Define research & insight

The Electoral Commission

Perceptions of Electoral Fraud: Qualitative Research

Report of Findings for Stage 2

Tender Reference: FC0148-23-KS-EA
September 2013

Table of Contents

Introduction

1. Executive Summary

Project context

1.1 The Electoral Commission has undertaken a review into the current voting system with a focus on any potential vulnerability. Proven cases of electoral fraud are relatively rare in the UK and levels of concern amongst the public and politicians are comparatively high. A key aim of the review is to *better understand concerns amongst the general public and others about electoral fraud* and to *get a better picture of the actual level of fraud*.

1.2 The Commission's review[1] has considered:
- potential vulnerabilities in the electoral system
- the integrity of electoral administration processes in the UK
- the role and effectiveness of different stakeholders involved in supporting the delivery of elections
- contributions from senior stakeholders[2] outlining their concerns and experiences of electoral fraud

1.3 The Commission will publish its final conclusions and recommendations from the review in the autumn of 2013, in time for any necessary legislation to be brought forward during the life of the current UK Parliament.

1.4 This report details findings from the second stage of a two stage qualitative research study undertaken as part of this wider review[3]. The key objective of this second stage was to **build on Stage 1 findings in order to understand how EC can best address concern levels around electoral fraud amongst the general public, to explore any changes that should be made to the current electoral system and to test out options for changes set out in the review.**

1.5 More detail on the context of the project can be found in Appendix 1.

---

[1] See: http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/focus-on-items/have-your-say-on-electoral-fraud

[2] Including elected representatives, political parties, professionals working in the elections field, the police and prosecuting authorities, academics, voluntary organisations and think tanks.

[3] Stage 1 research took place in January-February 2013 and focussed on: what the public consider to be electoral fraud, what activities appear to cause most concern for the public, which elections and geographical areas generate most concern, how concerned overall the public are, what drives concern, what people already and how they respond to more information about the electoral process and measures in place and whether people feel there is likely to be value in making changes to electoral processes.

Overview of Approach

1.6   The sample included 91 members of the general public.

1.7   75 participants were new to the research and were interviewed in either one of six group discussions or 39 individual depth interviews. These participants represented:
- A spread of those who stated they were 'concerned' and 'less concerned'
- A thorough mix of demographic criteria
- A mix of polling station and postal voters

1.8   In addition, 16 participants from Stage 1 of the research were re-contacted and were interviewed for a second time via telephone depths.

1.9   Fieldwork was undertaken in a range of locations across the UK (two locations in each of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and five locations in England). Locations were chosen to:
- Include those identified as having a higher risk of electoral fraud issues
- Include those where an election was held in May (i.e. those with recent voting experience at elections)
- Include those where neither of the above applied, and
- Ensure a sample broadly representative of the UK population

1.10 All participants were given information to consider in advance of the interview session/focus group. Half the sample was given Pre-Placement 1[4] (which provided information about the way the electoral system operates only) and half were given Pre-Placement 2[5] (which provided both electoral system information and a range of possible changes to the current electoral system

1.11 A detailed breakdown of the methodology and sample can be found in Appendix 2.

1.12 Topic areas discussed in both the depth interviews and group discussions included:
- Knowledge, understanding and experience of the electoral system
- Responses to policy options to explore possible changes that should be made to the current electoral system
- Perceptions and understanding of undue influence relating to elections[6]

1.13 Respondents were asked for their views on a number of specific electoral system policy changes which fell under the following areas: [7]

---

[4] For Pre-placement 1, please see Appendix 3.

[5] For Pre-placement 2, please see Appendix 4.

[6] Stage 1 of the research and findings from the wider fraud review prompted further research on this topic at Stage 2 in order to understand it in more depth.

[7] For the full list of policy options see Appendix 5. Policy options presented to participants in the research were derived from a number of different sources. These included:
- Recommendations included in previous Commission policy and election reports - for example, advance voting in polling stations;
- Systems and processes used elsewhere in the UK - for example, restrictions on postal voting and the requirement for photographic ID in polling stations in Northern Ireland;
- International practice - for example, the option of cancelling a postal vote in Sweden and other parts of Scandinavia; or mobile polling in Australia, Canada and the Republic of Ireland;
- Proposals put forward by respondents to Phase 1 of the Commission's fraud review or supported by respondents to public opinion research - for example, restricting the handling of postal vote application forms and postal ballot packs.

- Restricting the availability of postal voting in Great Britain
- Alternatives to postal voting in the event of restricted postal voting in Great Britain
- Stopping the handling of postal vote application forms and postal ballot packs by political parties, candidates, canvassers and campaigners
- Restricting proxy voting
- Requiring voters to present photographic identification at polling stations
- Introducing measures to improve the security in or around polling stations

1.14   Respondents were shown a selection of scenarios representing behaviours that might be either categorised as influence or undue influence. They were then probed on their perceptions and categorisation of these examples. See Appendix 5 for a full list of the undue influence scenarios tested in groups and depths.

Stage 2 Key Findings

1.15   The Stage 2 sample was recruited to represent a spread of levels of concern about electoral fraud. However, irrespective of their initial claimed level of concern, participants from across the sample reported little to no direct experience of electoral fraud themselves. As seen in Stage 1 of this research, concern about electoral fraud was sometimes linked to historical cases reported by the media and often created or further supported by both a series of assumptions and a lack of knowledge with which to counter those assumptions.

1.16   For example, providing a focus on the topic of electoral fraud through research implied to participants that electoral fraud was an issue (an idea they had no evidence to refute). Introduction to potential changes to the electoral system sometimes further exacerbated this idea, as respondents assumed that such measures were being suggested in response to a problem of some significance. Furthermore, where respondents were given information about the electoral system that was new to them (for example, information about methods of voting of which they had not previously been aware), this created or enhanced a perception that they knew little about the system overall, which supported the sense that there may be issues like electoral fraud that they are unaware of but should be concerned about. Overall then, prompting consideration of electoral fraud appears to raise concern to a level that may seem out of proportion with the number of reported cases of electoral fraud. [8]

1.17   However, when the public were given limited information about electoral system security measures in place and statistics on the number of reported cases of electoral fraud in the UK, they were reassured and concern either stayed low or was reduced.

1.18   Participants were given the opportunity to deliberate information on how the electoral system operates and found some of this information reassuring in terms of security (for example, learning that the police had a dedicated role in relation to helping prevent electoral fraud). However, participants perceived there were weak points in the system which informed their thoughts on worthwhile policy changes. The public did not spontaneously raise the need for legislation but, upon consideration, felt that

---

[8]We would expect a similar process to happen when respondents are exposed to a media story on electoral fraud, which delivers new information on a relatively unknown topic. For example, concern may be heightened in response to a news story about electoral fraud.

some policy changes would be worthwhile. The most worthwhile changes[9] were those that were felt would bring the system into line with their expectations. The following are broadly arranged in order of how worthwhile the policies were considered to be:

- Stopping the handling of postal vote application forms and postal ballot packs by political parties, candidates, canvassers and campaigners
    - Making it illegal for political parties, candidates, campaigners and supporters to handle postal vote applications and postal ballot packs
    - Making it a legal requirement for completed postal vote application forms to be returned directly to the relevant Electoral Registration Officer's address.
    - Sending completed postal vote application forms to an intermediary address, such as a local party office, would be prohibited
    - Making it illegal for anyone other than the voter to hand in postal ballot packs at polling stations on polling day.
    - Making sure that the list of people entitled to vote by post is not made available to anyone before elections
- Introducing legally binding (rather than voluntary) rules for campaigners operating in and around polling stations/places.
- Requiring voters to present identification at polling stations (but not stipulating that this must be photographic)
- Limiting the number of electors for which a person can be appointed as proxy, to four people – two family members and two others
- Limiting the number of electors for which a person can be appointed as proxy to two people

1.19 Communication around changes to the system needs to be carefully considered, with such changes presented as ensuring the system is best practice rather than driven in response to high levels of fraud.

---

[9] As judged against whether the policy change would:
- Negatively affect voter action (for self or the vulnerable) by increasing difficulty of voting
- Create increased cost to system (and taxpayer)
- Create complexity in the system itself leading to potential difficulties for electors in terms of being able to fully comprehend the system and their voting options.
- Appear ineffective/unsuitable for tackling or limiting fraud
- Target specific locations only
- Happen for a limited time period only
- Make it possible for vulnerable people to be manipulated (especially in a systematic way or on a large scale)

Detailed Findings

2. Awareness and understanding of electoral fraud

2.1   As at Stage 1, participants showed that electoral fraud was not something they had previously considered in much detail, or at all, prior to the research. However, once the topic of electoral fraud was raised through the research process, factors came into play that boosted concern about electoral fraud. Respondents very quickly became suspicious that their previous assumptions about low levels of electoral fraud had been misplaced, and queries started to surface about the overall safety and security of the electoral system.

> *It's something I've never really thought about but I think it's fairly safe.*
> [Female, DE, 17-26, Edinburgh]
>
> *I think it's just an assumption: we live in Britain and these things don't happen.*
> [Male, C1C2, 25-50, Aberdeen]
>
> *I have perhaps the naive perspective that the UK has less electoral irregularities than other countries.*
> [Male, AB, 50-60, Edinburgh]
>
> *I think [electoral security] is good, it's probably far better than it would be in other countries, but you do wonder if some darker powers might be able to influence it...there's always that possibility.*
> [Male, C1, 27-35, London]

2.2   In contrast, while the public in Northern Ireland had similarly not given electoral fraud much thought spontaneously, they tended not to experience an escalation of concern during the interview process[10]. When the topic was raised, their levels of concern increased a little, but tended to remain low overall, before returning to a very low level by the end of the session.

> *I would say it's a good 90% secure....it's a small country with a small minority who would try and manipulate it...I think there's more honest people than dishonest people...it's all down to photographic ID and a properly registered application form with a governing body...it all makes it more secure...compared to England, it's a hell of a lot more secure!*
> [Male, 47, DE, Belfast]

---

[10] The electoral system in Northern Ireland differs from Great Britain in that photographic ID is required for polling station voting, and there are additional restrictions on postal voting, including the requirement to provide a reason for requesting a postal vote, rather than this option being available on demand.

> *I'm happy enough to think that the government's doing it for me so that I don't have to worry about that...or anything untoward happening.*
> [Male, 44, DE, Belfast]

> *On a scale of 1-10 I would say its 9 ½ safe...the police involved and your ID... what we discussed today, it met my expectations.*
> [Male, C1C2, 27-35, Belfast]

2.3 Therefore, overall, raising the topic – and the means by which electoral fraud could happen – serves to create a sense of concern where it might not have existed previously or to any great extent. The key reasons for this are two-fold:

- The public have no information or knowledge about security of the electoral system or the actual number of reported cases of electoral fraud which they used to counter the concern
- A series of "logical" assumptions arise, drawn from expectations or experience, which support or validate the idea that there are opportunities for electoral fraud.

> *It all seems quite reasonable until you start talking about fraud and then you think, well there might be some flaws in there somewhere.*
> [Female, C1, 36-49, Edinburgh]

3. How does experience of the electoral system 'inform' assumptions about electoral fraud?

3.1 Respondents typically lacked any detailed or overarching knowledge regarding the electoral system or specific security measures that might be in place.

> *I don't have a lot of knowledge on politicians or polling or government. So, reading that was a bit of blur.[11]*
> [Female, C1C2, 17-26, Ipswich]

> *I had a general idea but a lot of things are probably taken for granted.*
> [Male, C1C2, 50-60, Ipswich]

> *All of it was new, I never knew who was involved and what their titles were.*
> [Female, DE, 17-26, Edinburgh]

3.2 There was also a lack of awareness of the actual number of reported cases of electoral fraud in the UK. This meant that they had no 'positive' facts or arguments about electoral fraud that they might have otherwise been drawn upon to dispel concern.

> *I don't really know enough about it to be honest, I've not got any statistics on it, generally I think the UK's quite good. Well I just think you don't hear much [about fraud] but obviously they're doing this so there must be a problem.*
> [Female, AB, 17-35, Cardiff]

---

[11] This participant was referring to the pre-placed information outlining the electoral system in England, Scotland and Wales. See Appendix 3.

Of course there is scope for improvement of almost any system. I have no factual knowledge of where electoral fraud is strongest, but I'm sure there is some information on it.
[Male, AB, 50-60, Edinburgh]

We don't know, or we've never heard of, how much fraud is actually going on. I mean how much fraud would have to go on to actually sway an election.
[Aberdeen]

3.3 Respondents therefore began to rationalise the possibility or existence of significant levels of electoral fraud by drawing examples from the back of their minds as 'evidence' that it was taking place. These examples were largely derived from word of mouth and historical media stories accessed via television and newspaper channels.

3.4 In some areas where participants were able to draw on examples of electoral fraud that were both specific and local[12], the conviction that electoral fraud was an issue was strengthened. In addition, for those who were able to draw from media stories, a particular link was often created between electoral fraud and minority communities (in some cases ethnic minorities) which boosted perceptions that electoral fraud was a particular issue in those communities and areas.

3.5 Specific 'stories' reported in this Stage of the research include:
- The removal from office of the Mayor of Peterborough in 2008 and his conviction, along with two others, for vote rigging using postal and proxy votes[13]
- An electoral fraud case in Oldham in 2001, in which 11 people were arrested for using dead people's names to vote and impersonating other voters[14]
- A newspaper report (unspecified) of an Asian man completing postal votes on behalf of his family
- General requests for re-counts in Northern Ireland[15]

Mayor Choudhary was rigging the votes with his family. There was a lot of trouble and press about it. It made me think you can commit fraud in elections.
[Female, C2, 50-60, Peterborough]

There were two cases about ten years ago. They were despicable and the police weren't quick to react. But eventually these people were arrested and send to court and convicted. It was people from the ethnic community... They don't have those same moral drives. They voted multiple times on spurious voting polling cards.
[Male, 63, E, Oldham]

There was a man who had got postal votes for all his family and then got everyone to vote how he said... I think I saw that in the newspapers.
[Female, C2, 50-60, Peterborough]

---

[12] Examples from Peterborough, Oldham, Belfast
[13] BBC report of the original news story:
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/cambridgeshire/7335364.stm
[14] Wikipedia entry referencing 2001 vote-rigging in Oldham:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oldham_Council_election,_2000
[15] Although this is not officially an example of electoral fraud it was raised as evidence that the integrity of the election result had been called into question.

> *There's always someone or another wanting a re-count.*
> [Male, 47, DE, Belfast]

3.6   The public also tended to reflect on their own voting experience to judge the integrity of election methods, protocols and processes as a whole. Given that very few participants had experienced difficulties (of any description) in their voting, many assumed that vulnerable points or problem areas within the system must lie with the methods of voting that they did not use personally, i.e. polling station voters assume the issue is with postal voting (or proxy voting when this is introduced).

> *That strikes me as a strange thing proxy voting, it doesn't seem fair someone voting for someone else.*
> [Male, C1, 27-35, London]

> *I didn't know that the postal vote was any less secure than going to the polling station. In fact, I thought that polling vote was less secure. Because you take your card there and they just say is this you. Whereas, with postal voting I was asked to verify my signature more than once.*
> [Male, Postal voter, BC1, 50-60, Leeds]

> *I thought proxy most open to abuse...I could envisage that there are a number of elderly people in care homes...therefore there is an opportunity there*
> [Male, AB, 50-60, Edinburgh]

> *I was aware of postal and proxy voting before but I thought it was only for special cases- it shocked me to read it was for anyone... that's a bit worrying because those ways of voting are more open to fraud.*
> [Female, C2, 50-60, Peterborough]

> *Looking from what I know, it seems like there are quite a few areas that could be exploited. Person voting by post – how do they know it's that person? Going to the polling station – again, how do you know it's that person? So, it looks like there are quite a few back doors.*
> [Male, DE, 27-35, Ipswich]

3.7   There were also many participants who started to see potential security issues related to their own method of voting too, most typically because they did not feel their identity had been rigorously verified[16].

> *I've always thought 'how do you know it's me?*
> [Group, Mixed gender, C2DE, 36-60, Surrey]

> *If I recall correctly when you arrive at the polling station you aren't even required to give your ballot card in... which strikes me as a little open to irregularities.*
> [Male, AB, 50-60, Edinburgh]

3.8   Furthermore, participants across the sample tended to apply a broadly consistent 'logic' to their appraisal of the issue, based on current disaffection with politics and politicians. This stance fed a cynicism towards any issues they categorised within the 'political' sphere, with many immediately assuming the worst.

---

[16] This included both polling station and postal voters with no difference in concern relating to their own method.

> *Well I have to say it doesn't surprise me... you know, with the bribery and the percentages... at the end of the day whoever you vote for the government aren't going to listen to you.*
> [Female, C1, 36-49, Leicester]

> *It's just a mess, whoever's in government; they'll do the same thing anyway.*
> [Female, C1C2, 25-50, Aberdeen]

3.9 General concerns about the culture of ethnic minority communities or immigration were also felt to provide a potential explanation for electoral fraud. Some participants asked whether this is 'an immigration issue?' and begin to draw links between ethnic minority populations and the incidence or likelihood of electoral fraud being committed.

> *I don't know, no, I'm tempted to say the Asian community where somebody's uncle is up for election so everybody has to vote for him even if they don't want to, that sounds awful and I'm not being racist.*
> [Female, C1, 50-60, Walsall]

> *In particular, when you have a lot of unauthorised people coming to the country that might have a bearing on voting processes.*
> [Male, C1C2, 50-60, Ipswich]

> *There's a high volume of people from other countries here ...In some areas with the high number of minorities it could happen.*
> [Female, BC1, 50-60, Leeds]

> *Without sounding racist, maybe it happens in bigger families. Maybe they have more of a family impact. Whereas here we're not that pressured or can't be arsed. Whereas in Asian families, if there's a big father figure, and they will have their opinion spread out: Alright, I have a thousand of family members in this area.*
> [Male, C2DE, 17-35, Nottingham]

3.10 Finally, participants interpreted the content of the policy options to indicate that the areas in the electoral process to which they referred to were those most affected by fraudulent practices. . In fact, highlighting any change implied there was evidence of significant electoral fraud in that area, meaning there are also specific considerations for how changes are communicated (see Section 10).

> *Where that says 'in areas where there's been fiddling' that just proves that there's been fiddling!*
> [Group, Mixed gender, C2DE, 36-60, Surrey]

> *I hadn't considered it but we wouldn't be here and they wouldn't be considering changing the system if it wasn't an issue.*
> [Group, Mixed gender, ABC1, 17-35, London]

> *I always thought it wasn't really anything but a slight issue in this country, but reading through it I thought well is it more of an issue than I thought.*
> [Male, C1C2, 25-50, Newport]

3.11 Regardless of the way in which concern was established however, the emotional responses were broadly similar. Respondents expressed a distinct sense of dismay

as a result of belief that electoral fraud was yet 'another bad news story for the UK'. They fitted electoral fraud as an issue into a familiar narrative that another part of the country they had been assumed to be running well was actually not fit for purpose.

> *I always voted and thought – how do they know I am doing that? It kind of pops into your head, but what I was thinking all along was true!*
> [Female, C1C2, 27-35, Tower Hamlets]

> *I got angry reading these changes as I thought our voting system was the best in the world but now I know it's not. It makes me think it's not secure at all. It brought to mind other stories I'd heard but dismissed about fraud in the system. I thought fraud wasn't that common but reading this makes you realise it must be.*
> [Female, C2, 50-60, Peterborough]

3.12   They also greeted this 'news' with a degree of surprise, since having previously heard nothing to indicate that electoral fraud might be an issue, it did feel unexpected. Spontaneously then, there was little indication that participants had considered the system to be in need of change prior to being asked about it. The research effect was that when people were asked if they thought changes should be considered, they assumed that there was a particular issue that needed action in order for it to be resolved[17].

> *I was just shocked that there was so much fraud or that fraud was mentioned. That's something you associate with third world countries. I was really quite shocked. I was like 'Do we really have a need for all this security? Obviously there needs to be an element of security. But do we really need that much? I was really taken aback by it. I didn't think it was a problem.*
> [Female, C2DE, 17-35, Nottingham]

> *I wasn't concerned at all until I got to the proposed changes.*
> [Female, C1, 36-49, Edinburgh]

3.13   Finally, participants also registered some irritation about electoral fraud being an issue in Britain as it was really felt that as a country with a long democratic history, some level of incompetence or system failure must be to blame. Some, in addition felt almost disdainful that electoral fraud was not under control, and resented being asked to consider and worry about it. This feeling of irritation, though common to all, was particularly strong amongst a specific minority of the sample who tended to live in areas with a specific example of electoral fraud in (relatively) recent times, or areas with greater tensions drawn along ethnic lines.

> *It made me quite angry because I didn't even know campaigners [sic] could count the vote. It's disgusting I thought only third world countries did that![18]*
> [Female, C2, 50-60, Peterborough]

---

[17] Any misperception regarding the incidence of electoral fraud was addressed when participants were asked to consider stimulus that showed the breakdown of alleged electoral fraud cases. See Appendix 5 for copies of stimulus used.

[18] The stimulus material used did not state or imply that campaigners were responsible for any part of the counting process. The participant in question had misinterpreted the information presented, and the moderator corrected their misunderstanding during the interview. The quote is used in this instance to illustrate the emotional response to the idea that electoral fraud is an issue in the UK.

