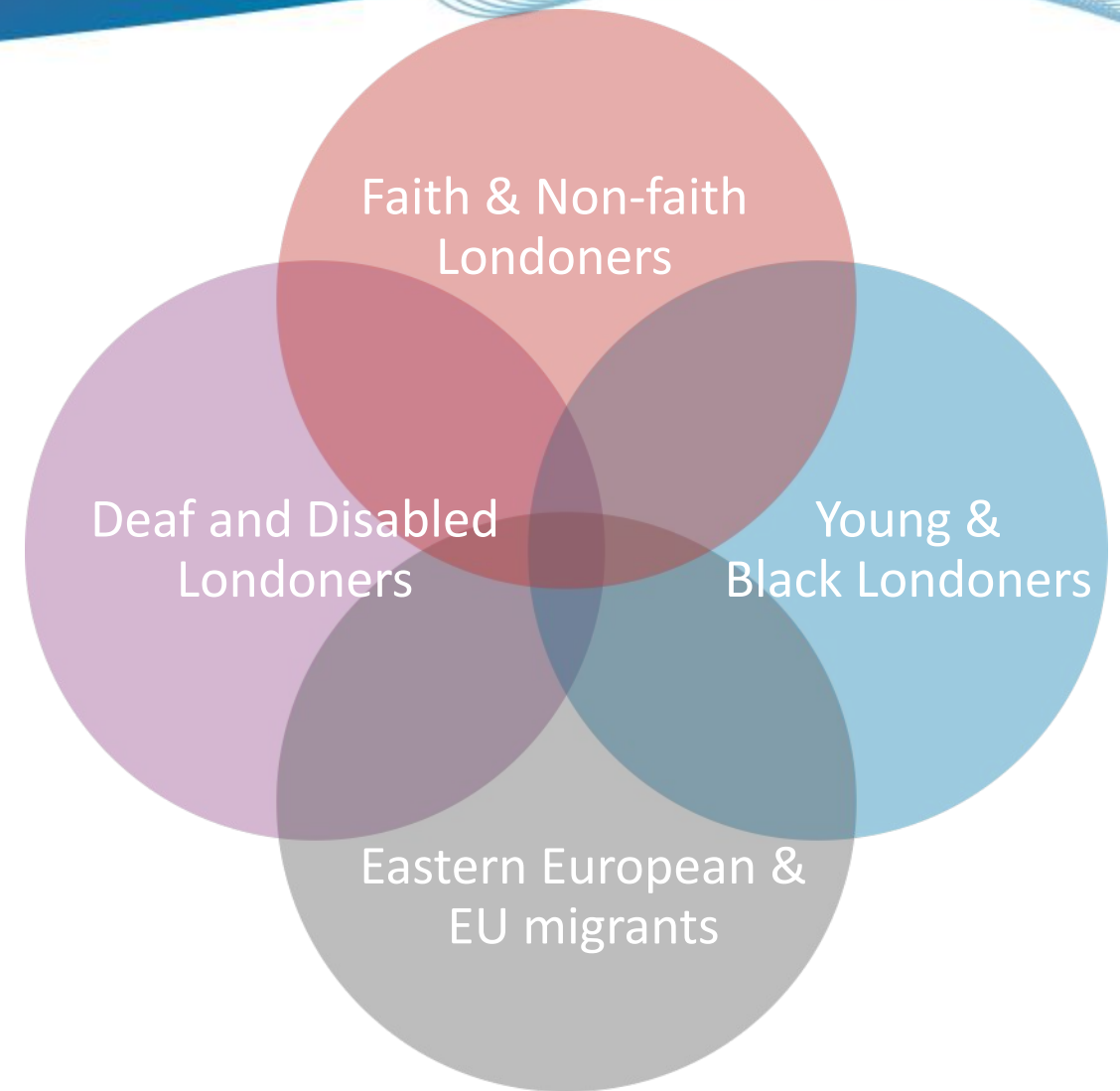
Voices of London's
grassroots
organisations:
semi-directed
interview

21 deep interviews

Organisations directly
and indirectly
representing
under-registered and
under-represented
communities

