

Intelligence Briefing

General Statistics Team

Alternative Vote referendum results for London



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Source of all data: Regional Returning Officers

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Data can be made available in other formats on request

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Summary

- Over two-thirds of the UK voted to keep the ‘first past the post’ system.
- The proportion was lower in London at 60 per cent.
- London had the highest ‘Yes’ vote (Hackney), and four of the top five in the UK.
- London showed a much wider variation of results compared with other regions.
- London boroughs had the four lowest turnouts in the UK, though there were no local elections taking place in the capital on May 5.
- Areas with a high ‘No’ vote tended to also display a high conservative share in the 2010 local elections.

Background

The alternative vote (AV) referendum was a public vote held across the United Kingdom on 5 May 2011 in which the electorate voted on a proposal to introduce a new voting system. This was only the second time a referendum had been held throughout the whole of the United Kingdom in British history, the first being the EC referendum in 1975.

The question posed by the referendum was “At present, the UK uses the “first past the post” system to elect MPs to the House of Commons. Should the “alternative vote” system be used instead?”

The proposed system

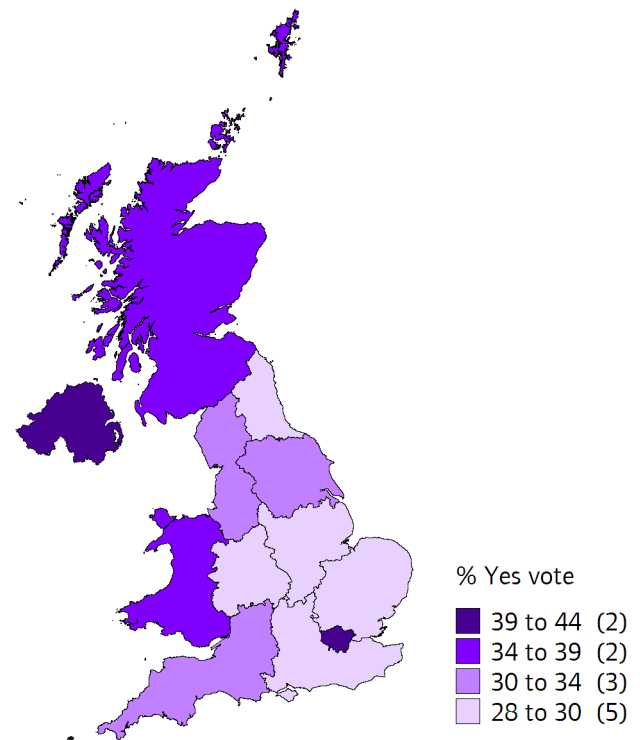
Under the AV system proposed in the referendum, voters will still be electing just one candidate associated with one geographic constituency. Instead of simply voting for one candidate on the ballot paper (with an ‘X’), the voter would instead rank one or more of the candidates in order of preference. If after first preferences have been counted, no one candidate has a majority of the votes cast, then the bottom candidate will be eliminated and votes for that candidate are transferred to each voter’s next available preference.

The process continues repeatedly until one candidate reaches a majority and wins.

Result

The overall result for the UK was clear, with around 68 per cent of the population voting ‘No’ to AV. For the ‘Yes’ vote to have achieved half of the vote, with the turnout that occurred, over 3.4 million people who voted ‘No’ would have had to have voted instead in favour of AV. In London, the result was less overwhelming at just over 60 per cent, and this was the second lowest percentage at regional level after Northern Ireland (56 per cent). The North East had the highest ‘No’ vote at 72 per cent, though five regions were over 70 per cent ([Map 1](#)).