4. What does the public consider 'undue influence' to be?

4.1 Following on from Stage 1 insights and wider review findings, Stage 2 research explored perceptions of undue influence in further detail. In line with perceptions of electoral fraud more generally, undue influence was not spontaneously a cause of great concern for most participants and was not considered to be a huge issue in the UK. However, focusing people on the topic through discussion did cause some to consider the limits to 'true' democracy within any society, i.e. that everyone is basically open to influence and voting decisions are rarely entirely one's own. For these participants, there was some small sense of disappointment upon concluding that the democratic system in the UK (or indeed anywhere) was inherently imperfect.

4.2 When asked to spontaneously provide examples of what might constitute undue influence, participants tended to refer to vulnerable individuals being pressured or manipulated; for example where husbands have control over wives/children, or elderly and disabled people in the care of others being inappropriately influenced in some way.

4.3 Respondents also mentioned, although to a lesser extent overall, inappropriate pressure being exerted by political parties. For example, in Northern Ireland and Tower Hamlets in England concern over undue influence from campaigners was more top of mind. Respondents from these areas reported campaigner presence at polling stations as a particular issue. In Northern Ireland the pressure exerted by such behaviour was thought to have potential to make some voters feel uncomfortable but was considered broadly acceptable. In Tower Hamlets, there was more concern about campaigner behaviour at the polling station. This was because they had personally witnessed campaigners in their local area behaving in a way they considered overly pressurising or manipulative. One respondent suggesting that feeling pressured or uncomfortable when voting in person was a reason that many people in the borough chose to vote by post.

> *I think too many people are voting by post because of the campaigners outside the polling station...people feel very pressurised and it's not something very professional...*
> [Female, C1C2, 27-35, Tower Hamlets]

4.4 Discussion of undue influence also prompted some to again consider that it might be a problem within certain areas or communities. As such, undue influence was often considered to be particularly prevalent in ethnic minority communities. Within this sample, this was more likely to be mentioned by non-ethnic minority participants, usually as a veiled reference to broader concerns they had about immigration and 'foreign culture' rather than a concrete example that could be backed up by firsthand experience.

> *There's a high volume of people from other countries here and in some areas with the high number of minorities it could happen.*
> [Female, BC1, 50-60, Leeds]

4.5 Comments on undue influence in ethnic minority communities were also sometimes based on a generalised perception of cultural differences and norms regarding power dynamics in families, e.g. Asian women typically having less of an independent voice/opinion in political issues.

> *I do think it's a cultural thing. I went to university in Leicester and we lived in the predominantly Asian street. And the families were very large and I imagine that they were all persuaded to vote the same. I don't know but I imagine that.*
> [Female, C2DE, 17-35, Nottingham]

> *I'm aware there is an issue of it amongst some minority communities, if there is a cultural perspective, for example, that women should not vote, then do they vote here? Amongst Arabs for example*
> [Male, AB, 50-60, Edinburgh]

4.6   However, three Asian participants[19] (in Tower Hamlets and Oldham) also mentioned having experienced or witnessed something they considered to be undue influence in their communities, including:

- Canvassers standing outside local schools and making parents there feel uncomfortable by their presence
- Representatives of a political party at the polling station demonstrating on a mocked-up ballot paper to non-English speaking electors where they should make their mark.
- Women being told to vote in a certain way by male family members

No non-Asian participants had any firsthand experience of undue influence in Asian communities.

> *At election time you get canvassers and campaigners going door to door, to schools, saying to parents 'are you voting?', 'you should vote', ... when you're picking up children. My husband has had experience of that and sometimes they can be aggressive ... with their tone of voice ... just that kind of pressure.*
> [Female, C1C2, 27-35, Tower Hamlets]

No other ethnic minority participants mentioned these issues as a particular concern and reported a general voting experience in line with the non-ethnic minority participants.

Prompted consideration of undue influence

4.7   Following discussion about spontaneous understanding of undue influence, participants were prompted with a list of potential scenarios to facilitate consideration around what is more clearly electoral fraud in their view and what is not.

4.8   Overall, there was consistency with regards to the types of influence that people felt were clearly fraudulent and those types that were considered socially acceptable or otherwise difficult to affect or control through legislation.

4.9   Firstly, the scenarios considered **acceptable** were those instances which the public felt were normal, everyday, legal behaviours in a democratic country. It was also mentioned that debate and discussion of this nature was not only a type of influence to be tolerated but, instead, vital behaviour to have in a healthy democratic society. The two that fell into this category were as follows:

---

[19] South Asian

Having a discussion with friends/family about politics and persuading someone to change their mind about who to vote for

> *At the end of the day, it's still their choice.*
> [Female, C1, 36-49, Edinburgh]

> *If you're having a debate with a family member...you're going to try and win other people over, that's the whole point...I don't think that's undue influence.*
> [Female, C1C2, 27-35, Tower Hamlets]

> *Persuading people, that is part of life.*
> [Male, AB, 50-60, Newport]

Having a discussion as a family about who to vote for and all deciding on the same party/candidate

> *Children normally vote for who their parents do really.*
> [Male, C1C2, 50-60, Newport]

> *Having a discussion with your family and all deciding on one party, that's fine if they all agree.*
> [Female, C1C2, 17-26, Ipswich]

4.10   Those examples considered **unacceptable** were all categorised as such because they were felt in some way to take away a voter's freedom of choice as well as to be unlawful because they involved violence or 'theft' in some way. These examples were also typically identified as, or suspected of being, criminal activities:

Someone completing another person's postal vote without their knowledge

> *Clearly that's immoral and illegal.*
> [Male, B, 50, Peterborough]

A party leaflet that threatens the use of force against some voters

> *This is illegal and since the leaflet would count as evidence against them...if they had brains they wouldn't do it.*
> [Male, C1C2, 27-35, Belfast]

A person threatens someone in order to stop them from voting

> *But when you're threatened, you're forced, that's taking your power away from you.*
> [Female, B, 17-26, Oldham]

A person threatens someone to make them vote in a certain way

> *These things you're being forced, it's not like influencing them it's actually threatening them, so they've not got a choice.*
> [Male, AB, 17-26, Leicester]

No one should be able to threaten you.
[Female, AB, 36-40, Leicester]

4.11   Respondents found it hard to categorise a number of other scenarios tested in the research, either because the behaviours felt impossible to curtail in any way or because the acceptability of the behaviour was dependent on other factors or contextual detail.

So for example, 'having a discussion as a family then one person making a decision about who everyone will vote for' was typically considered 'bad' behaviour but in many ways an unavoidable consequence of some family dynamics.

With the family one... It shouldn't be illegal. If the dad is trying to threaten... well, not threaten but persuade his daughter and she goes along with it, that's her choice if she wants to follow her family. I don't think that's an illegal matter.
[Female, C1C2, 17-26, Ipswich]

Having a discussion with family and one deciding – You'd have to prove that. And if you're family, you should hope that your family is there for guidance. And also, you can then make a decision for your own. You can think 'let them carry on talking, I'll do my thing.' Everyone's got their own decision. They can't physically stand with them in the polling station.
[Male, DE, 27-35, Ipswich]

Most participants could imagine how 'someone completing another person's postal vote with their knowledge' could be perfectly acceptable behaviour, although some did wonder whether technically this would be illegal.

That's fine, it's not immoral as far as I'm concerned, it might be illegal though, I don't know.
[Male, C2, 27-35, Hertfordshire]

That's fine, if it's with their knowledge. It depends on the circumstances, especially, if somebody can't read or write.
[Male, C1, 36-49, Leeds]

'Having representatives of political parties canvass for your vote' was also broadly considered acceptable and for many a legitimate part of the political process in this country. However, there were some who found the experience of being approached, or of someone coming to their door, slightly uncomfortable and many also raised concerns about the potential for vulnerable people to feel pressured or manipulated in these ways.

It's just part of elections you have to put up with that for democracy!
[Male, B, 50, Peterborough]

I don't like canvassing in the home because they will encounter vulnerable people.
[Female, C1, 36-49, Edinburgh]

Having political representatives come to your door – that's fine. They can come to your door, and you can say I'm sorry, I'm not voting for your party.
[Female, C1C2, 17-26, Ipswich]

'Being persistently asked by someone to reveal who you will vote for' was considered broadly fine, although some did acknowledge that the tone of this request could be intimidating.

> *If someone's asking you who you're going to vote for, who you're going to vote for... I'd get fed up with that. It's my choice. But it's not illegal.*
> [Male, C1, 36-49, Leeds]

> *Someone can ask you who you will vote for but you don't have to tell them.*
> [Female, C1C2, 17-26, Ipswich]

> *Depends on the situation. If it's your mates asking you, you can tell them anything.*
> [Male, C2DE, 17-35, Nottingham]

'Having representatives of political parties in the vicinity of the polling station' was again considered generally acceptable. However some participants, particularly those in Northern Ireland and Tower Hamlets, were slightly more concerned about their experience of this scenario. Participants in Northern Ireland did not report behaviours out of line with those reported in Great Britain, but they were more likely to say that this activity had the potential to be problematic for electors. The slightly higher level of concern may be linked to the recent political history of the country but this was not something made explicit by participants. Participants in Tower Hamlets, on the other hand, had higher levels of concern based on behaviours they had witnessed around polling stations in their local area which they considered to be overly manipulative or pressurising. As mentioned earlier, there was some sense that having these political representatives at the polling station, whilst not serving any rational purpose, was therefore about having a 'presence' with the potential to make people feel uneasy or intimidated.

> *It's not the end of the world if there's a political party around the station.*
> [Male, DE, 27-35, Ipswich]

> *Having representatives close to the polling station – I don't like that.*
> [Female, C2DE, 17-35, Nottingham]

> *The political parties should do their work in advance...not on the day on elections.*
> [Male, C1C2, 27-35, Belfast]

> *I think people would feel an influence if you're going to a school to vote and there's a lot of [campaigners] about...I think that maybe people can feel – not threatened because you're vote is secret anyway – but nervous maybe.*
> [Male, 44, DE, Belfast]

> *It borders on harassment. That's why I don't think that representatives of political parties should be at the polling station. But again, I don't know if it should be illegal. People do straw polls on the way out.*
> [Male, C1, 36-49, Leeds]

In Tower Hamlets in particular, two participants mentioned having been made to feel uncomfortable by political representatives present around the polling station. They also reported that the tone of these individuals could be quite forceful which they felt was inappropriate.

Finally, 'being accompanied to the polling station' was considered on a scale of acceptability dependent on who was accompanying the voter and why.

People can go together to the polling station, that's not a big deal.
[Female, C1C2, 17-26, Ipswich]

Don't quite understand being accompanied to the polling station. Is that under duress? It sounds that way. I go with my partner. If it was under duress, then it's wrong.
[Male, C1C2, 50-60, Ipswich]

Being accompanied to a polling station seems quite innocent. Of course not if someone's got a gun to your head, but I struggle to imagine it coming to that.
[Male, C1C2, 50-60, Ipswich]

5. How does the public respond to information about the electoral system and electoral fraud?

5.1 All participants were given some information about the electoral system in Great Britain (and in Northern Ireland) prior to attending the research[20]. This included basic information about security measures in place and clarification about the different ways to vote. Some participants received, in addition to this, information about possible policy changes that could introduce new checking measures or controls at various points within the current system.