Peer Research

- Voices of under-represented, marginalised and disenfranchised Londoners
- Peer research to build a space of trust
- Focus groups and interviews conducted by peer researchers





Findings highlights

Key Themes



How barriers to civic and democratic participation are connected

Perceptions of government-led policies & legislation

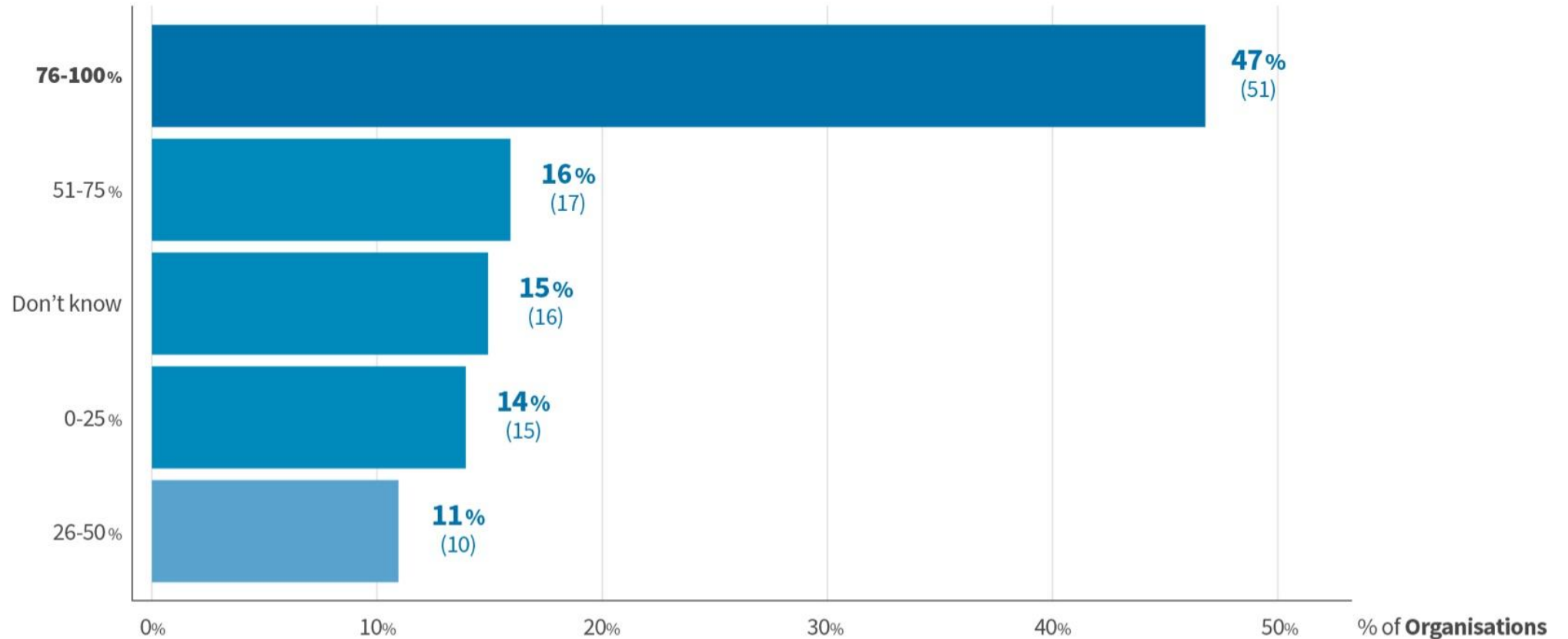
The role of civil society and relationships with local authorities

Innovative & grassroots forms of civic and democratic participation

What local authorities, funders, political parties and the UK Government can do to support civic and democratic participation in London

Most staff and volunteers in more than 60% of civil society organisations surveyed have lived experience