Map 1 Proportion of valid votes for ‘Yes’ to AV, by UK region



At smaller geographies, the highest ‘Yes’ vote in the UK was in Hackney (61 per cent), while the lowest was in Castle Point (East of England) (20 per cent). The second highest ‘Yes’ was in Glasgow Kelvin followed by Islington, Haringey and Lambeth. Only ten areas returned with more than half the votes for ‘Yes’ – six of them in London (the other two being Camden and Southwark). The ‘Yes’ areas outside

Table 1 Highest and Lowest 'Yes' Votes, by UK region

Region	Area of lowest 'Yes' vote	% Yes	Area of highest 'Yes' vote	% Yes	Difference	Standard Deviation
London	Havering	22.7	Hackney	60.7	38.0	9.6
East of England	Castle Point	20.3	Cambridge	54.3	34.0	6.0
South East	Havant	23.0	Oxford	54.1	31.1	5.3
Scotland	Banffshire and Buchan Coast	29.1	Glasgow Kelvin	58.8	29.7	5.6
South West	East Dorset	23.1	Bristol, City of	44.7	21.6	4.1
East Midlands	South Holland	21.4	Leicester	42.9	21.4	4.0
North West	Wyre	23.3	Manchester	44.5	21.2	4.3
Wales	Clwyd West	30.2	Cardiff Central	45.7	15.5	3.6
West Midlands	South Staffordshire	20.9	Birmingham	35.7	14.8	3.5
Yorkshire and The Humber	North East Lincolnshire	24.5	Sheffield	38.3	13.8	4.1
North East	Hartlepool	23.1	Newcastle-upon-Tyne	35.9	12.8	3.1
Northern Ireland ¹	-	-	-	-	-	-
UK	Castle Point	20.3	Hackney	61	40.4	6.6

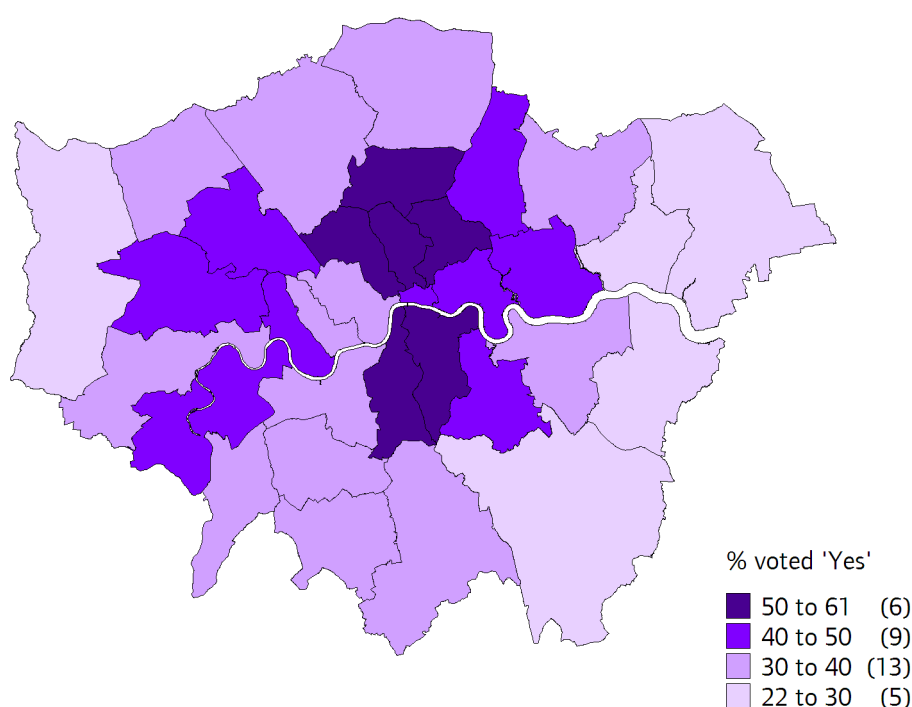
¹ The result for Northern Ireland was not broken down into smaller areas

London were Oxford, Cambridge, and university areas of Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Variation

In London the lowest 'Yes' vote was in Havering (23 per cent). London had the highest range between top and bottom result than any other region (38 percentage points) and a standard deviation of 9.6,

Map 2 Proportion of valid votes for 'Yes' to AV, by London borough



much higher than any other region (Table 1). The next closest being East of England (6.0), indicating that the variation of results was much greater in the capital than elsewhere – there were a number of boroughs with results towards the extremes. There were the six boroughs over 50 per cent voting 'Yes' and five boroughs where under 30 per cent of the electorate voted this way (Map 2). Only these five boroughs had a 'Yes' vote share that was below the UK average (32.1) – four of them located in outer and Eastern parts of London.

