

6. Background to our evaluation | Electoral Commission Search

6. Background to our evaluation You are in the May 2019 voter identification pilot schemes section Home Our research Voter identification pilots May 2019 voter identification pilot schemes Pilot areas by numbers and equality: feedback from local and national organisations Confidence assessment: findings and recommendations First published: 12 July 2019 Last updated: 12 July 2019 Contents Overview Our findings Impact on voters: experience Impact on voters: confidence Impact on security Impact of administration of the polls Background to our evaluation Previous pilot scheme

In 2017, the UK Government asked local councils in England to test different ways of identifying voters at polling stations. At the local elections in May 2018, people in five areas had to show ID before they could vote in a polling station. We published our independent evaluation of the 2018 pilot scheme in July 2018. Overall we found that the scheme worked well, but we said that a wider range of local authorities should run more pilots in 2019. The May 2019 pilot scheme The Government decided to run more pilots at the May 2019 local elections. People in ten areas had to show ID before they could vote in a polling station: Local authorities holding pilots in May 2019 Photo ID only Pendle and Woking Photo or non-photo ID Braintree, Broxtowe, Craven, Derby and North Kesteven Poll card Mid Sussex, North West Leicestershire and Watford Local Returning Officers ran the processes in each area, and the Cabinet Office oversaw the pilot scheme as a whole. The legislation that allowed the pilot scheme to take place was published in March 2019. Northern Ireland

At elections held between 1985 and 2002, voters at polling stations in Northern Ireland had to show one of a number of specified pieces of ID before they could be issued with their ballot paper. The list of specified ID included a number of non-photographic identity documents. This requirement had been introduced to address concerns about electoral fraud, which at the time were widely perceived to be a problem in Northern Ireland. The list of specified ID was changed in 2002, and in elections since 2003 voters at polling stations in Northern Ireland have been required to show specified photo ID. The Government said this change was needed because of the ease with which identity documents could be falsified and the fact that non-photographic documents were regarded as providing insufficient proof of identity. The ID does not need to be current, but the Presiding Officer must be satisfied that the photograph is of a good enough likeness before issuing a ballot paper. The list of acceptable photo ID includes an Electoral Identity Card, which an elector can apply for free of charge from the Electoral Office. When the photo ID requirement was first introduced in Northern Ireland we found that the uptake of the electoral identity card varied between areas, and also that a number of disadvantaged groups were less likely to have eligible identification. However, our public opinion research after subsequent elections since 2003 suggests that voters in Northern Ireland have not experienced any difficulties in meeting the photo ID requirement.

Other areas of the electoral system This evaluation has only looked at the process of voting at a polling station and the potential impact of ID to reduce the risk of fraud at polling stations. It does not look at other areas of the electoral system where further strengthening might also be needed, such as improving protections for postal voters. We have made other recommendations for improvements to strengthen postal voting . The UK government also needs to make progress on implementing these recommendations and others that were highlighted in 2016 by Sir Eric Pickles in his review of electoral fraud . Aims of this report The law says that we have to publish an independent review of the pilot scheme within three months of the election, and there are specific questions that we have to consider: Whether the turnout of voters

was higher than it would have been if the scheme had not applied Whether voters found the procedures provided for their assistance by the scheme easy to use Whether the procedures provided for by the scheme led to any increase in personation or other electoral offences or in any other malpractice in connection with elections Whether those procedures led to any increase in expenditure, or to any savings, by the authority We collected information from different sources to make sure that our review of the 2019 voter ID pilot scheme is thorough and robust. This included: A survey asking people in each local area what they thought of the scheme A survey of people who worked in polling stations Data about what ID people showed to vote, and the number of people who were turned away for not having the right ID Views and evidence from organisations that represent different groups of voters, including local groups in each area Information about how much it cost to run the pilot scheme An expert review of the security of the different voter ID models Alongside this report we have also published key figures about each of the ten local authority areas that ran pilots in May 2019 . Report navigation links Previous 5. Impact of administration of the polls Related content Party registration decisions View our decisions on political party names, descriptions and emblems View current applications View the political party names, descriptions and emblems which we are currently considering as part of our assessment process Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run