5.2 During the discussion itself, most participants in the sample were also shown facts about the incidence of reported fraud in the UK[21].

5.3 The overall response to the information was mixed depending on the detail. Some of the information worked well to reassure the public about electoral security and electoral fraud; other information started to raise some queries and concerns.

I suppose the more people involved to keep it safe it's a good thing, and it's a bit of an insight.
[Female, DE, 17-26, Edinburgh]

I wasn't aware of the volume of all the people involved...I like that everyone has a position that they don't have to multi-task, they can concentrate on one role.
[Male, C1C2, 27-35, Belfast]

Voting by proxy that I wasn't aware of...I don't know whether that's a good idea because how secure is that?
[Female, C1C2, 27-35, Tower Hamlets]

---

[20] See Appendix 3
[21] See Appendix 5

Information that reassures

5.4   This research illustrated how certain information and messages can help to reduce concern about electoral fraud.

5.5   In relation to undue influence specifically, the reminder to participants that we all have the opportunity to cast our votes in private was helpful to dispel concerns. The privacy and anonymity of voting was not often top of mind as a security measure but, when prompted, participants considered this feature a useful and effective check to ensuring the overall integrity of voting.

> *Once you're in the polling station you're away from your family... you can make your own decision and come back and tell them you voted for whoever you like if it keeps the peace...*
> [Male, 47, DE, Belfast]

> *But once you're in the polling station they don't know. If someone threatened me I'd vote the other way!*
> [Female, C1, 36-49, Edinburgh]

> *Well they can threaten you, but they still don't know which box you're gonna go for .*
> [Female, C1C2, 25-50, Newport]

5.6   When thinking about electoral fraud in broader terms, participants typically felt reassured by information on the security of the electoral system, and in particular about the role of the Electoral Commission, police and electoral administrators. The fact that there are a range of different bodies involved, each with specific responsibilities and expertise, suggested to participants that there are many measures in place to monitor and prevent fraudulent activity across the whole election process and all types of voting. The public also understood that the system comes under review in order to check that it continues to be fit for purpose.

5.7   Essentially, this information was felt to 'fill in the gaps' in participants' knowledge, so where they had assumed that there were specific bodies and personnel involved but were unsure, this provided confirmation and detail of involvement. The public were also happy for an official body to take responsibility and relieved that there was 'someone else worrying about the issue on their behalf'.

> *It was reassuring to know that there's all these people involved.*
> [Female, DE, 27-35, Aberdeen]

> *You expect a body to be responsible for it but it's good to know who they are.*
> [Female, C2, 50-60, Peterborough]

> *I hadn't really thought about how much goes into it and how much vetting there is...Yes, definitely [that's] reassuring, definitely makes you happy to know all the different people involved.*
> [Male, C1, 27-35, London]

5.8   With regard to facts about the incidence of reported fraud in the UK, the vast majority of participants accepted the figures[22] presented to them as evidence of low incidence of electoral fraud and assumed that, in light of this, the system is largely under control.

> *I think it's not really that much is it, it's very small. Obviously if they're going to do anything they should focus on the postal votes and the campaigners, but 406 in the whole country, that's really not a lot is it.*
> [Female, DE, 27-35, Aberdeen]

> *The figures tell me it's not an issue so I am happier than I was before.*
> [Male, C1, 60-65, Peterborough]

5.9   However, a minority of participants speculated that some electoral fraud might be going unreported. In addition, a very small minority of participants responded more negatively to the figures. That is, they interpreted the same figures that others saw as low (and therefore reassuring) as high (and therefore concerning). They took the numbers of *alleged* electoral fraud as confirmation that electoral fraud was in fact a real possibility, and that it was taking place at a relatively high rate of incidence.

> *That's quite high...406, that's a lot... now I see the facts it's more worrying than I had been before.*
> [Female, C1C2, 27-35, Tower Hamlets]

5.10   In light of this, some members of the public may need more guidance to understand these statistics in context. Specifically, it may be worth clarifying that the incidence of reported fraud is 'very low' compared to the total number of votes cast and contested seats, rather than leaving them to draw their own conclusions.

5.11   In the context of the possible policy changes, however, the very low incidence of electoral fraud was a cause of some irritation and surprise, as the figures seemed to render the policy options somewhat extreme and unnecessary.

> *So the postal voting is the biggest problem but its 44% of about 80 cases...of 60 million people? It seems like for 40 cases of fraud, that wouldn't sway a vote anyway, is this not all overkill? I think a lot of these would cost a fortune!*
> [Female, C1, 36-49, Edinburgh]

> *I think on the basis of that there's no case for making any change at all...even if it was 10 times that number it's not that much.*
> [Male, AB, 50-60, Newport]

---

[22] The following figures were included in the stimulus: 406 cases of <u>alleged</u> electoral fraud were reported in 2012; 66% of cases reported in 2012 were resolved with no further action; 12% alleged cases are under investigation; 1% alleged cases led to court proceedings; No cases have resulted in a conviction; *No cases are known to have affected the outcome of any election.* See Appendix 5 for all other stimulus (including charts) used to communicate incidence of reported fraud.

Information that raises queries and concerns

5.12   While it stands that some policy changes tested with the public in this research are considered worthwhile [23] , and will improve perceptions of security when the information is brought to the attention of the public in certain circumstances (such as in response to concern about electoral fraud when it was raised spontaneously), announcing any changes proactively is likely to be unhelpful. Specifically, participants interpreted any change to the system as a response to a proven security issue.

5.13   Other information that started to increase concern levels was typically the detail given to participants about postal and proxy voting methods.

5.14   Current awareness of these methods amongst the public was low. Polling station voters generally knew very little about postal voting, postal voters were sometimes fairly unfamiliar with polling station voting and both types of voters tended to know very little, if anything, about proxy voting. Indeed, some were completely unaware of proxy voting.

5.15   This meant that information which extended their current concept of voting and the electoral system overall tended to be unnerving. When introduced to new methods, participants realised that there was little they did know about the way voting works and a lot they do not know. As a result, the public felt the system was even more complex than they had anticipated and that, perhaps, this was a reason for electoral fraud, which they were previously unaware of.

> *It does provide evidence that there is more than one option to vote. But it surprised me that there are opportunities to commit fraud. I believe that our system is robust but this information made me question it.*
> [Female, BC1, 50-60, Leeds]

5.16   Furthermore, based on their assumptions, postal and proxy voting simply felt like the more vulnerable points of system security in terms of being open to impersonation or undue influence.

> *The only one would be the proxy voting...it just seems to be a way for someone to gain an extra vote...it could be abused.*
> [Male, 47, DE, Belfast]
>
> *That made me think, what happens to the postal vote once they are posted? I'd like reassurance on that.*
> [Female, D, 50-60, Leicester]

5.17   In Northern Ireland the detail about having to be resident in the country for three months before being able to register to vote was also picked out as a cause for concern[24]. Whilst not directly linked to concerns about electoral fraud, this detail fed into broader concerns about immigration and the ability for ethnic-minority populations to 'sway' the overall election results.

---

[23] See page 20, Section 6 below
[24] There is no equivalent time period in Great Britain, so this feature of the system was not referenced in the pre-placed materials for participants in England, Scotland and Wales.

The only thing is being resident to vote in Northern Ireland for 3 months, I don't think that's long enough...there's a lot of people coming in here from other countries and if they only have to be here three months...next year there'll be 250,00 people coming who will be able to sway a vote.
[Male, 47, DE, Belfast]

6. Overview of responses to potential policy changes

6.1 Participants were either given a list of potential changes to the electoral system to consider in advance[25] or these were introduced to them during the discussion. This did not impact on their overall responses to the policy changes, however, it did highlight how information can drive concern, as those who had been given information in advance tended to have a greater sense that electoral fraud was an issue. These options were broadly related to the following 3 areas:

- Polling station voting
- Postal voting
- Proxy voting

6.2 In terms of overall response to these ideas, the public rejected some on the grounds that they felt unnecessary or even counter-productive in some way. However, other suggested changes were supported and it was felt important that these were implemented to ensure the integrity of the electoral system.

6.3 There were a consistent set of factors that the public used to evaluate and ascertain the value of the policy options. For all participants, for the change to be considered 'worthwhile' it must be seen to:

- Have a definite positive impact in increasing overall security of election
- Meet an identified need, i.e. be designed to tackle a proven vulnerability in the system
- Be universal in terms of the time period or geographical area it pertains to

6.4 Changes considered 'not worthwhile' were those deemed to meet any of the following criteria:

- Negatively affect voter action (for self or the vulnerable) by increasing difficulty of voting
- Create increased cost to system (and taxpayer)
- Create complexity in the system itself leading to potential difficulties for electors in terms of being able to fully comprehend the system and their voting options.
- Appear ineffective/unsuitable for tackling or limiting fraud
- Target specific locations only
- Happen for a limited time period only
- Make it possible for vulnerable people to be manipulated (especially in a systematic way or on a large scale)

---

[25] See detail on pre-tasking, in Appendix 3, page 40

The only drawbacks I see are cost, more work for the electoral department [sic]...but I don't know how much fraud there is...you'd have to balance it against how much fraud is happening....I would want the statistics being available to everyone.
[Female, C1C2, 27-35, Tower Hamlets]

Only doing it for a limited period is no good as the fraud will continue afterwards and in some areas wouldn't make any difference, it would still go on elsewhere.
[Male, B, 50, Peterborough]

People would think 'Why are they pinpointing certain areas? Why are they giving it to us and not to others?' And it starts to put suspicion into people's mind.
[Female, C1, 17-26, Leeds]

You've got to go for the one that would still let the disabilities go, because you'd have uproar...that's discrimination.
[Group, Mixed gender, C2DE, 36-60, Surrey]

I would like to vote by post, I wouldn't like to have to go there and vote, it's the flexibility isn't it? There is a big chance I wouldn't be bothered.
[Female, C1C2, 27-35, Tower Hamlets]

6.5   Using these criteria to assess the policy options, the majority of participants considered that only a few of the policy options were worthwhile pursuing. The following table shows how the broad policy options were categorised when judged against the factors outlined above:

Worthwhile	Not worthwhile
Stopping the handling of postal vote application forms and postal ballot packs by political parties, candidates, canvassers and campaigners	*Other suggested changes to the way proxy voting is run – limits on who can proxy vote and certification*
Creating legally binding rules for campaigners around polling stations	*Restricting the availability of postal voting in Great Britain*
Asking voters to present approved non- photographic identification[26] (e.g. Utility bill) at polling stations	*Other measures introduced to improve the security in or around polling stations*
Limits for those acting as proxy voters	*Voters required to present approved photographic identification at polling stations*

6.6   It is worth noting, however, that there was a minority contingent of the sample, typically in areas with a larger ethnic minority population or an historical local fraud

---

[26] Although photographic ID not essential this would also be accepted by some

issue (e.g. Oldham, Peterborough and Tower Hamlets), who were much warmer to the idea of policy changes overall. These participants were less concerned about other people losing the right to vote in general, so even those policy changes with the potential to disenfranchise parts of the electorate were considered favourably if they were felt to tighten up system security.

