

The Association of Electoral Administrators



With new electoral legislation proposed in today's Queen's Speech, we once again call for a single Electoral Administration Act to be drafted.

Rather than bolting on new legislation to law that is decades or even a century old, a new Act would introduce logical and manageable change to deliver the elections and service electors expect and deserve.

Voter ID

We take a neutral position over Voter ID at polling stations, but believe careful consideration is needed to make sure it is deliverable and does not:

- add unnecessarily to election bureaucracy, costs and risk.
- lead to the disenfranchisement of certain groups, particularly those who are already underrepresented.
- negatively impact on people who wish to vote.

The rate of progress needed to introduce voter ID in time for the next UK Parliamentary General election – expected to be held in 2024 if not earlier – is a concern. For voter ID to work successfully, sufficient lead-in time for legislation, administrative planning, delivery, and voter education is vital.

As evidence suggests many electors do not have either a passport or driving licence, a national or locally produced photographic ID card will be necessary, similar to that already running in Northern Ireland.

The responsibility for producing a local ID card should rest with the local authority, rather than Returning and Electoral Registration Officers, who do not have the capacity to administer the scheme at their busiest time.

Any scheme must also be fully funded, with no additional cost burden pushed onto councils.

Fixed Term Parliaments Act

The abolition of the Act was expected, and with two unscheduled UK Parliamentary General Elections in 2017 and 2019, it was clear the Act was obsolete.

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We would strongly oppose any reduction in the general election timetable as proposed in March by the Joint Committee on the Fixed Term Parliaments Act.

As we [stated in our evidence to the Committee](#), a reduction is simply not possible within our current electoral system.

The current 25-day timetable is only just achievable, particularly in the case of a snap election. A minimum statutory timetable with no lead-in time does not put the citizen first.

A shorter timetable risks disenfranchising electors, leaving them little time to register to vote or cast postal votes, especially those living overseas.

Less time would also significantly jeopardise a Returning Officer's ability to manage poll logistics, and significantly increase the risk of disenfranchisement and failure.

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