



Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee

John Pullinger CB
Chair
Electoral Commission
3 Bunhill Row
London
EC1Y 8YZ

28 April 2023

Dear John,

Many thanks for your timely and constructive response [to my letter on 26 April 2023](#) which expressed concern about the data the Electoral Commission will be collecting on the implementation of voter ID at the local elections next week.

[Your response on 27 April 2023](#) suggests that meeter-greeters will not be collecting data on the number of voters turned away outside polling stations because they do not hold appropriate voter ID. Your letter also acknowledges that the presence of a meeter-greeters at polling stations "is likely to affect data recorded at the desk".

As previously outlined in my earlier letter, this is disappointing and is in direct contravention to what we were previously told by Peter Stanyon, Chief Executive of the Association of Electoral Administrators, who said that "returning officers are required where they have a meeter-greeter to report those they have advised at the door and turned away, and those at the desk as well. They will be reported as two separate things".¹

Given the importance of this issue, I have pursued this matter further, along with other MPs, via an [Urgent Question which took place on Thursday 27 April 2023](#).

This issue remains a significant concern and we would be grateful if you could provide clarity on the questions below. Given the importance of this issue and with the local elections less than one week away, we would appreciate a response by **Tuesday 2 May 2023**.

The assessment of voter ID implementation

Your letter states "it has therefore never been the case that an accurate, specific number of people impacted could be defined." The Minister confirmed in the Chamber on 27 April 2023 that the data collected by the Electoral Commission will represent "a significant part" of the government's evaluation of implementation and impact of voter ID.² If this data is not accurate and relied upon for future evaluation, this draws into question the credibility of any conclusions, which are integral to learning for future electoral events including general elections. **How can the Electoral Commission be confident in their assessment of the roll-out of voter ID, if an accurate number of people impacted will not be known?**

¹ Peter Stanyon, Association of Electoral Administrators, [Oral evidence](#), 17 April 2023, Q102

² Rachel Maclean, Minister of State, Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, [UQ on voter ID](#), 27



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Engagement with the statutory instrument

Your letter explains that legally only presiding officers or poll clerks can record this information, not meeter-greeters. **What involvement did the Electoral Commission have in the Government's drafting of the statutory instrument? Did the Electoral Commission raise concern about the impact of the statutory instrument on accurate data collecting?**

Practical challenges

In your letter you expressed concern that asking meeter-greeters to record data "risks providing inaccurate data in an inconsistent way" as it is only at the desk where individuals can be recorded against their elector numbers. Your letter also notes the practical challenges of accurately recording those who subsequently return with correct identification. **What assessment has the Electoral Commission give to how the practical challenges relating to how meeter-greeters collect data could be mitigated?**

Looking ahead

We are now only a handful of days away from the local elections which will take place on 4 May 2023. We remain extremely concerned about the fact meeter-greeters may turn people away without voter ID but this will not be recorded, and how this is likely to undermine assessment of the impact of voter ID. Your letter noted you will be undertaking opinion polling as part of your evaluation. If meeter-greeters are not to be recording those turned away, it is essential that opinion polling be widespread and substantial to reduce the large gap in data that will now occur. **How will the Electoral Commission ensure that opinion polling will sufficiently reflect the number of individuals, and their experience, being turned away due to lack of appropriate ID?**

With best wishes,

Mr Clive Betts MP
Chair, Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee