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and Parliament should consider carefully the available evidence about the impact of different approaches on the accessibility and security of polling station voting in Great Britain. This should include evidence from the experience of polling station voters in Northern Ireland, who have been required to show ID since 1985 (including requiring photo ID since 2003), as well as the evidence from the local pilot schemes in both 2018 and 2019. We have identified three key areas for further consideration:

Any ID requirement should deliver clear improvements to current security levels. A photo ID requirement would provide the greatest level of security, but each of the models that have been piloted in 2018 and 2019 would provide some level of improved security compared with the current rules. Government and Parliament should consider what level of security is proportionate to the risk of personation fraud in polling stations. Any ID requirement should ensure accessibility for all voters. While a large majority of people already have access to an acceptable form of photo ID, allowing only existing forms of officially issued photo ID would not be accessible for everyone. To make sure voting at polling stations remains accessible, there would need to be other options for people who do not already have an acceptable form of photo ID. This could involve providing free of charge locally issued photo ID, as currently provided for electors in Northern Ireland. Alternatively, it could involve allowing voters to use their poll card – on the current model or a different model – as the primary or secondary route to proving identity, depending on the level of security required. Any ID requirement should realistically be deliverable, taking into account the resources required to administer it. The pilot scheme has shown that some ID options would be more complicated for Returning Officers and polling station staff to deliver. The relative security benefits of these options would need to be considered alongside the impact on the administration of election procedures, particularly polling station processes.

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