Turnout

Unlike other parts of the country there were no local elections taking place on the same day in London, though the turnout was reasonable at 35 per cent. This was the lowest at regional level, though only slightly below North East and North West (39 per cent), while the UK average turnout was 42 per cent. Newham had the lowest turnout in the UK (27 per cent), followed

by three other London boroughs, with Stoke-on-Trent making up the bottom five, and eleven of the lowest 20 turnouts were in London. London's highest turnout was in Richmond (47 per cent) but was still ranked 119th out of 439 areas in the UK. Scotland (50 per cent) and Northern Ireland (55 per cent) were the only two UK regions to get at least half of the electorate to vote. All the top ten highest turnouts were in Scotland, with the highest turnout being in Eastwood (63 per cent).

Comparisons with Local Elections

London's local elections took place in May 2010 and the detailed results are contained within *London Borough Council Elections* report available on the *London Datastore*. A quick comparison of the 'No' to AV votes with the share who voted for the Conservative party in the borough elections highlights a relatively strong correlation between

the two (Figure 1). The linear trend lines on the chart are very similar albeit with the proportion who voted Conservative being below those who voted 'No'.

However, there are a few outliers at borough level. Most notably, the areas with a low Conservative vote and a high 'No' vote were Barking and Dagenham, and Havering, while areas with a high Conservative vote and a relatively low 'No' vote were Richmond, Hammersmith and Fulham and Wandsworth, which all had significantly above average Conservative share but around the London average 'No' vote. Hackney had both the lowest Conservative vote share (13.7) and the lowest 'No' vote (39.3) in London.

Table 2 shows the results for boroughs and regions. The full national results are available on the *London Datastore*.

Figure 1 Proportion of 'No' vote compared with Conservative Share from 2010 local election, by borough

