Impact on public confidence   You are in the May 2018 voter identification pilot schemes section Home Our research Voter identification pilots May 2018 voter identification pilot schemes First published: 24 July 2019 Last updated: 24 July 2019 Impact on public confidence There is some evidence to suggest that requiring voters to show identification had a positive impact on public confidence in the May 2018 elections: People in areas where the pilot schemes took place were less likely to think that electoral fraud took place at the May polls than those in other areas where elections were also held in May 2018 Across the pilot areas as a whole people were more likely to say they thought electoral fraud was not a problem than they were in January 2018 People who voted in polling stations in the pilot scheme areas, and therefore experienced the process of showing identification, were more confident in the security of the voting system than non-voters in those areas Intro However, this picture is not consistent within the individual pilot areas and there is evidence that wider local circumstances also have an impact. Overall findings from the pilot schemes Perceptions of electoral fraud People in the pilot scheme areas were significantly less likely than those in other areas with elections in May 2018 to say that fraud took place at the elections. Our research also showed that in the pilot scheme areas there was a notable increase in the proportion of respondents saying that electoral fraud was not a problem between January and May 2018 (24% compared with 42%). At the same time, fewer people saw it as a serious problem (19% compared with 9%). This significant change in views between before and after polling day was not seen in other areas with elections in May 2018. In these areas the number of people who thought that electoral fraud was not a problem remained broadly consistent between January and May (37% compared with 33%). This was also the case for people who thought that electoral fraud was a problem (24% compared with 29%). The extent to which people's views about electoral fraud changed between before and after polling day also varied by individual pilot areas. People in Bromley and Watford were significantly more likely to say that electoral fraud was not a problem after polling day than before (increasing from 21% to 57% in Bromley and 34% to 57% in Watford). In the other three areas there was only a small increase in the proportion who said electoral fraud was not a problem. There is some evidence to suggest that local circumstances may affect the changes we can see in these surveys. For example, in our January survey, out of the five pilot scheme areas, people living in Woking were much more likely to say that they thought that electoral fraud was a problem than in the other areas. This could reflect relatively recent high profile cases of electoral fraud in Woking. Perceptions of voting in polling stations being safe from fraud and abuse The proportion of people in the pilot scheme areas saying that voting in polling stations was safe from fraud and abuse did not change significantly between January and May 2018 (90% and 86%).11 Across the pilot areas as a whole, the strength of confidence did increase between January and May: the proportion of people saying it was very safe increased from 43% to 57%. There was no evidence of a similar change in the other areas with elections in May 2018, which suggests some effect from the pilots. However, it is worth noting that we did not find this increase in Watford either, where the proportion saying that voting in a polling station is very safe from fraud and abuse fell between January and May 2018. Our survey results also show that people who voted in the pilot areas, and therefore experienced showing their identification, were more likely to say voting in a polling station was very safe from fraud and abuse than those who didn't vote (64% compared with 43%). Overall impact of an identification requirement There is inconsistent evidence from the May

2018 pilot schemes about whether a requirement to show identification at polling stations in Great Britain would improve confidence in the security of the voting system overall. There were some significant differences between the pilot scheme areas. A majority of people in Bromley (63%) and Gosport (57%) said that an identification requirement would make them more confident in the security of the voting system. In the other three areas a majority of people said it would make no difference, although around a third of people did say it would make them more confident. The experience of showing identification may have had a positive effect on levels of public confidence. People who voted in polling stations in pilot areas were more likely than those who didn't vote to say that the requirement to show identification would make them more confident in the security of the voting system (52% compared with 37%). Forty seven per cent of people in the pilot scheme areas thought that a requirement to show identification would make them feel more confident in the security of the voting system, and 62% thought this in the other areas where there were elections in May 2018. Beyond the pilots: the impact on public confidence at future elections The evidence from the pilot schemes suggests that showing identification in polling stations may have had some positive impact on the level of public confidence in the security of the system. Overall, however, the evidence is mixed as the impact was not consistent across all of the pilot areas. It is worth noting again the impact of the relatively low levels of engagement with local elections. As set out above, voters who engaged with the election were more likely to be more confident than non-voters and it may be that any potential impact on confidence from an identification requirement is limited when turnout at polling stations is low. Further work, including in future pilot schemes, would be needed to help the Government and Returning Officers better understand any connection between a voter identification requirement and public confidence in the election. Related content Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number. Our Commissioners 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