



Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee

Baroness Scott of Bybrook OBE
**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Faith
and Communities**
**Department for Levelling Up, Housing and
Communities**

10 November 2023

Dear Baroness Scott,

Voter ID

I am writing to you in relation to the recent implementation of voter identification for elections across England. The Electoral Commission published its [post-poll report on 13 September 2023](#), providing a fuller picture of the impact of the introduction of voter ID on voters and Electoral Registration Officers.

Figures from the Electoral Commission report showed voter ID had a significant impact on some people's ability to vote at the local elections in May 2023. Whilst 14,000 people were recorded as being unable to vote due to the requirement for voter ID, the Electoral Commission have warned they believe the actual number to be far greater. The [Electoral Commission's initial analysis of the local elections](#) found 4% of people did not vote as a result of the requirement. In [correspondence on 12 September to the Committee](#), the Electoral Commission confirmed that based on the local election turnout figures, 4% of non-voters was equivalent to 740,000 people. Looking forward, the Electoral Commission suggested multiple recommendations to deal with the issue in future elections, which Minister Rachel Maclean called "sensible and practical" in her response to [an Urgent Question](#) on 14 September 2023. **Which of the Electoral Commission's recommendations do the Government plan to take forward?**

Witnesses have expressed concerns to us that the impact of voter ID could be even higher at a future general election. General elections tend to have higher turnouts, meaning that even in areas where voter ID was used in local elections, it will still be a new requirement to many voters. **How does the Government intend to ensure that the proportion of those unable to vote due to voter ID is not considerably higher at a future general election?**

It is also of particular concern that the Electoral Commission found unemployed voters and disabled voters were more likely to be unable to vote due to the requirement. **What is the Government changing to ensure specific groups of individuals, including unemployed or disabled individuals, are not disproportionately impacted by this requirement in future elections?**

The Electoral Commission, the Association of Electoral Administrators and Democracy Volunteers along with multiple other stakeholders, have recommended the Government consider widening the list of acceptable ID documents.¹ In response to [an Urgent Question](#) on this matter on 14 September, Minister Rachel Maclean said, "when we try to expand the forms of identification that can be used, we

¹ [Election report - England 2023 \(parliamentonline.co.uk\)](#);
[AEA-2023-Post-Polls-Report-27-June-2023.pdf \(aea-elections.co.uk\)](#);
[Democracy Volunteers FINAL REPORT – English Local Elections 2023](#).



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are going to say yes in some instances and no in others". **Can you confirm the Government plans to expand forms of accepted ID? What specific types of documents are being reviewed, and is attestation being considered?**

Several returning officers have raised concerns with us about the recruitment and retention of electoral staff. Whilst a long-standing problem, we have heard evidence these issues have been exacerbated with the roll out of voter ID. At the local elections, we heard evidence that many authorities with elections relied on borrowing staff from neighbouring authorities to support them. The [Electoral Commission's report](#) concluded "administrators were only able to make these elections work by exceptional efforts and commitment". In a general election, local authorities will not be able to rely on those additional staff. Subsequently, we are increasingly concerned about the impact this may have on their ability to deliver a safe and secure election, when voter ID will be rolled out on a much larger-scale and many authorities (particularly those in Scotland and Wales) will be undertaking the challenge for the first time. **Has the Government conducted a review of electoral teams² to assess their capacity to deliver a general election effectively and securely?**

Looking forward, we are deeply concerned about the impact that implementing the remaining provisions of the Elections Act 2022 may have on the recruitment of electoral registration officers. The Electoral Commission have suggested the incoming changes will add "further complexity and administration to a system already under strain."³ **Will local authorities receive new burdens funding to implement these remaining provisions? Additionally, when will the secondary legislation for each of the remaining provisions will be presented to Parliament?**

We would welcome a response to the above questions by Friday 1 December.

Best wishes,

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

² Electoral staff refers to both electoral registration officers and polling station staff recruited specifically for elections

³ Letter from the Electoral Commission, 12 September 2023 (voter id report)