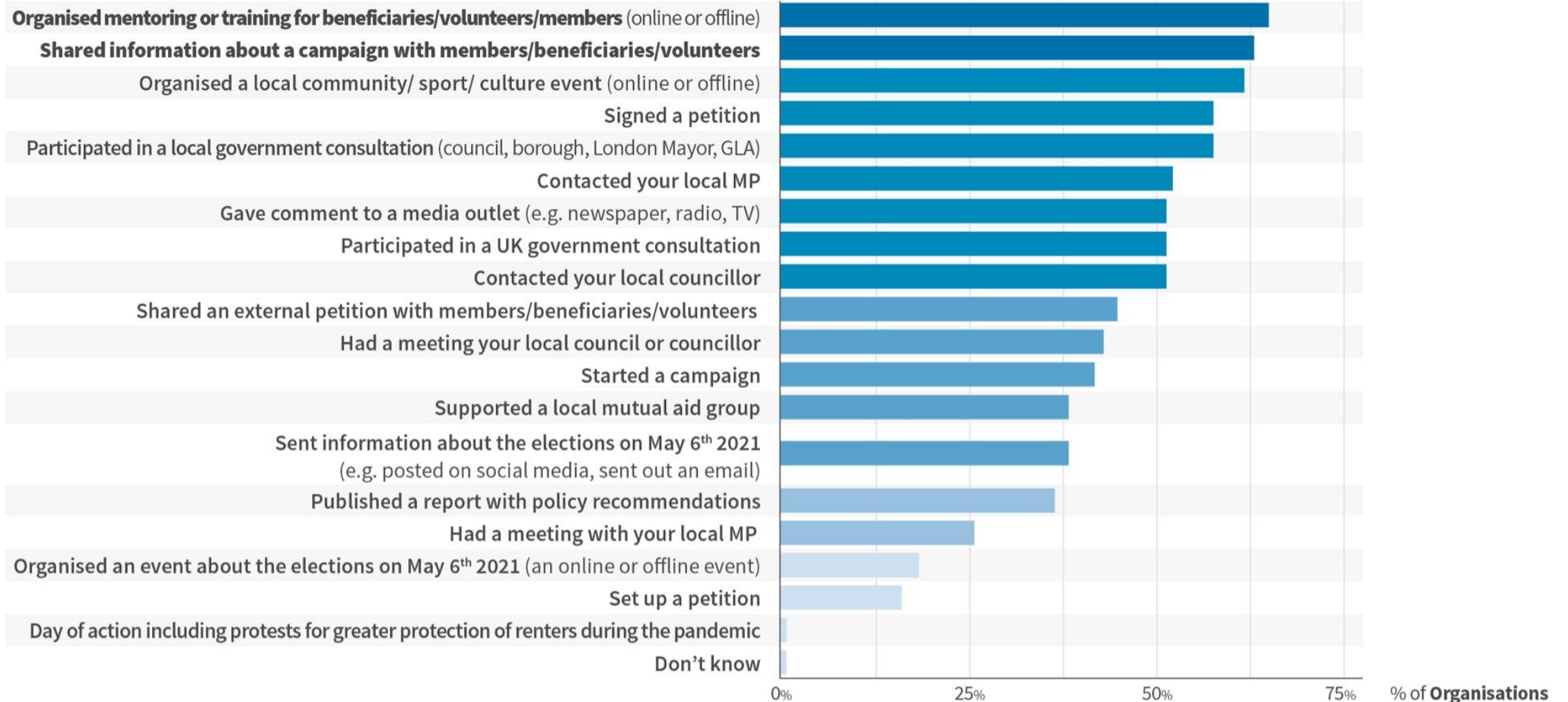
Number of volunteers and staff WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE



Source: London Voices Survey, N = 109 organisations – Lived experience meaning that they belong to one of the beneficiary groups of the organisation's work

