

News story: Don't forget to take ID to vote in five pilot areas on 3 May

The government is working with five local authorities to pilot the use of identification at polling stations in the local elections on 3 May 2018.

In Swindon and Watford, you will need to take your poll card to the polling station. These are being delivered to every eligible voter with a reminder to keep it safe for use on polling day.

In Bromley and Gosport, you will need one piece of photo identification, like a passport or driving licence, or two pieces of non photo ID, such as a recent bank or credit card statement and utility bill of which one must contain your address.

In Woking, you will need photo identification, like a passport, driving licence or senior bus pass.

To find a full list of accepted ID in each pilot area visit the local authority website

If you are concerned you don't have the required identification documents, you should visit your local authority website and follow their advice for applying for an alternative identification document.

Why are these local authorities piloting voter ID?

A report from the Electoral Commission showed that allegations of people pretending to be other people to steal their votes doubled nationally between 2014 and 2016.

The Electoral Commission welcomes the voter ID pilots as a positive first step towards implementing its 2014 recommendation that an accessible, proportionate voter identification scheme should be introduced in Great Britain.

The impact of electoral fraud on voters can be significant and takes away their right to vote as they want, whether through intimidation, bribery or by impersonating someone and casting their vote. There is undeniable potential for people to cast other people's votes unless their identity is checked at the polling station.

We already ask that people prove who they are in order to collect a parcel from the post office, claim benefits, rent a car or travel abroad, and it is reasonable to take the same approach to protect voting rights.

How are local authorities making people aware they need to bring

identification?

The five pilot local authorities are working to ensure everyone is aware that they need to bring identification to the polling station, and what to do if they don't have the required identification.

The local authorities launched their public awareness campaigns at the start of the year. Since then, they have been contacting local community, charity and faith groups to make sure everyone knows about the changes.

The public awareness campaigns are tailored to each area and involve a combination of

- digital advertising and social media
- outdoor advertising
- local, regional and national press
- stakeholder engagement
- face to face meetings
- pop up stalls (e.g. outside the supermarket)
- delivering information to every eligible voter