

Elections

The government this week moved to honour its Manifesto promise to tighten up on fraud at elections. There have been cases of impersonation, harvesting postal votes by individuals who wish to dictate the voting intention, influencing people to vote in a particular way through undue pressure or power over them, and voting more than once in the same general election by those with more than one residence.

Central to the government's response is to introduce the need for voter ID at polling stations, to cut out impersonation and vote theft. Controlling postal vote abuse is more difficult, though modern postal votes are addressed directly to the named voter and do include the double envelope system to encourage proper checks on the eligibility to vote and to give people the chance of privacy of their ballot. These precautions do not prevent a residential home manager or a dominant parent or guardian intercepting or influencing someone's vote in their care.

The government has allowed EU citizens exercising their right to stay here to continue to have a vote in local elections. New arrivals from EU countries will only gain such a right if their country offers a similar right to UK citizens living in their country.

Some express concern about the requirement to show ID to vote. As most other things we do today requires us to prove identity or enter through password controlled systems it is difficult to claim people will find this difficult. As someone who does not welcome more controls and use of passes, I do think voting integrity is crucial. I accept the need to have strong security on work computers for example requiring my ID to enter and would regard the integrity of the vote as very important. There have been enough cases of voter fraud to warrant some action to tighten up. Is this enough?