



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Baroness Scott of Bybrook OBE
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Our reference: 27590480

Best for Britain
International House
24 Holborn Viaduct
London
EC1A 2BN

By email: info@bestforbritain.org

JSK June 2023

I am writing in response to your online campaign 'Voter ID: tell the Government what you think' and I would be grateful if you could share this reply with your supporters.

In its manifesto, the Government committed to protecting the integrity of our democracy by introducing identification to vote at polling stations.

Introducing voter identification in Great Britain has been recommended by the independent Electoral Commission since 2014. It is also backed by international election observers, such as the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, which repeatedly called for the introduction of identification in polling stations in Great Britain, saying its absence was a security risk.

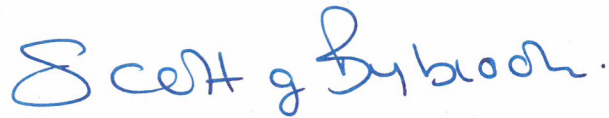
Identification for the purposes of voting has been a part of the electoral landscape in Northern Ireland for two decades, when it was introduced by the last Labour government. Electors and electoral administrators view it as a common-sense measure to protect the integrity of their elections. This view is replicated throughout many European countries, including France, Germany and Austria, as well as comparable democracies further afield, such as Canada, all of which require some form of identification to vote.

The voter identification policy was informed by a significant amount of research, including the findings of voter identification pilots held at local elections across 2018 and 2019, photographic identification research carried out by the Cabinet Office in 2021, and a significant amount of work with civil society organisations and other key stakeholders. The legislation was thoroughly considered and scrutinised by Parliament and early evidence is that the majority of electors will have cast their vote successfully at the polls in May when the new requirements were first introduced.

It is essential that the impact of the Elections Act and how the voter identification policy operated in practice is properly understood. The Electoral Commission (as the independent electoral regulator) will be providing its analysis of the running of the May polls, as it always does. We received its interim report in June and anticipate its full report in September. The Commission will include in its evaluation its analysis of the number of electors who were refused a ballot paper and will be relying on the data collected at each polling station by Returning Officers.

As set out in legislation, the Government will also be conducting an evaluation of the implementation of voter identification at the May polls. We expect to publish the report no later than November 2023. The evaluation will draw on data gathered at polling stations, as well as additional evidence gathered through public opinion surveys and qualitative research, to provide a full picture of the impact of the implementation of voter identification. Updates to the list of accepted identification will be considered as part of this evaluation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Scott of Bybrook". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

BARONESS SCOTT OF BYBROOK