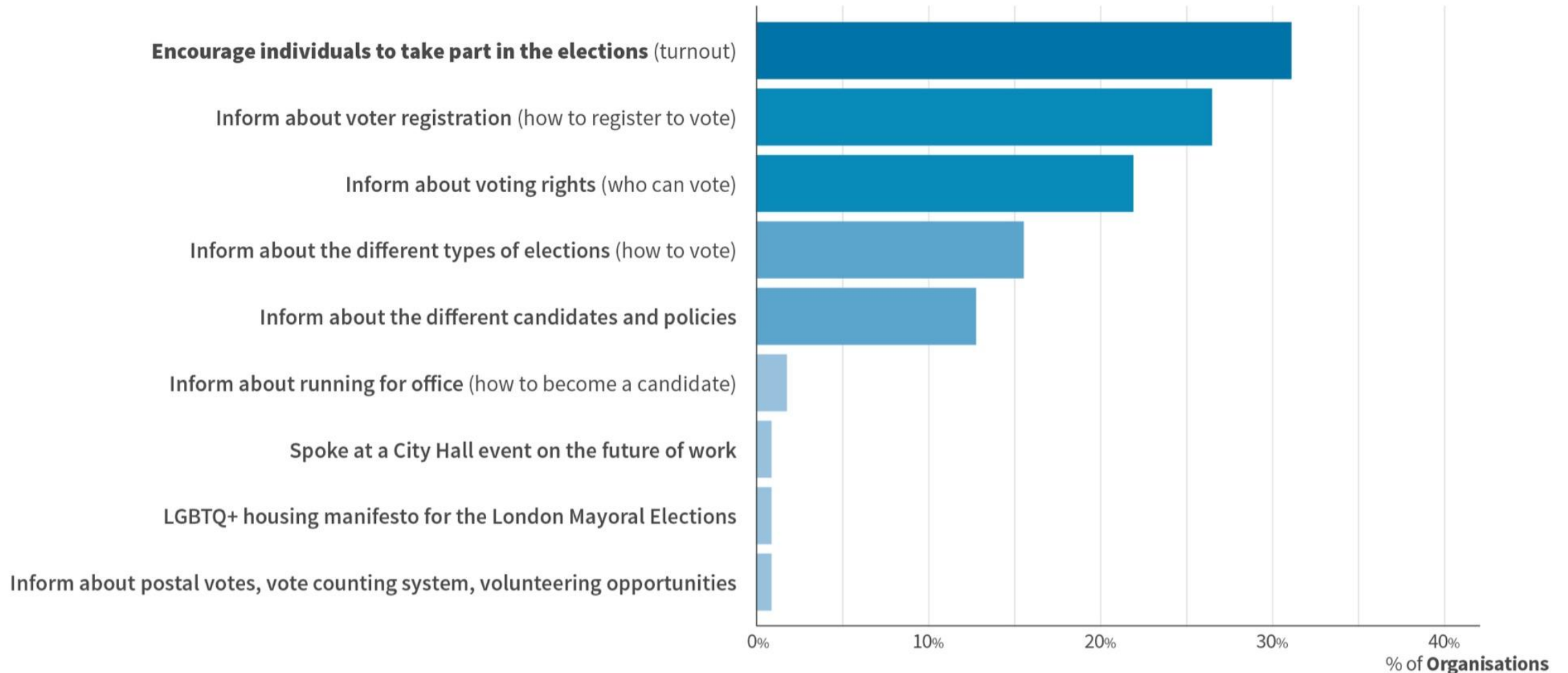
Civil society organisations contribute to all aspects of civic and democratic life in London

What TYPES OF CIVIC PARTICIPATION do organisations engage in?



Civil society organisations are somewhat active in impartial democratic awareness campaigns, but face financial and legal barriers. This can improve.

What TYPES OF VOTER REGISTRATION or INFORMATION ACTIVITIES do organisations engage in?



Source: London Voices Survey, N = 109 organisations – Lived experience meaning that they belong to one of the beneficiary groups of the organisation's work

Civil society organisations know how to increase the participation of under-registered and under-represented groups

What do you think could **HELP INCREASE PARTICIPATION** among your beneficiaries?

