

[Voter Identification – FAQs](#)

What is voter identification and what will voters need to know?

Voter identification will require voters to prove their identity by showing a form of photographic identification, before being given their ballot paper in a polling station across Great Britain at national UK-wide elections, and at local elections in England.

A broad range of documents, both in date and expired, will be accepted in order to prove your identity to vote.

Why are we introducing this policy?

In our current electoral system, there is inexcusable potential for someone to cast another's vote at the polling station. All you need to do is say a name and address when you go to vote.

Stealing someone's vote is stealing their voice. Voter fraud is a crime that we cannot allow room for, so the government is stamping out any potential for it to take place in elections.

Showing identification to prove who they are is something people of all walks of life already do everyday. It is a reasonable and proportionate approach to extend this practice to voting and give the public confidence that their vote is theirs, and theirs alone.

It will also bring the rest of the UK in line with Northern Ireland, where a form of voter identification has been in use since 1985, requiring photo identification since 2003, with no adverse effect on voter participation.

Reports say that there is little evidence that electoral fraud takes place in the UK?

An independent review of electoral fraud conducted by Lord Pickles highlighted the events of cases such as Tower Hamlets – in which the 2014 Mayoral election was declared void by corrupt and illegal practices – as evidence of vulnerabilities in our system which must be addressed.

Personation – assuming the identity of another person with the intention to deceive – is very difficult to prove and prosecute but it is by no means a victimless crime. There are frequent anecdotal reports of personation, including most recently during the 2021 local elections. Often, it only comes to light if and when the real voter tries to vote later after the crime has been committed.

That is why voter identification is so important – it virtually eliminates the risk of it occurring in the first place.

The perception that our electoral system is vulnerable to fraud is damaging

for public confidence. Data from our pilot evaluations in 2018 and 2019 show that the requirement to show identification increased voter confidence in the process.

What identification will be acceptable?

There will be a wide range of photographic identification which will be acceptable.

These include:

- Various concessionary travel passes
- PASS cards
- Ministry of Defence identity cards
- Photocard parking permits issued as part of the Blue Badge scheme
- Driver's licenses
- Passports
- Free Voter Cards, provided by local authorities

Expired photographic identification will also be accepted if the photograph is of a good enough likeness to allow polling station staff to confirm the identity of the holder.

Legislation will also make clear that local authorities must provide a Voter Card free of charge where an elector does not have one of the approved forms of photo identification

What if I don't have any of those documents?

Everyone eligible to vote will continue to be able to do so. New research published by the Government shows that 98% of electors already own a photographic document that is on the list of acceptable types of identification under this policy.

Local authorities will be required, by law, to provide a Voter Card free of charge where an elector does not have one of the approved forms of photo identification. A similar provision will be established for anonymous electors who will be able to apply for a free anonymous elector Voter Card should they wish to vote in person.

What if identification is out of date?

This does not matter – expired forms of identification will be accepted as long as the photograph is a good enough likeness.

Who will pay for the free Voter Cards, will local authorities have to find the funds?

The Cabinet Office will cover costs of Voter Cards for local authorities. We continue to work with the sector to consider implementation in Great Britain in a sensible way and the next steps, including implementation costs, will be set out in due course.

How will voters know about this in time?

It is vital that such an important policy is implemented properly and with sufficient time for voters and the electoral sector to understand the new requirements.

As is the case before any election, or change requirement for the public, a comprehensive communications campaign will advertise the requirements in plenty of time and across a broad range of channels before the policy is implemented nationwide.

When will voter identification be required in future elections?

It is vital that such an important policy is implemented properly and with sufficient time for voters and the electoral sector to understand the new requirements.

We continue to work with the sector to consider implementation in a sensible way and the next steps will be set out in due course.

Will this additional measure put people off voting altogether?

Showing identification to prove who they are is something people of all walks of life already do everyday. It is a reasonable and proportionate approach to extend this practice to voting and give the public confidence that their vote is theirs, and theirs alone.

If the public are more confident in our democratic system, they are more likely to participate in it. Data from our pilot evaluations in 2018 and 2019 show that the requirement to show identification increased voter confidence in the process.

What other countries use identification?

Most European countries, include France, Germany, Austria, The Netherlands, as well as Switzerland and Canada.

It has been claimed that two million people won't have the right to vote under these plans?

That's not the case. Everyone who is entitled to vote must and will be able to.

We have published [research](#) that shows that 98% of electors already own a photographic document that is on the broad list of acceptable types of identification, and the 2% that currently do not, would not equate to two million.

Local authorities will be required, by law, to provide anyone without one of the wide range of accepted documents with a free, local Voter Card.

It has been reported that 19% of those with no recognisable identification would be put off voting based on the research published?

The 19% figure relates to an extremely small group of respondents who held a form of ID that they believed was non-recognisable and not overall respondents. This equates to 0.25% of overall respondents.

A further 6% with no recognisable identification said they would be more likely to vote.

The same research showed that 98% of all respondents owned one of the photographic documents on the list of acceptable types of identification, either in date or expired.

The Electoral Commission report claims that 7.5% of the electorate don't have access to photo identification?

The Electoral Commission report was published in 2015 and does not cover the breadth of documents, or expired documents, that the government's voter identification policy will accept.

New research shows that 98% electors already own a photographic document that is on the list of acceptable types of identification under this policy. The research, carried out by IFF Research, draws on the most comprehensive data available to date.

Recent media reporting suggests that people from ethnic minorities are less likely to have photo identification. Is this the case?

This is not what our research suggests, which draws on the most comprehensive available to date. The data shows that 99% of ethnic minorities had a form of identification that would be accepted under our proposals, as did 98% of people who identify as white. Legislation will also make clear that local authorities must provide a Voter Card free of charge where an elector does not have one of the approved forms of photo identification.

We will continue to work with a wide range of civil society organisations to ensure voter identification will work for everybody.

What about elderly people, are they less likely to have recognisable photo identification?

This is not what the research suggests, which draws on the most comprehensive available to date. It shows that 99% of 18-29 year olds hold the relevant identification, as do 98% of those aged 70 and above. Legislation will also make clear that local authorities must provide a Voter Card free of charge to anyone who does need it. We will continue to work with charities and civil society organisations, including those who advocate for older people, to ensure that voter identification will work for everybody.

What about disabled people, will this make it more difficult for them to participate?

Everyone who is entitled to vote must and will be able to.

We will continue working constructively with charities and civil society organisations to help people understand these changes and make sure that everyone who is eligible to vote will be supported to do so.

As well as steps to increase protections and tackle fraud, the Elections Bill also includes wider measures to make our polls more inclusive, such as:

- extending the list of people who can support disabled people to vote at the polling station
- requiring Returning Officers to consider the needs of voters with a wide range of disabilities

Isn't there a bigger problem with fraud taking place in postal voting and intimidating people into appointing a proxy vote?

Fraud, and the intent to intimidate or coerce a voter, are crimes. So this government is stamping out the space for such damage to take place in our elections – in any form.

Following the announcement of the Elections Bill in the Queen's Speech, the government has set out further details on measures to tighten the rules for absent voting and prevent voter intimidation [here](#).