

Proposals in the Queen's Speech You are in the section Home On this page Briefing summary Full briefing First published: 17 October 2019 Last updated: 17 October 2019 Summary Date: 17 October 2019 For: MPs Full briefing This briefing outlines the Electoral Commission's response to proposed legislation on electoral integrity which was included in the Queen's Speech. Voter identification The proposed legislation would introduce a requirement for voters at polling stations to show identification before they can be issued with a ballot paper. We undertook independent evaluation of the Government's voter ID pilots in 2018 and 2019 . These clarified the way in which a voter ID scheme could be delivered in Great Britain but did not point to definitive conclusions, particularly for higher turnout polls. We identified areas for further consideration, relating to security and accessibility. We welcome the Government's commitment to for the provision of a free of charge, locally issued photo ID, as currently provided for electors in Northern Ireland. This would be available on application to voters without an approved form of photo ID. If legislation is approved by Parliament the Commission would expect to conduct public awareness campaigns in the lead-up to elections, to inform voters on what they need to do to comply with new identification rules. We will also provide guidance for Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers to help them deliver new voter identification requirements. We publish data on allegations of electoral offences annually and in 2014 published a report on electoral fraud. We also carry out annual survey work with voters, which regularly finds concerns about electoral fraud and the integrity of elections, including as a result of the lack of a requirement to show ID. Postal and proxy voting Proposal to introduce restrictions on campaigners handling postal votes – this would formalise the 'best practice' approach in our guidance and a voluntary code of conduct for campaigners. That would be beneficial as we do not see universal compliance by campaigners with current non-legally binding arrangements. Proposal to require people to re-apply to vote by post every three years – as we have previously recommended , would mean that voters are encouraged to regularly review and confirm that they still want to vote by post, or choose to vote in person at a polling station instead. This would help to ensure records are up-to-date and accurate. Proposal to limit the number of people for whom someone may act as a proxy voter to a maximum of two regardless of their relationship – as we have previously identified, this could disadvantage some people (including overseas voters) who have a genuine need to appoint a proxy. This should be considered in developing the legislation. The Government makes a welcome commitment of further support to people with disabilities. Extending the types of people who can act as a companion for disabled voters and improving the tools provided to support voters with visual impairments should help support people to cast their votes independently and in secret. We will work with the Government and groups representing people with sight loss and other disabilities to ensure that the proposed legislation delivers meaningful benefits. Other measures We strongly welcome the Government's commitment to implementing an imprint requirement for digital campaigning material; this is urgently needed to ensure transparency for voters about who is spending money online to influence them. We will work to ensure these proposals can improve transparency and public confidence. We also welcome the Government's intention to consult on measures to strengthen protection of our democracy from foreign interference. We continue to recommend our laws are updated to prevent foreign funding of elections and referendum campaigns. Other key priorities for the Electoral Commission While not included in the Queen's Speech, we continue to firmly recommend the UK Government

introduce other legislative changes to make our elections more transparent and maintain trust and participation in our democratic processes. These include:

- [Simplifying and modernising electoral law](#) We need comprehensive electoral law reform, including a new overarching UK Elections Act. The UK's Law Commissions have already provided a blueprint for electoral law reform that is widely supported by those who deliver, regulate and campaign at elections.
- [Strengthening digital campaign regulation](#) Effective campaigning is an essential part of well-run elections, but we need transparency and safeguards to maintain trust and confidence. We have set out a package of recommendations to increase transparency about digital campaign spending, and to strengthen our investigation and enforcement tools.
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