Local authorities working in collaboration with civil society organisations to support wider civic and democratic awareness

More opportunities for citizen participation in deliberative democracy
(e.g. Permanent Citizen Assemblies, regular local authority consultations)

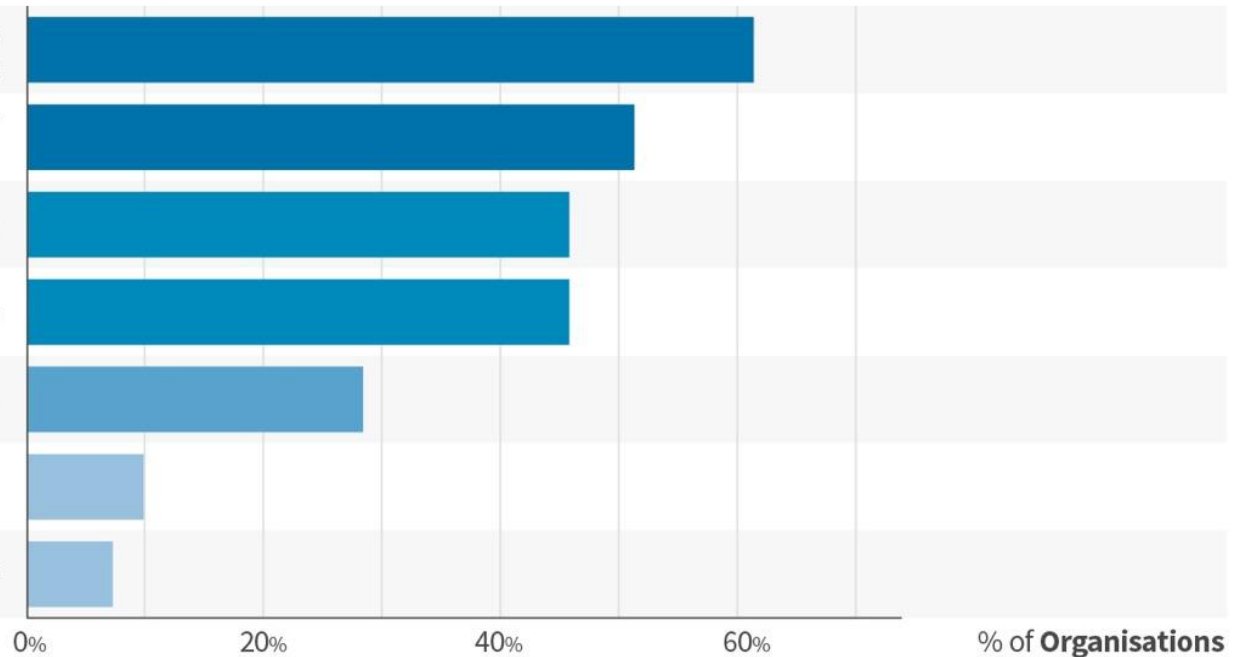
Making sure Civic, Media and Political Literacy is part of the school curriculum