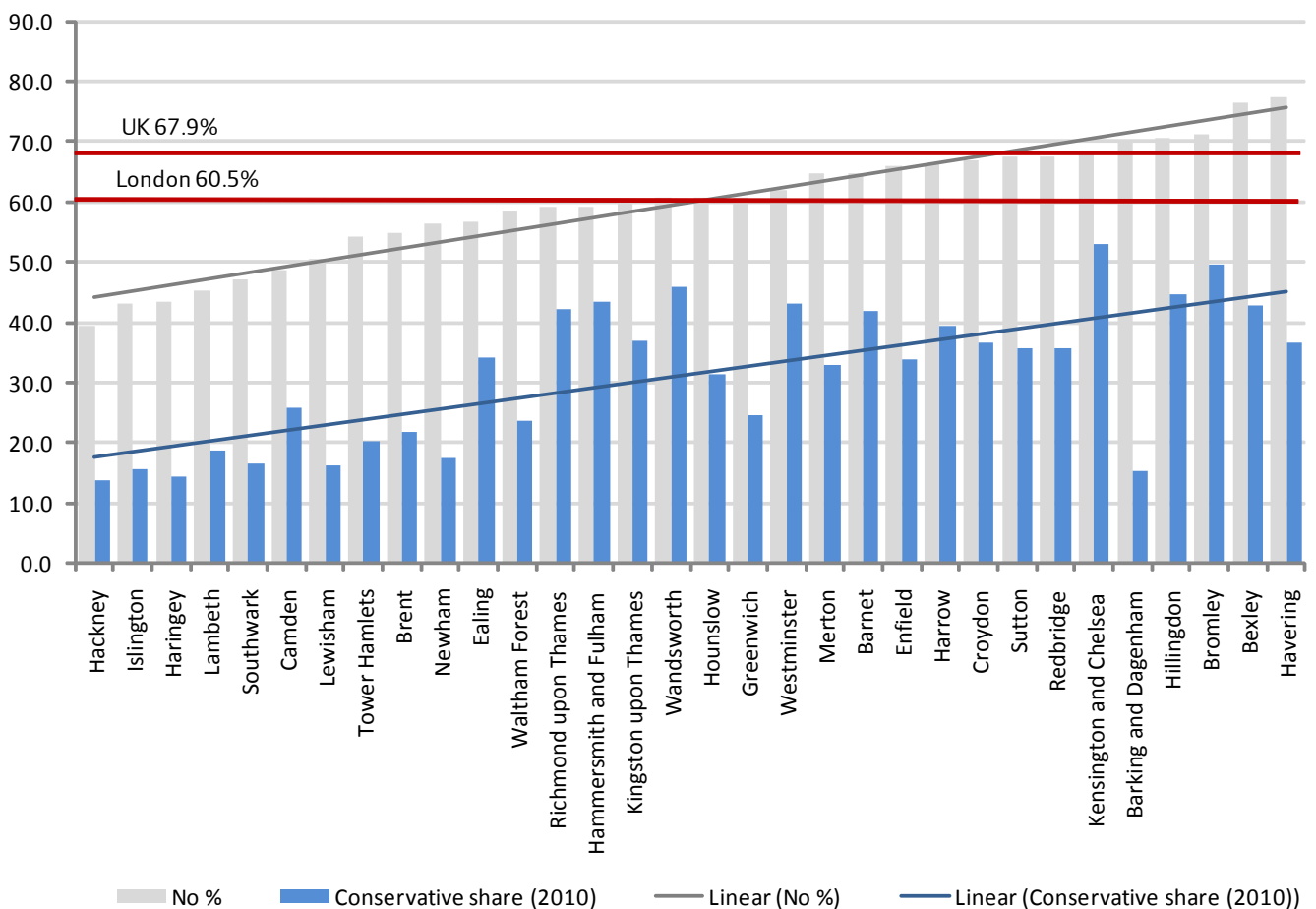


Table 2 Full results for Alternative Vote referendum, by borough and region

Area	Result	Majority	Maj %	Yes vote	Yes %	No vote	No %	Electorate	Valid Votes	Turnout %
City of London	No	188	7.3	1,196	46.4	1,384	53.6	6,068	2,580	42.5
Barking and Dagenham	No	12,902	40.6	9,436	29.7	22,338	70.3	114,639	31,774	27.7
Barnet	No	25,298	29.6	30,153	35.2	55,451	64.8	220,340	85,604	38.9
Bexley	No	33,701	53.0	14,929	23.5	48,630	76.5	169,825	63,559	37.4
Brent	No	5,390	9.5	25,551	45.2	30,941	54.8	183,529	56,492	30.8
Bromley	No	40,385	42.5	27,286	28.7	67,671	71.3	230,331	94,957	41.2
Camden	Yes	1,430	2.8	26,275	51.4	24,845	48.6	137,117	51,120	37.3
Croydon	No	29,686	34.0	28,789	33.0	58,475	67.0	243,610	87,264	35.8
Ealing	No	10,120	13.5	32,445	43.3	42,565	56.8	207,846	75,010	36.1
Enfield	No	22,200	32.1	23,521	34.0	45,721	66.0	196,016	69,242	35.3
Greenwich	No	11,421	21.7	20,618	39.2	32,039	60.8	158,603	52,657	33.2
Hackney	Yes	10,905	21.4	30,969	60.7	20,064	39.3	149,606	51,033	34.1
Hammersmith and Fulham	No	7,491	18.2	16,889	40.9	24,380	59.1	109,375	41,269	37.7
Haringey	Yes	7,087	13.2	30,310	56.6	23,223	43.4	150,294	53,533	35.6
Harrow	No	20,003	32.3	20,990	33.9	40,993	66.1	163,792	61,983	37.8
Havering	No	35,099	54.6	14,592	22.7	49,691	77.3	179,159	64,283	35.9
Hillingdon	No	26,647	41.4	18,888	29.3	45,535	70.7	189,505	64,423	34.0
Hounslow	No	11,597	21.7	20,953	39.2	32,550	60.8	162,466	53,503	32.9
Islington	Yes	6,702	13.9	27,553	56.9	20,851	43.1	135,675	48,404	35.7
Kensington and Chelsea	No	10,636	35.4	9,696	32.3	20,332	67.7	87,514	30,028	34.3
Kingston upon Thames	No	9,715	21.0	18,230	39.5	27,945	60.5	107,868	46,175	42.8
Lambeth	Yes	5,954	9.4	34,712	54.7	28,758	45.3	191,929	63,470	33.1
Lewisham	No	745	1.3	28,184	49.4	28,929	50.7	172,573	57,113	33.1
