

# [Press release: Minister hosts 'Call for Evidence' roundtable to improve accessibility of elections](#)

Minister called on the campaigners, who attended a roundtable hosted by the Minister, to share his Call for Evidence on how people with disabilities experience registering to vote and voting itself.

At the roundtable held during National Inclusion Week, the Minister highlighted his visits to every part of the United Kingdom as part of his Every Voice Matters Tour, which have helped him understand how to tackle barriers to voter registration.

As a direct result of this, changes have been made to the Certificate of Visual Impairment so it can be used by local authorities to support blind and partially sighted people to vote at elections, once their consent has been provided.

The Call for Evidence will ask people to provide information that will: \* enhance the Government's understanding of the experiences of disabled people in registering to vote and casting their vote; \* help identify if current mechanisms to support disabled people to participate in the democratic process are sufficient; and \* identify examples of good practice provided by Electoral Service Teams to disabled people at elections.

Minister for the Constitution, Chris Skidmore said:

This Call for Evidence is part of the process to help ensure that every disabled person is able to have that equal chance and that equal right, to participate in our democracy, and to have their say.

We want to ensure that our elections are as accessible as possible, and to remove any barriers that exist to democratic participation – every voice matters and we want ours to be a democracy that works for everyone.

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## [Press release: New protections for](#)

# Lobster stocks

New protections to improve the long-term sustainability of England's shellfish industry and support the next generation of fishermen have been announced by Fisheries Minister George Eustice.

From Sunday (1 October), fishermen will no longer be able to land egg-bearing ('berried') lobsters and crawfish in English waters – a move that will protect the species until their eggs have hatched.

England's shellfish industry is worth £117 million, and over £22 million worth of lobster and crawfish were landed in ports in 2016. But with stock assessments indicating the species are being fished at more than twice the rate scientists consider optimal, taking action now will make stock levels more sustainable and provide long-term benefits for the fishing industry.

The UK is leading the way in Europe in providing this new protection for shellfish – with a proposal for similar action to ban the landing of berried lobsters across the EU currently in discussion.

Fisheries Minister George Eustice said:

We do not have quotas for lobsters but it is important to harvest shellfish sustainably. Ensuring that all egg-bearing lobsters are returned to the sea is an obvious step to allow populations to regenerate.

These new regulations will ensure a consistent approach around our coast and help protect our marine environment and the future of our shellfish industry.

The changes come after the government [consulted on introducing a ban in May](#), with respondents overwhelmingly in favour of proposals put forward and agreeing stocks are being over-exploited.

Local bans on landing berried lobsters and crawfish are already in place in certain Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authorities (IFCAs), but a coordinated national ban around England will provide a consistent framework to sustain these important species.

The move follows a similar ban on catching and keeping berried edible crabs – part of the UK's continued work to champion sustainable fishing.

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# News story: Consultation launched into new right of appeal at Investigatory Powers Tribunal

The Investigatory Powers Act 2016, which received Royal Assent in November last year, introduced a right of appeal from decisions of the Investigatory Powers Tribunal. This forms part of a range of reforms to the oversight of the security and intelligence agencies, and the use of investigatory powers.

The Investigatory Powers Tribunal provides a right of redress for anyone who believes they have been the victim of unlawful action by a public authority improperly using covert investigative techniques. It is also the appropriate forum to consider claims alleging the infringement of human rights which are brought against the security and intelligence agencies.

The [consultation](#) of the draft revised rules, which is open for 6 weeks, asks for views on the changes to the rules which govern the Investigatory Powers Tribunal. The draft rule changes reflect the new right of appeal as well as updating the existing rules to reflect the evolution of Investigatory Powers Tribunal practice and procedures since they were written in 2000.

The right of appeal will be available in limited circumstances where there is a point of law that raises an important point of principle or practice, or where there is some other compelling reason for allowing an appeal.

Launching the consultation, Security Minister Ben Wallace said:

The Investigatory Powers Tribunal is a crucial way to help ensure the activities of our intelligence and law enforcement agencies carry out to keep us all safe are authorised, necessary and proportionate.

I am pleased to confirm that the Investigatory Powers Tribunal is content with the draft update to the rules which allows a right of appeal.

We are now seeking wider views, in particular on the proposed changes. All responses are welcome and will be carefully considered.

The consultation comes as part of implementing the world-leading oversight regime being created by the Investigatory Powers Act 2016. The act brought together powers already available to the security and intelligence agencies and law enforcement to obtain communications and data about communications. It ensures that these powers, and the safeguards that apply to them, are clear and understandable.

It radically overhauls the way these powers are authorised and overseen, including through the creation of a powerful new Investigatory Powers Commissioner to oversee how these powers are used. And it ensures the powers are fit for the digital age.

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## **News story: Benefit reassessments stopped for those most in need**

Coming into effect from today (29 September 2017), claimants in the Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) support group and Universal Credit (UC) recipients with limited capability for work and work-related activity will no longer need to be reassessed if they:

- have a severe, lifelong disability, illness or health condition
- are unlikely to ever be able to move into work

See [Employment and Support Allowance and Universal Credit: changes to the Work Capability Assessment](#) for more information.

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## **Press release: PM meeting with Prime Minister Szydło: 29 September 2017**

Prime Minister Theresa May met with Polish Prime Minister Szydło, while in Estonia.

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

“Prime Minister Theresa May and Prime Minister Beata Szydło this afternoon held a bilateral meeting at the Tallinn Digital Summit in Estonia.

The Polish Prime Minister welcomed last week’s Florence speech and stressed the importance of reaching an early settlement on citizens’ rights.

PM May said this was a shared priority, good progress was being made in the talks and that she wanted to give certainty to Polish and other EU citizens living in the UK.

PM Szydło and PM May agreed on the importance of Poland having a strong relationship with the UK after Brexit, pointing to the two countries’ many

shared projects, family ties and history.

The two leaders agreed the next UK-Poland Summit will take place in Poland on December 21.

The bilateral summit – the second of its kind – will bring together senior ministers from both countries to discuss cooperation in areas such as foreign affairs, defence and security, and trade and investment.”