More representative political parties and candidates

Easier postal voting system

Don't know

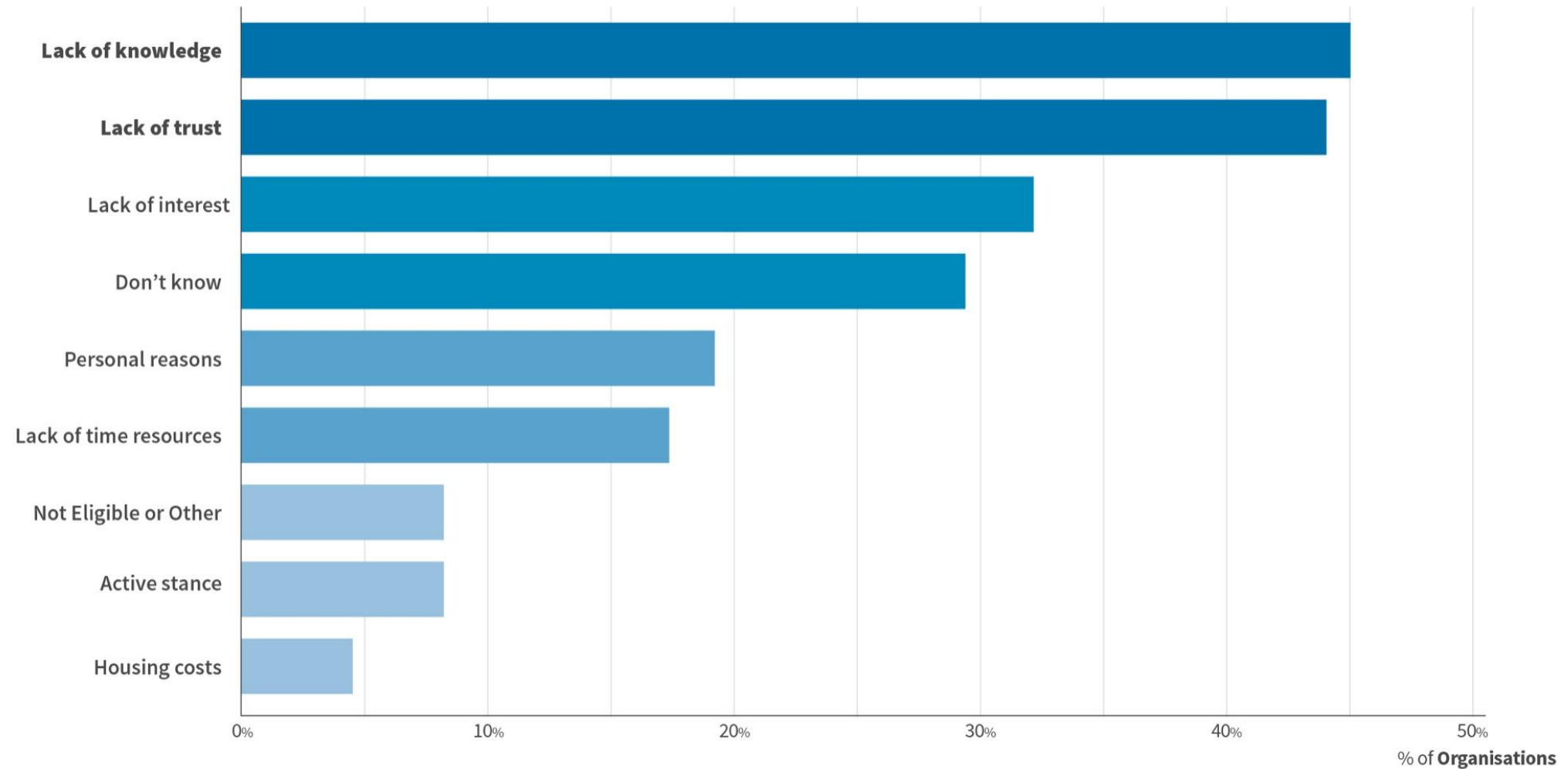
Other



Source: London Voices Survey, N = 109 organisations

Lack of knowledge, trust and potentially interest show the scale of the challenge of engaging under-represented and under-registered communities in the democratic processes