> *People should make the effort to go to the polling station, people are too lazy. You shouldn't have the postal vote just for lazy people only if they have a valid reason. It will stop fraudulent voting and people who can make it to vote will.*
> [Male, B, 50, Peterborough]

> *If you're too lazy, that's tough, you shouldn't get to vote anyway.*
> [Group Discussion, 36-68, C2DE, Oldham]

7. Policy options considered *worthwhile* by the public

7.1 The range of policy options that related to stopping the handling of postal vote application forms and postal ballot packs by political parties, candidates, canvassers and campaigners, were also all considered to be worthwhile overall. In fact many participants expressed surprise and concern that these policies were not already in place:

<u>Possible change 3</u>: Stopping the handling of postal vote application forms and postal ballot packs by political parties, candidates, canvassers and campaigners

a) *Making it illegal for political parties, candidates, campaigners and supporters to handle postal vote applications and postal ballot packs.*

b) *Making it a legal requirement for completed postal vote application forms to be returned directly to the relevant Electoral Registration Officer's address. Sending completed postal vote application forms to an intermediary address, such as a local party office, would be prohibited.*

c) *Making it illegal for anyone other than the voter to hand in postal ballot packs at polling stations on polling day.*

d) *Making sure that the list of people entitled to vote by post is not made available to anyone before elections.*

7.2 It was considered that these policy options would increase the overall security of elections without having a negative impact on voter action (either themselves or vulnerable electors). They also felt low cost and easy to implement.

Handling of postal vote applications and postal ballot packs:

I'm totally for that – it stops suspicion being cast on candidates, canvassers, campaigners and things like that. It stops doubt being put into electors' minds, stops them thinking 'is it authentic? Has it been done under the table?
[Female, C1C2, 27-35, Tower Hamlets]

Clearly it's going to reduce the instances of voting irregularities.
[Male, AB, 50-60, Edinburgh]

Postal vote application forms to be returned directly to the Electoral Registration Officer's address:

This was one of the ones I thought 'why is this not in place already?'.
[Group, Mixed gender, C2DE, 36-60, Surrey]

Like somebody in a nursing home who goes and collects them all together. All postal votes should go straight to the electoral registration officer. No one should be able to deliver someone else's postal vote.
[Female, BC1, 50-60, Leeds]

It would stop fraud. And there are no negatives.
[Female, C2DE, 17-35, Nottingham]

Making it illegal to hand in postal ballot packs at polling stations:

Well you know the voter, the person who's vote it is handing it in, so it's guaranteed it's the persons vote
[Male, C1C2, 25-50, Aberdeen]

Restricting the availability of the list of postal voters before elections:

I can't believe it isn't? Makes you think why isn't it? That should be private otherwise your could be targeted.
[Female, C2, 50-60, Peterborough]

It would reduce the risk of fraud or people being pressurised to vote in a certain way.
[Male, C1, 60-65, Peterborough]

A lot of postal voters are disabled and they could be pressured. Campaigners can visit those people and target them.
[Female, BC1, 50-60, Leeds]

7.3   The policy option relating to measures designed to improve the security in or around polling stations was another proposal that the public viewed favourably:

> **_Possible change 9c:_**
> **_Introducing legally binding (rather than voluntary) rules for campaigners operating in and around polling stations/places._**

7.4   Again, some participants questioned why such a policy was not already in place, given that it felt like 'common sense' to them. Overall, however, it was felt this policy would increase overall security of elections, would not affect voter action (either themselves or vulnerable electors) and would be low cost and straightforward to bring in.

How can the police act on anything if it's a voluntary code of conduct, if anyone does anything wrong they can't actually do anything.
[Male, C1C2, 25-50, Aberdeen]

Brilliant idea as knowing they could face prosecution would deter fraud, although you can still get people who will cheat the system.
[Male, B, 50, Peterborough]

Yes, I think there's too much license for campaigners to do the wrong thing. Especially with elderly people.
[Female, BC1, 50-60, Leeds]

7.5 Two of the policy options relating to potential changes to the way that proxy voting is run were viewed positively by the public:

> **_Possible change 5_:**
> **_Limiting the number of electors for which a person can be appointed as proxy, to four people – two family members and two others_**
>
> **_Possible change 6_:**
> **_Limiting the number of electors for which a person can be appointed as proxy to two people_**

7.6 Participants did struggle to understand proxy voting, in terms of who would vote this way and why. However, given their already suspicious stance towards this voting method (as noted above in Section 5), the idea of putting limits on it made sense as a means to reduce potential abuse. These policy changes were both felt to increase overall security of the election process, and neither was felt to affect ability or ease for themselves or vulnerable others to vote. They also felt like low cost and relatively straightforward changes to implement.

I think if a person was voting as a proxy unlimited they could be voting all over the place.
[Female, AB, 36-40, Leicester]

I'm just not sure about proxy voting, it should definitely be limited and people should have to certify who they are so people can't just do this willy nilly.
[Female, C2, 50-60, Peterborough]

7.7 There were some concerns, however, that if these restrictions were put in place that it might restrict access to voting for some more vulnerable individuals, for example in care homes.

I don't know if it the manager of 60 care people ... does he go to vote for them and if he can't vote for them and they don't have anyone to vote for them it wouldn't be fair. I think that's a situation where you'd need to have someone to certify why you're voting for these people. That would need further investigation.
[Female, C2, 27-35, Hertfordshire]

What about in care homes and stuff? So if they don't have family members who's going to vote for them?
[Female, DE, 17-26, Edinburgh]

8. Policy options prompting debate but potentially worthwhile

8.1 The proposed policy option relating to the requirement to present photographic identification at polling stations generated a mixed response, polarising some within the sample:

> **_Possible change 8a): Voters required to present photographic identification at polling stations_**
>
> a) _Require all voters to present an approved form of photographic identification when attending a polling station on polling day. Examples could include a photographic driving license or a passport._

8.2 The point of contention was the stipulation that ID should be photographic, which was felt to discriminate against large sections of the electorate without such photographic documentation and who may be disenfranchised if this policy were to be introduced. As such, it was felt likely to impact on voter apathy and turnout. When it was explained to participants that approved forms of photographic ID would cover a range of options, concerns were reduced slightly, but remained nevertheless.

> _Young people who don't have [a photo] ID won't come to vote. They're not going to bother._
> [Female, C2DE, 17-35, Nottingham]
>
> _The only drawback is if people didn't have driving license or passport. Possibly they would think that they cannot vote. But there are ways... Maybe I would open that ID to medical cards or birth certificates. Maybe you should show two forms of ID, like banks ask you. Everyone will have a utility bill._
> [Male, C1, 36-49, Leeds]
>
> _That's unfair because it's saying to everybody you've got to have a passport or driving license if you want to vote, and that costs money, so if you've not got one you have to have the money or you can't vote. I think overall there would be less people voting._
> [Female, DE, 17-26, Edinburgh]

8.3 Despite these objections to photographic ID, the idea of being requested to provide some proof of identification at the polling station was more warmly received. In fact, many participants had previously raised their surprise and concern that they were not required to do so already.

8.4 In particular, participants suggested that being asked to bring in the polling card would actually match their security expectations and indicated that this would improve perceptions of safety in the system as they experience it. They acknowledged that this system would not be fool proof as it was still potentially possible for polling cards to be stolen or misused. However, they felt they would have some recourse and it would be helpful to monitor fraud. For example, they felt it would be possible to identify at the time of the election if a vote had been misused, whereas at present it might not be noticed.

> *I don't know but if you've lost your card and you show up and they say someone's already used it then you know a problem has happened.*
> [Group, Mixed gender, ABC1, 17-35, London]
>
> *I've always taken my card... I think I always felt that was a kind of justification of who I was.*
> [Male, C1C2, 50-60, Ipswich]

8.5   Suggestions for other suitable forms of ID included utility bill or credit card.

> *What do they gain by seeing the photo? It's the polling card. As long as you provide something with your name and address... it shows who you are. It doesn't have to be a photographic ID. It could be any form of identification; it could be a bank card.*
> [Male, C2DE, 17-35, Nottingham]

8.6   Therefore, in line with public responses and suggestions, their preferred policy option was altered to the following:

> **Require all voters to present their polling card when attending a polling station on polling day.**
> **If this is not available, then another approved form of identification should be presented**

8.7   It was felt that such a measure would increase security in the system overall, that it would be low cost, straightforward to implement and unlikely to affect voter action.

9.   Policy options considered *not worthwhile* by the public

9.1   There were two policy options relating to the way that proxy voting is run that were not considered worthwhile. However, it should be noted that the general lack of awareness and understanding of proxy voting did hamper efforts to effectively judge the value of these changes:

> **Possible change 4:**
> **Requiring people who want to apply for a proxy vote for a particular election to have their application signed to certify that the details of the application are true, as is the case for those wanting a proxy vote on a permanent basis.**

> **Possible change 7:**
> **Limiting the availability of proxy votes to special category electors, e.g. service voters, overseas voters and crown servants.**

9.2   The reasons given for rejecting these policy options were: firstly, it was not felt they could improve overall security of proxy voting; and, secondly, that they would be impractical to implement and over-complicate the system. Limiting proxy voting was

also felt to discriminate against disabled and other vulnerable electors and so rejected on these grounds too.

> *It's just a bit of extra security. It would probably put a few people off. I think it may put some people off, saying they wouldn't bother*
> [Female, D, 50-60, Leicester]

> *I don't really understand why anyone would want to apply for a proxy*
> [Male, AB, 50-60, Newport]

> *I don't agree with that. There are a lot of people around, those who are severely disabled or on holiday, who need proxy voting.*
> [Female, BC1, 50-60, Leeds]

9.3   Policy options restricting the availability of postal voting in Great Britain were also rejected by the public:

Possible change 1: Restricting the availability of postal voting in Great Britain

a) *Abolishing postal voting on demand. This would mean that only people who are unable to attend the polling station because of disability, illness, occupation or holiday would be allowed to vote by post.*

b) *Suspending postal voting on demand for a limited time in election areas where there had been recent proven cases of postal voting fraud. This would not affect those electors unable to access the polling station due to disability, illness, occupation or holiday.*

c) *Suspending all postal voting for all electors for a limited time in areas where there had been recent proven cases of postal voting fraud. This would mean that electors unable to access the polling station due to disability, illness, occupation or holiday could not vote by post.*

9.4   There were a number of reasons why these policy options were considered not worthwhile:

- Firstly, the positive value of these proposals was queried, as the public were unsure how either abolishing or suspending postal voting 'on demand' would actually improve overall security of postal voting.
- Secondly, it was felt that these proposals would negatively affect voter action, in that those who currently vote by post would find it more difficult to vote.
- Following from this, it was felt that these options would actively disenfranchise some sections of the electorate, specifically busy or shift workers and those with caring responsibilities (in relation to policy options 'a' and 'b') and for those with limited mobility (in relation to policy option 'c').

