

Voters in the UK must have a photo ID to qualify to vote

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Voters will now face an extra hurdle to cast their ballot in elections in Britain, with the introduction of having to produce a valid photo ID. Ministers created this requirement in what they say is an attempt to crack down on allegations of in-person voter fraud.

Critics say these changes will make it harder for some to vote.

There have been 1,386 cases of alleged electoral fraud reported to the police since 2018, according to the Electoral Commission. These led to six police cautions and nine convictions. In the past five years there has been “no evidence of large-scale electoral fraud”, the commission said. Although some Conservative MPs claim the statistics underplay the issue.

After trials in 10 constituencies, photo ID requirements are being rolled out nationally for the first time in the local elections taking place on the 4th of May. Previously, people in the UK could attend a polling station by just giving their address – with



From October, the ID requirements will apply to all future elections. Source: secretlondon123 (via Wikimedia Common)

some voters choosing to bring their polling cards.

From October, the ID requirements will apply to all future elections. You do not need to show proof of ID if voting by post.

Some polling stations may have “greeters” outside to remind voters about the changes to voting rules. However, you only need to show your photo ID to staff issuing ballot papers inside.

Only original versions of the photo ID will be accepted and photocopies will not be allowed. But the ID will still be usable even if it is out of date, as long as the voter still resembles their picture and their name matches the one on the electoral roll. If the voter no longer looks like the photo on their ID they will be encouraged to apply for a new free ID document known as a Voter Authority Certificate. The deadline to apply was the 25th April,

which now has passed.

You are able to exchange a paper driving license for a photocard, or apply for a photocard travel pass if you are over 60, disabled or registered blind (or partially sighted).

As well as a passport or driving license, other forms of ID include a blue badge, older person's or disabled person's bus pass, and any identity card bearing the hologram of proof of age standers scheme. National identity cards issued by a country in the European Economic Area and biometric immigration documents will also be allowed.

The number of voters who are unable to vote due to this new rule will be recorded. Polling station staff have a legal duty to record the number of people who cannot be issued a ballot paper because they could not show valid photo ID.

This number will include the people who are turned away and later return to the polling station with the correct ID.