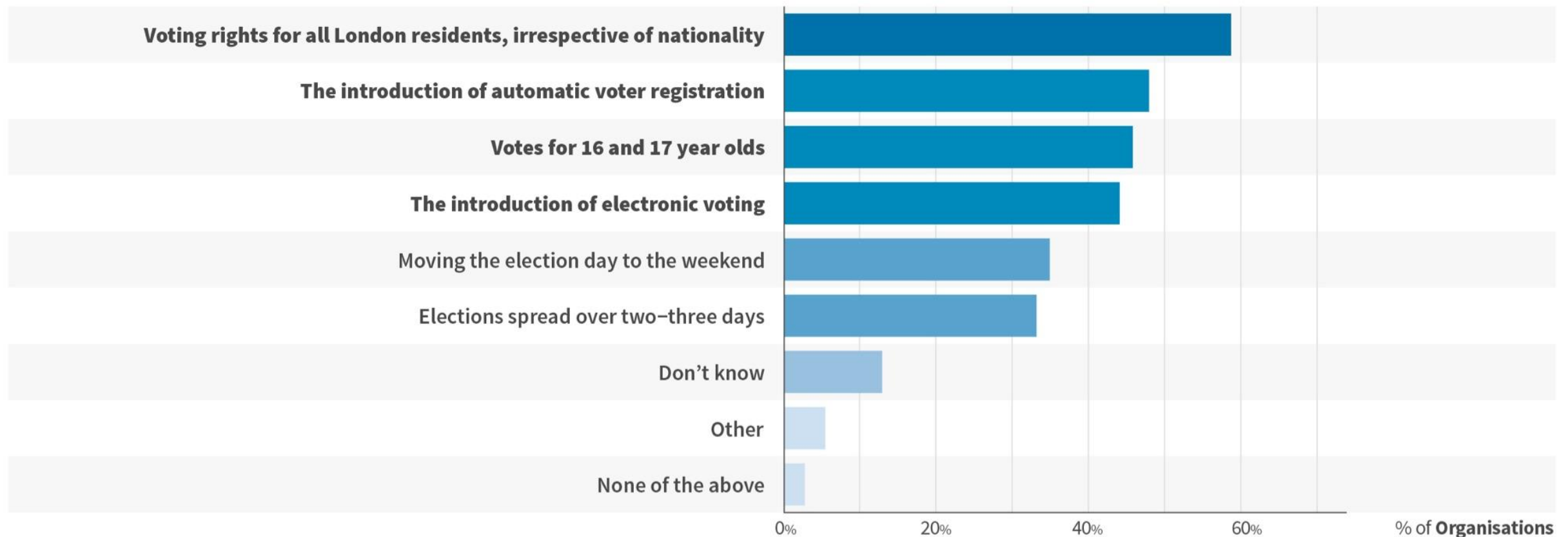
WHY do you think that many of your beneficiaries **HAVE NOT VOTED** in elections?



Source: London Voices Survey, N = 109 organisations

Calls for inclusive democratic reform: residence-based voting rights, automatic voter registration and votes at 16

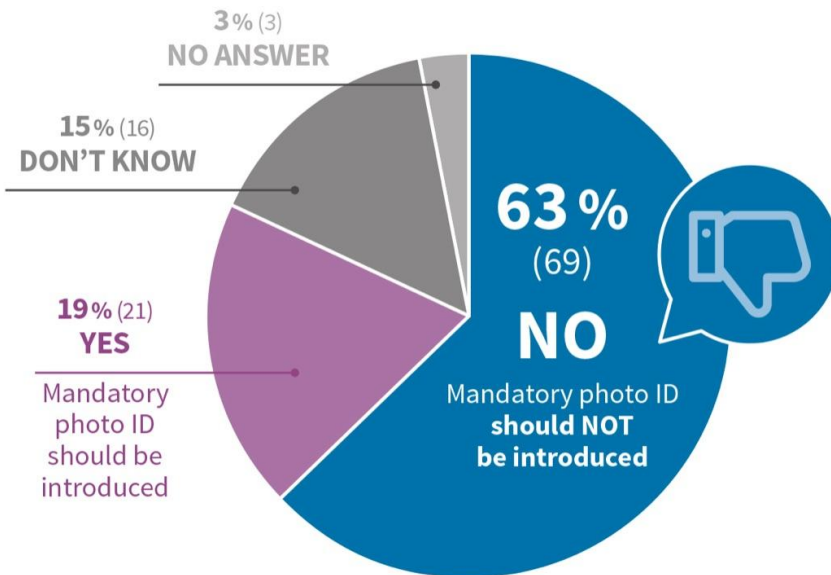
What of the following **REFORMS**, if any, do you think **COULD INCREASE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION** among Londoners?



Source: London Voices Survey, N = 109 organisations

Civil society organisations have major concerns about the equality implications of the introduction of photo IDs for in-person voting.