9.5   Finally, any policy that proposed suspending or restricting postal voting in specific locations only was rejected as it was felt to stigmatise certain areas and punish the vast majority of residents innocent of any crime.

Abolishing on demand postal voting:

> *I think you might get less voting, someone who does a postal vote, who hasn't got one of those reasons but maybe has another reason...with your postal vote you get a little bit more time, so I know with myself, having 3 kids and keeping a job down...I know I've not voted because I've forgotten.*
> [Group, Mixed gender, C2DE, 36-60, Surrey]

It's not a good idea. It may reduce electoral fraud but it may also reduce the number of people voting. It's easier just to write it down and post it out. Postal voting is so easy – it comes to your house and you complete it and post it. If you abolish that, more people have to go out of their way and complete it. It puts more strain on people.
[Female, B, 17-26, Oldham]

I don't think it's a good idea to abolish postal voting on demand. If it was taken away, it would reduce the turn out even more.
[Male, C1, 36-49, Leeds]

Suspending on demand postal voting:

You're highlighting certain areas, you're saying 'you're illegal'...Surrey doesn't do things [properly].
[Group, Mixed gender, C2DE, 36-60, Surrey]

The system would be more honest with this. But would the fraud move into another area? And people who are honest in that area would be stigmatised. So, maybe everybody would need to prove who they are.
[Male, C1, 36-49, Leeds]

Suspending all postal voting:

I'm disabled and I can't go out without my husband, he drops me off and picks me up. So, if he wasn't available I wouldn't be able to go to vote. Because I've got a disability, I'm very big on discriminating against people with disabilities. And that is discriminating, because people with disabilities can't go out on their own. They rely on other people.
[Female, C1C2, 17-35, Ipswich]

That is completely out of question because it's not allowing anyone to vote by post, even people with disabilities, which is ridiculous.
[Male, C2DE, 17-35, Nottingham]

9.6   Those policy options that proposed alternatives to postal voting in the event of restricted postal voting in Great Britain were also rejected:

Possible change 2: _Alternatives to postal voting in the event of restricted postal voting in Great Britain_

a) *Introducing mobile polling stations that that can be moved and temporarily set up in different locations*
b) *Establishing a system of advance voting, where someone can vote in a polling station in advance of the official polling day.*
c) *Allowing electors to 'cancel' their postal vote and instead vote in person at a polling station if they felt they had been subjected to undue pressure when completing their postal ballot paper*

9.7   It was uncertain to the public how these measures would improve overall security of postal voting. Additionally these changes would be expected to make the system more complex, leading not only to increased running costs of election but also allowing more room for error (or even fraud). For example, participants perceived mobile polling facilities in particular to allow greater opportunities for fraud to occur,

given it was uncertain who would be running these or what the process would be for safely delivering ballot boxes.

9.8   Cancelling postal votes was not only perceived as likely to be an administrative burden, it also generated unhelpful queries and concerns about the integrity of those officials charged with cancelling votes. One or two participants also raised concerns about the infringement on voter confidentiality. For example, the idea that one's vote could, if necessary, be located and identified as belonging to that particular person, was felt to quite clearly undermine the principle of voter anonymity.

Mobile polling stations:

> *And knowing we've got that many polling stations, how would that reduce fraud?*
> [Group, Mixed gender, C2DE, 36-60, Surrey]

> *A bit more convenient for people who can't get out to the polling station but then having said that, the polling stations are very local anyway....I've never heard of anybody not being able to get to the polling station...I don't see the reason for that really, a waste of money!*
> [Female, C1C2, 27-35, Tower Hamlets]

Advance voting:

> *That would cause complications and open up more problems. It needs to be on the same day as fraud would be easier to achieve.*
> [Male, B, 50, Peterborough]

> *That would cause more frustration because everybody should vote on the same day. If people are voting on different days, it will all be mixed. You'll have so many votes from different places on different days that it's going to be mixed and complicated.*
> [Female, C2DE, 17-35, Nottingham]

> *It would be less secure over a longer period of time and it would a lot of money.*
> [Female, DE, 27-35, Aberdeen]

Cancelling postal votes:

> *Sounds a bit complicated. Imagine going through all those piles of paper to find that vote.*
> [Male, C2DE, 17-35, Nottingham]

> *Could this not work in reverse? Could someone not be pressured cancel their vote and to vote again for something they didn't want?*
> [Female, BC1, 50-60, Leeds]

> *I don't know about that one, if anyone could cancel their vote couldn't you cancel someone else's. I'd need to know how it would work?*
> [Female, DE, 17-26, Edinburgh]

9.9   Those policy options relating to measures designed to improve the security in or around polling stations were generally considered not worthwhile:

> **Possible change 9 a) and b): Measures introduced to improve the security in or around polling stations**
> a) *Asking voters to sign for their ballot paper (and if they refuse to sign then their ballot paper will be withheld).*
> b) *Asking voters to confirm their date of birth before receiving their ballot paper.*

9.10 Firstly the public were unconvinced that these measures would actually be effective at reducing fraud. Respondents speculated that signatures and dates of birth could be relatively easily forged or accessed, thus failing to provide a robust protection against fraud.

9.11 Some participants raised further queries and concerns about how signatures would be collated and held; the perception that they would need to be held on a central database either felt like a huge administrative burden or as opening new opportunities for fraud to be committed. Finally, there were suggestions that turnout could be reduced if the overall voting process was slowed down, due to the checking of signatures and longer queues that would result.

Signing for ballot papers:

> *If you want to copy a signature, you can copy a signature.*
> [Group, Mixed gender, C2DE, 36-60, Surrey]

> *Anybody can fraud signature. Unless they are able to check them against copies of signatures...but then, do we go into the territory of data protection? And how well are people trained to check those signatures?*
> [Male, C1, 36-49, Leeds]

> *You're taking additional measures to prevent fraud because you're ensuring the person voting is who they say they are...the drawback I can see is long queues, unless you've got a lot more people working on the day...*
> [Female, C1C2, 27-35, Tower Hamlets]

Confirming date of birth:

> *If it was a family member that wouldn't stop fraud 'cos they will know your date of birth.*
> [Group, Mixed gender, C2DE, 36-60, Surrey]

> *If you're going to the lengths where you're going to commit fraud you're gonna know people's dates of birth anyway.*
> [Male, C1C2, 25-50, Aberdeen]

> *I just think if someone wants to steal someone's identity they would find out their date of birth.*
> [Female, DE, 17-26, Edinburgh]

9.12 Finally the change relating to temporary photographic ID at polling stations was broadly rejected:

> **Possible change 8b): Voters required to present photographic identification at polling stations**
> b) *Temporarily require all voters in specific electoral areas where proven cases of personation (someone pretending to be someone else in order to cast a vote) to*

> *present an approved form of photographic identification when voting at a polling station on polling day.*
>
> *Examples could include a photographic driving license or a passport.*

9.13 Aside from the issues pertaining to photographic ID as discussed above[27], it was the temporary nature of this change that was a core reason for rejection. The public were unconvinced this measure would have any lasting or effective impact on reducing electoral fraud, given it would only be in place for a limited period of time.

9.14 Further, the measure would be expected to make the system more complex if different parts of a city or different parts within a region were operating under different set of rules. This increased complexity was in turn thought likely to make the change impractical.

9.15 Finally, it was also rejected on the grounds that a location-specific policy did not feel like a fair way to resolve the issue. There was anxiety about one's own local area being highlighted and singled out, and the idea that everyone in that area would be 'punished' for the wrongdoing of a few.

> *By saying 'You're from a certain area, so you have to give us photographic evidence because you could lie. But you from a nicer area, so you don't have to provide it. Well, there are different people in all areas. That could just put people's backs up and stop them from voting. They'd feel 'Oh, you don't believe me because I live in this area.' You need to treat everybody equally.*
> [Female, B, 17-26, Oldham]

> *If electors weren't notified in advance, they would have a difficulty in getting hold of photographic ID.*
> [Female, C1C2, 27-35, Tower Hamlets]

> *If you just temporarily introduce this, people will go to another area and impersonate there.*
> [Male, C2DE, 17-35, Nottingham]

10. Conclusions

What information might help improve confidence in the security of the system?

10.1 Specific information shown to the public in this research (see Appendix 3 on page 41) helped to reduce their concern levels about vulnerability or security in the electoral system and electoral fraud. Working against these concerns, this information instead helped to support the perception that the electoral system in the UK is sound and comes under review at times to check integrity, with appropriate adjustments being made as a result if necessary.

---

[27] For example concerns around disenfranchising parts of the electorate, increasing voter apathy and reducing overall voter turnout.

10.2   In light of this, communicating the following is likely to increase positive perceptions of security of the electoral system:

- The range of bodies and roles that are in place to ensure electoral security helps to reassure. Where the public currently assume there to be an official body but are not totally certain, this would serve as confirmation.

- That the police have a specific role in relation to electoral security (and fraud) is also likely to be helpful in terms of reassuring the public that this area of public life is treated seriously, is in the hands of those who understand crime and that any issues are likely to be taken care of. It is also potentially possible to ask the public to be vigilant in terms of being aware of and reporting suspicious behaviour in order to help maintain the positive status quo. There is a risk, however, that this might inadvertently raise some concern about the nature and extent of unreported fraud currently.

- The low incidence of electoral fraud in UK, as well as the fact that most alleged cases do not lead to a conviction, are also likely to reduce concern. Many within the public feel this is relatively good news and helps them avoid having to worry about electoral fraud. For some, showing UK fraud as low as part of an international comparison was likely to support reassurance and confidence further.

- Finally, reminding the public about one of the key features of the electoral system, the privacy of polling station voting and the complete anonymity and confidentiality of each person's vote, is likely to work well to help mitigate against concerns relating to undue influence.

10.3   The overall tone of such communications should be modest but confident in order to help with reassurance.

10.4   There is potential to deliver such communication via PR, general information sources and via voting correspondence (as far as this is feasible).

What changes might help improve confidence in the security of the system?

10.5   Several potential policy options tested within the research were felt to offer important changes to the system, improving electoral security and reducing the potential for electoral fraud.