Merton	No	15,198	29.3	18,375	35.4	33,573	64.6	130,413	51,948	39.8
Newham	No	6,084	12.6	21,085	43.7	27,169	56.3	177,666	48,254	27.2
Redbridge	No	22,193	35.1	20,524	32.5	42,717	67.6	192,533	63,241	32.9
Richmond upon Thames	No	10,972	18.1	24,796	40.9	35,768	59.1	128,637	60,564	47.1
Southwark	Yes	3,391	5.5	32,695	52.7	29,304	47.3	180,695	61,999	34.3
Sutton	No	18,073	34.8	16,930	32.6	35,003	67.4	133,714	51,933	38.8
Tower Hamlets	No	3,689	8.3	20,286	45.8	23,975	54.2	153,378	44,261	28.9
Waltham Forest	No	8,978	16.9	22,140	41.6	31,118	58.4	157,784	53,258	33.8
Wandsworth	No	16,585	21.6	30,152	39.2	46,737	60.8	207,806	76,889	37.0
Westminster	No	9,526	23.8	15,279	38.1	24,805	61.9	127,540	40,084	31.4
North East	No	333,187	43.9	212,951	28.1	546,138	71.9	1,967,332	759,089	38.6
North West	No	802,952	39.6	613,249	30.2	1,416,201	69.8	5,237,698	2,029,450	38.7
Yorkshire and The Humber	No	567,646	37.4	474,532	31.3	1,042,178	68.7	3,835,056	1,516,710	39.5
East Midlands	No	604,987	42.5	408,877	28.7	1,013,864	71.3	3,347,851	1,422,741	42.5
West Midlands	No	695,925	43.0	461,847	28.5	1,157,772	71.5	4,092,469	1,619,619	39.6
East of England	No	767,864	42.0	530,140	29.0	1,298,004	71.0	4,262,724	1,828,144	42.9
London	No	389,053	20.9	734,427	39.5	1,123,480	60.5	5,257,846	1,857,907	35.3
South East	No	1,128,000	40.6	823,793	29.7	1,951,793	70.3	6,290,853	2,775,586	44.1
South West	No	660,764	36.9	564,541	31.5	1,225,305	68.5	4,027,945	1,789,846	44.4
Northern Ireland	No	83,618	12.6	289,088	43.7	372,706	56.3	1,198,966	661,794	55.2
Scotland	No	535,562	27.3	713,813	36.4	1,249,375	63.6	3,892,622	1,963,188	50.4
Wales	No	290,958	30.9	325,349	34.6	616,307	65.4	2,268,735	941,656	41.5
UK	No	6,860,516	35.8	6,152,607	32.1	13,013,123	67.9	45,680,097	19,165,730	42.0