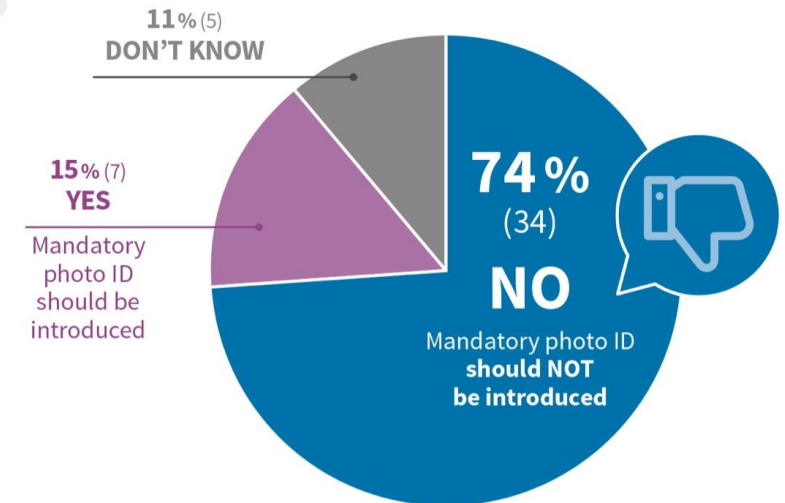
Should **MANDATORY PHOTO IDS** for in-person voting be introduced or not?



Source: London Voices Survey, N = 109 organisations % of Respondents – (Number of Respondents in parentheses)

Should **MANDATORY PHOTO IDS** for in-person voting be introduced or not?

Only organisations supporting **BLACK LONDONERS** and **OTHER MINORITIES**



Source: London Voices Survey, N = 109 organisations % of Respondents – (Number of Respondents in parentheses)

Civil society organisations want to join a London Democracy Network to coordinate and provide guidance on social action

If a London Democracy Network existed **WOULD YOU JOIN IT?**



Source: London Voices Survey, N = 109 organisations – A London Democracy Network would share best practices, funding opportunities, collaborate on activities and advocacy as well as meet regularly.



Recommendations for funders

Co-Produced Recommendations



Funders should implement sustainable and inclusive funding practices, by providing more core and unrestricted funding, making it easier for small and new civil society organisations to obtain funding, and by investing in more medium and long-term funding. Funders should also empower and support civil society organisations by providing training, mentorship and networking opportunities. This holistic approach is instrumental in supporting a third sector that is genuinely intersectional, intergenerational and focuses on the most marginalised groups.

Supporting small and new civil society organisations



- To provide specific funding to support capacity especially for small civil society organisations.
- To ring-fence funding for small and new civil society organisations which lack the capacity to comply with time-consuming application and reporting requirements.

Facilitating access to funding opportunities



- To coordinate the creation of a centralised funding availability platform for London's civil society organisations so that organisations do not miss relevant opportunities and deadlines.
- To ensure grant information is shared using the 360Giving data standard, and that geographic information is included.

Implementing sustainable & inclusive funding practices



- To provide more opportunities for unrestricted and core funding.
- To support racial equality organisations and councils and provide sustainable investment in their work.
- To invest in strategic medium (2 years) and long term (3 - 5 years) funding, collaborations and projects with civil society, local authorities and researchers around civic and democratic participation, not just around elections - a current practice that reinforces the systemic issues in the sector, especially around capacity and resilience and threatens the survival of many organisations and their ability to coordinate and collaborate on medium and long term advocacy.
- To consider the value of funding campaigning work to achieve social change (which CC9 campaigning and political activity guidance for charities allows for) and update their funding principles accordingly to ensure they do not exclude non-party political, impartial campaigning activities.

Empowering civil society



- To fund work to increase the knowledge-base and capacity of civil society organisations to get involved in campaigning, and encourage greater sharing of experience of how best to influence elected officials and other decision-makers. This will help shift the balance away from focus on service delivery and towards collectively tackling the root causes of the issues faced by civil society organisations and Londoners.
- To facilitate and fund cross-sector buddying or mentorship on civic and democratic participation.
- To consider funding and coordinating an annual event around a potential London Democracy Network.
- To raise awareness, co-design and co-produce resources to support civil society organisations to deal with the chilling and gagging effects of charity and electoral law and to better communicate their stories and impact, especially in view of upcoming legislation that could impact on the right to protest and run non-party political, social justice campaigns.



**Full report, executive summary and voter ID
briefing paper at:
www.londonvoices.co.uk**