10.6   Importantly, however, the public feel that most of these measures are ones that should already be in place. Making such changes therefore:
- Bring system *in line with expectations* (around campaigner or candidate activity)
- And/or improve *elector experience* of security in the system

10.7   In light of this, any communication of policy changes should emphasise that these are measures to ensure best practice rather than measures to tackle specific issues of fraud. Given that they are addressing perceived weaknesses in the system, focusing public attention on the changes as a measure to reduce electoral can lead to the assumption that current issues in relation to these areas are extensive.

10.8   In terms of specific changes the public in this sample supported:

10.9   Presentation of ID at polling stations was felt likely to be effective by:
- Creating a sense that the electoral operators have security in mind
- Strengthening the idea that 'it is difficult for someone to take my vote' and offering some sense of personal security
- Having an additional 'halo effect' when the public consider other aspects of the system of which they are less aware

10.10   Tightening the rules governing candidates is also likely to help bring process in line with public expectations. This included all those specific policy options that related to stopping the handling of postal vote application forms and postal ballot packs by political parties, candidates, canvassers and campaigners as well as introducing legally binding (rather than voluntary) rules for campaigners operating in and around polling stations/places. Although the public are currently unaware of current procedures, when these are understood they are considered to be potential loop holes or system-failures. In light of this, it would appear best to address these before they become 'an issue'.

*   *   *   *   *

APPENDICES

1. **Project Background and Objectives**
2. **Research Methodology and Sample**
3. **Pre-placed material introducing information about the current voting process**
4. **Pre-placed material introducing potential changes to voting processes and related pre-task**
5. **Stimulus materials used in depths/groups**
6. **Discussion Guide**
7. **Recruitment Questionnaire**

Appendix 1 – Project Background and Objectives

Project Context: A Review into Concern on Electoral Fraud

1.1   Proven cases of electoral fraud are relatively rare in the UK and yet levels of concern amongst the public and politicians are comparatively high. In light of this, the Commission is undertaking a review[28] of the UK's current voting system. This review aims to achieve consensus about the best balance between ensuring the integrity and accessibility of electoral process in the UK.

1.2   The first phase of the review is completed and gathered evidence and views about electoral fraud from as wide a range of sources as possible. It focused on **concerns** that people have about the current electoral process and **any evidence about the nature and extent of electoral fraud** that people may have – either first hand or indirectly.

1.3   The first phase included consultation with stakeholders and an initial stage of qualitative research with the general public. Findings from this phase of the research fed into a Commission paper identifying key issues and potential policy options that was published in March 2013.

1.4   The second phase included testing policy options identified in the first phase with both stakeholders and with the public in order to find the best balance between ensuring the integrity and accessibility of electoral process in the UK. Data for this phase was drawn from both responses to the Commission's consultation document and findings from qualitative research with the public. This report details findings from Stage 2 of the qualitative research with the public.

The Role for Qualitative Research

1.5   Qualitative research was required to feed into and assist the review in several ways. Firstly, it can provide a distinct set of data about both concern about and experiences (direct or indirect) of electoral fraud, as well as ideas or perceived needs for change. Secondly, by providing a forum for discussion within the timeframe of the overall review, it offered an opportunity to gauge public responses to information and hypotheses for other sources, for example:
- Responses to issues or questions raised by stakeholders in phase 1 of the review[29]
- Responses to specific policy ideas raised by stakeholders or the Commission (in terms of both perceptions of value and consideration of specific benefits and drawbacks to the process)

---

[28] http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voter-registration/electoral-fraud

[29] As part of phase 1 of the review, the Commission have written to a range of stakeholders, including elected representatives, political parties, professionals working in the elections field, the police and prosecuting authorities, academics, voluntary organisations and think tanks to invite contributions in the following key areas:
- Firstly, what concerns do they have, if any, about vulnerabilities within the current electoral process (in relation to, for example, electoral registration, absent voting, voting in polling stations, the counting of votes, staff responsible for elections)?
- Secondly, what evidence do they have – either first-hand or indirect – about the extent and nature of electoral fraud which may have taken place in the UK?

1.6   In light of this, research is being conducted over two stages:
- **Stage 1** – to gain public perceptions and understanding of issues identified via phase 1 of the fraud review
- **Stage 2** – to follow up the research findings from stage 1 and test out possible policy recommendations with the public

1.7   This report details the findings from Stage 2.

Research Aims and Objectives

1.8   The overall objective for Stage 2 was defined as: **To build on Stage 1 findings in order to understand how EC can best address concern levels around electoral fraud amongst the general public and to explore any changes that should be made to the current electoral system.**

1.9   Specific areas for the research to focus on included *what policy options did the public consider to be worthwhile (or not) and how they might impact on perceptions of electoral fraud:*

- **Test out possible policy recommendations / options with the public.**
    - What do people think about the potential policy recommendations?
    - How much impact is the recommendation expected to have on preventing electoral fraud?
    - What are the potential drawbacks?

- **Understand perceptions of whether policy changes are necessary, or should there be more focus on educating people around existing security measures or both?**
    - Messaging - what information will help improve confidence in the integrity of the electoral system
    - If further information is required, what information would improve confidence and how should it be communicated?

- **Understand which messages should go to who? (e.g. picking up on the Stage 1 finding that for participants who had less personal experience of voting and voting processes there tended to be more personal concern and that new information prompted them to imagine gaps and weak points in the system)**

- **Understand how perceptions of electoral fraud are blurred with more general concerns around community issues and local politics**
    - What drives these perceptions / what evidence are they based on? This may cover at which point (if at all) specific behaviours cross from inappropriate to illegal, e.g. undue influence.
    - Do people think certain behaviours should be illegal that aren't currently?

Appendix 2 - Research Methodology and Sample

Methodology

2.1   The research used a mixed methodology of face-to-face depth interviews, groups and telephone depths:
- Groups of six participants lasted 1.5 hours each
- Depth interviews lasted 1 hour each
- Telephone depths lasted 30 mins

2.2   **Group discussions** were used to access the debate and discourse on the topic of electoral fraud and to see how issues or ideas 'hothouse' within this social setting and on what basis.

2.3   **Depth interviews** were used to provide a contrast to the group data and a means to access attitudes and opinions that would be less influenced in the moment by others. The privacy afforded by a depth allows participants to raise comments, experiences or questions that they may choose to withhold in a group setting.

2.4   **Telephone depths** with re-contacted participants from Stage 1 were used to explore how perceptions of electoral fraud might have developed over time as a contrast to the more immediate responses of those in the groups and depths.

2.5   **Topic areas** discussed in both the depth interviews and group discussions included:
- Knowledge, understanding and experience of the electoral system
- Responses to policy options
- Perceptions and understanding of undue influence

2.6   **Pre-tasking** was undertaken with the entire sample. Half received Pre-Placement 1 which provided system information only and half were given Pre-Placement 2 which provided system information and the list of policy options (see Appendix 3).
The specific benefits of pre-tasking in this way were as follows:
- Understanding what impact seeing information only had on perceptions of system security and electoral fraud
- Understanding what impact the policy options had on perceptions of system security and electoral fraud
- Rapport and positive dynamics with participants was easier to establish
- Session efficiency, productivity and depth of detail was enhanced
- In the case of the groups, facilitating participants to develop their own view prior to attending improved the level and richness of debate and discussion. It also made it easier for them to both contribute and challenge others as they had examples on hand and developed views from which to draw.

Sample

2.8   The purposive sample was designed to ensure a wide range of variables including age, SEG, locations, disability and ethnic origin and provide thorough representation of the characteristics of the British public. No one was excluded on the basis of protected characteristics.

2.9 To summarise the key characteristics represented with the sample and how different sessions were arranged:

a) Face-to-face depth interviews

39 interviews were undertaken, 1 hour in length and conducted face-to-face, with half of the depth participants to have received pre-placement 1 and half to have received pre-placement 2 a few days prior to the interview.

Criteria				Depths	Total (39)
Gender	*Female*			Min 18	39
	Male			Min 18	
Age	*17-26*			Min 8	39
	27-35			Min 8	
	36-49			Min 8	
	50-60+			Min 8	
SEG	*(A)B*			Min 10	39
	C1C2			Min 10	
	DE			Min 10	
Location *Areas where elections held in May 2013*	*England*	*North*	*Leeds*	3	21
			Oldham	3	
		Midlands	*Walsall*	3	
			Leicestershire*	3	
		South	*Peterborough*	3	
			Tower Hamlets	3	
			Suffolk*	3	
	Scotland		*Aberdeen*	3	6
			Edinburgh	3	
	Wales		*Carmarthen*	3	6
			Newport	3	
	Northern Ireland		*Belfast (east)*	3	6
			Belfast (west)	3	
Disability	*Have a disability/registered disability*			Min 7	7+
Ethnicity	*White British*			Min 20	39
	British Ethnic Minority			Min 12	
Voting practice	*Postal*			Min 10	39
	Polling station			Min 10	
Level of concern	*Not at all/Hardly at all*			Min 15	39
	A little/A lot			Min 15	

Additional criteria for depths
- Locations to be included in May fieldwork are marked with an asterisk
  o For these depths, at least 1 respondent per area to have voted in election on 2 May 2013
- *Ethnic minority participants*
  o to represent a roughly even mix of gender and spread of age and SEG
- *Northern Ireland sample*
  o Representation of both Protestant and Catholic participants - Min 3 of each (will be clustered by location)
  o Good spread of SEG:
    ▪ 2 x (A)B
    ▪ 2 x C1C2

- ▪ 2 x DE
  - o Good spread of age:
    - ▪ Min 2 17-35
    - ▪ Min 2 36-60+

i) Telephone Depth Interviews with re-contacted sample (n =16)

Criteria		Depths	Total
Age	*17-35*	8	16
	36-60+	8	
SEG	*(A)B*	Min 4	16
	C1C2	Min 4	
	DE	Min 4	
Location	*England*	Min 5	16
	Scotland	Min 3	
	Wales	Min 3	
	Northern Ireland	Min 3	
Ethnicity	*White British*	Min 10	16
	British Ethnic Minority	Min 2	
Concern	*Respondents who previously mentioned more experience of EF/concern about undue influence in communities**	Min 3	Min 3

*To be identified from previous participants by researchers, not screened for this
Additional criteria for <u>re-contacted</u> sample:
- All to say they are concerned about electoral fraud

ii) Mini groups (n=6) with 6 participants per group (total=36)

England	Wales	Scotland
1. Younger ABC1, London (mixed areas)	5. C1C2, 25-50, Newport	6. C1C2, 25-50, Aberdeen or Edinburgh (TBC)
2. Older C2DE, Surrey*		
3. Younger C2DE, Nottinghamshire* or Oxfordshire* (TBC)		
4. Older ABC1, Leeds or Newcastle		

Additional criteria for <u>group</u> participants:
- Locations where elections were held in May 2013 and to be included in May fieldwork are marked with an asterisk
  - o For these groups, minimum of 2 participants per group to have voted in election on 2 May 2013
- Age range of England groups defined as:
  - o Younger: 17-35
  - o Older: 36-60+
- A good spread of SEG required within each broad band
- Each group to include minimum of 3 men and 3 women each (spread of age and SEG within broad range of group)
- Min 1, max 2 participants per group to have a disability
- Ethnicity

- o Min 3, max 9 participants in group sample to represent an ethnic minority – likely to fall out by location with some locations having 2+ EM participants and other having none
- Levels of concern
  - o A minimum of 2 participants in each who think fraud happens not at all/hardly at all and a min of 4 that think it happens a little / a lot
- A good spread of all other criteria in each group

2.10   Fieldwork took place across seven locations to cover the North of England (Oldham), Midlands (Leicester, Nottingham and Walsall), South of England (Suffolk) and London (including Tower Hamlets), East of England (Peterborough), Wales (Newport and Carmathen), Scotland (Edinburgh and Aberdeen) and Northern Ireland (East and West Belfast). Recontact telephone depths were drawn from Northern Ireland, Cardiff, Ceredigion, Glasgow, Oldham, Leicester, Hertfordshire, London. All fieldwork too place from 28th May – 2nd July.

2.11   The research team included: Joceline Jones, Claire Vernon, Lucy Bush, Danica Minic and Elena Hailwood.

Appendix 3 - Pre-placed material introducing information about the current voting process

Overview of electoral system in the UK

Outlined below are some of the key features of the electoral system in the UK, e.g. how you can register to vote, the different ways people can vote etc.

Please read over these carefully before the interview/group discussion. This is just to help with our discussion - it's not a test.

Don't worry if you don't understand all the terms/words. You might know some of this information already, or some of it might be new to you.

The Electoral Commission

- The Electoral Commission is an independent body set up by the UK Parliament to help support a healthy democracy. They regulate party and election finance and set standards for well-run elections.

- Their duties include:

  − Registering political parties
  − Making sure people understand and follow the rules on party and election finance
  − Publishing details of where parties and candidates get money from and how they spend it
  − Setting the standards for electoral registration (i.e. the process and information required from an individual, in order to register to vote)
  − Setting standards for running elections and reporting on how well this is done
  − Making sure people understand how to vote
  − Running any referendums held under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000

- The Electoral Commission also provides resources to those involved in administering elections. There are many different people performing different roles at election time, including:

  − **Returning Officers** (ROs) - are responsible for administering elections in their area. This includes making sure there are robust plans in place to prevent and detect electoral fraud
  − **Electoral Registration Officers** (EROs) **–** these are the people who have the overall responsibility for registering electors to vote in their area. In many cases, the Returning Officer will also be the Electoral Registration Officer
  − **Electoral administrators** - run the registration of electors and elections e.g. appoint staff to work in the polling stations, organise the counting of the votes etc.)
  − **Candidates -** are politicians running for office
  − **Agents -** are responsible in law for the proper management of a candidate's election campaign, in particular, its financial management. Every candidate must have an agent
  − **Tellers -** are usually volunteers for campaigners that stand outside polling stations and record the number of electors that vote
  − **Postal workers** - handle applications to vote by post or proxy, polling cards and postal voting packs

- **Police** - are responsible for investigating cases of alleged electoral fraud and taking appropriate action. Every police force has a designated "Single Point of Contact" (SPOC) to lead on election related crime
- **Prosecuting authorities** - such as the Crown Prosecution Service, will be involved as part of their job in prosecuting those who commit electoral fraud

- The resources that the Electoral Commission provides to these people help ensure overall integrity of the electoral system. Examples include:

  - **Guidance for Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and electoral administrators** to help them understand their duties in relation to preventing electoral fraud e.g. that checks should be made where a large number of people (8+) are registered to vote at a single property.
  - **A code of conduct for campaigners** to help them understand what is and isn't acceptable behaviour at polling stations and in the community in the run up to polling day. This includes guidance on how applications for a postal vote and postal ballot packs are handled by political parties, candidates and canvassers.
  - **Guidance for tellers on what they can and can't do**
  - **Guidance and training with the police** each year to update their knowledge to help them detect fraud and about working with EROs and ROs
  - **Pocket guides for postal workers and police** to help them detect electoral fraud
  - **Annual report** on allegations of electoral fraud made to the police

The Police

- The police have a duty to help maintain the integrity of the electoral process.

- The Representation of the People Act 1983 specifies a number of criminal offences relating to electoral fraud.

- Every police force has a designated person to lead on election-related crime and who will give advice to local police officers.

- The relevant police force can investigate any allegations that an offence may have taken place.

Registering to vote

- You need to be on the electoral register to vote in UK elections and referendums.

- In terms of the eligibility criteria, you can register to vote if you are:
  - 16 years old or over, and
  - a British citizen
  - or an Irish, Commonwealth or European Union citizen who is resident in the UK

- If you are 16 or 17, you will only be added to the register if you will be 18 within the lifetime of the electoral register. You cannot actually vote until you are 18.

- Most people in the UK register between September and November every year when the Electoral Registration Officer sends a registration form direct to your home. This is called the annual canvass. Currently, one person in the household is responsible for

completing the form in order to register all the eligible people at that address. This person then signs the form and returns it to the local Electoral Registration Officer.

- Individuals can also register themselves at any time throughout the year, or update their details as required. For example, if you move house you will need to register at your new address. Individuals can do part of this online by filling in a form with their details (including name, previous address, current address, date of birth and nationality). Once the form is completed it needs to be printed off, signed and sent to the local Electoral Registration Officer. It can't be submitted online because the Electoral Registration Officer needs a hard copy of your signature for security reasons.

- From 2014 there are some changes to this system, as Individual Electoral Registration (IER) is being introduced in Great Britain. This change will mean that:
  − Each person will be required to register individually, rather than by household
  − Individuals will be asked to provide additional 'identifying information', such as a date of birth and national insurance number, when they apply to register

Different ways of voting

- In the UK there are three different ways you can cast your vote:
  1. **Voting in person** (at a polling station)
  2. **Voting by post** (where you fill out your ballot paper and post it back to your local council)
  3. **Voting by proxy** (where you nominate someone to cast your vote in a polling station / or they can apply to post your vote on your behalf)

- *Voting in person:*

  − If you vote in person you will receive a polling card at your registered address

  − This polling card will confirm your right to vote in the election and include details of:
    o Which election is taking place
    o The date of the election
    o The location of your polling station, and the date and hours that it will be open.

  − When you get to the polling station you will need to give your name to the polling clerk who will check that you are on the electoral register. You will then be given a ballot paper.

  − You are provided with a booth in which you cast your vote. This ensures your vote is <u>private</u> and <u>anonymous</u>.

  − You do not need to take your poll card with you to vote. However, in Northern Ireland you are asked to provide a specified form of photographic identification to confirm your identity when attending the polling station.

- *Voting by post:*

  − Anyone who is registered to vote (or about to be registered to vote) can apply to vote by post

- You can apply for just one election, for a certain type of election, for a specific time period or for a permanent postal vote

- To register for a postal vote, you need to fill in a postal vote application form, including your signature and date of birth (DOB), and send it to your local Electoral Registration Officer.

- Electors also have to provide their signature and DOB when casting their postal vote. The DOB and signature on record are checked with those provided on the security statement that accompanies the postal ballot paper and if they don't match, the ballot paper is rejected.

- ***Voting by proxy, which is where somebody has been appointed to cast a vote on behalf of another person:***

  - People on the electoral register that can't attend polling station can apply for a proxy

  - The Voter

    - You can only apply for a long-term proxy vote if you have a specific reason such as a disability or being overseas. Your application needs to be attested (that is, a witness needs to sign in addition to certify that the details of the application are true)

    - However, you can have a proxy for a specific election without the need for an attestation, provided you have a reason - for example you will be on holiday or away due to work

    - If you are suddenly incapacitated or taken ill after the ordinary deadline for applying for a proxy, you can apply to vote by proxy for medical reasons up until 5pm on polling day

  - The Voter's Proxy

    - Anyone who is eligible to vote in the election themselves can act as a proxy. However, you can only be a proxy for up to two people who are not members of your immediate family

    - If you are someone's proxy, you will be sent a proxy poll card with details of where you should go to vote

    - If you are going to the polling station, you would need to tell the staff there that you are voting as a proxy, (though it will be on the register) and they will tell you what to do

    - If, as a Proxy, you can't attend the polling station you can apply for a proxy postal vote.

Overview of electoral system in Northern Ireland

Outlined below are some of the key features of the electoral system in Northern Ireland, e.g. how you can register to vote, the different ways people can vote etc.

Please read over these carefully before the interview/group discussion. This is just to help with our discussion - it's not a test.

Don't worry if you don't understand all the terms/words. You might know some of this information already, or some of it might be new to you.

The Electoral Commission

- The Electoral Commission is an independent body set up by the UK Parliament to help support a healthy democracy. They regulate party and election finance and set standards for well-run elections.

- Their duties include:

  − Registering political parties
  − Making sure people understand and follow the rules on party and election finance
  − Publishing details of where parties and candidates get money from and how they spend it
  − Setting the standards for electoral registration (i.e. the process and information required from an individual, in order to register to vote)
  − Setting standards for running elections and reporting on how well this is done
  − Making sure people understand how to vote
  − Running any referendums held in accordance with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000

- The Electoral Commission also provides resources to those people involved in administering each election. There are many different people performing different roles at election time, including:

  − **The Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland** - who is the registration officer and returning officer for all elections in Northern Ireland. He is responsible for maintaining the electoral register and has overall responsibility for the conduct of elections
  − **The Electoral Office for Northern Ireland -** which is the body which supports the Chief Electoral Officer is carrying out his duties in Northern Ireland
  − **Candidates** – who are politicians running for office
  − **Agents -** are responsible in law for the proper management of a candidate's election campaign, in particular, its financial management. Every candidate must have an agent
  − **Tellers -** who are usually volunteers for campaigners that stand outside polling places and record the number of electors that vote
  − **Postal workers** – who handle applications to vote by post or proxy, polling cards and postal voting packs
  − **Police** – who are responsible for investigating cases of alleged electoral fraud and taking appropriate action. Every police force has a designated "Single Point of Contact" (SPOC) to lead on election related crime

- **Prosecuting authorities** – who will be involved as part of their job in prosecuting those who commit electoral fraud

- The resources that the Electoral Commission provides to these people help to ensure overall integrity of the electoral system. Examples include:

  - **Working closely with the Chief Electoral Officer ahead of elections to ensure that elections are well run**
  - **Providing straightforward advice to officers of the Police Service of Northern Ireland** to help them understand electoral fraud and assist in detecting it. This includes pocket guides for PSNI officers.
  - **Reporting annually** on allegations of electoral malpractice made to the police

Police

- The Police Service has a duty to help maintain the integrity of the electoral process.

- The Representation of the People Act 1983 specifies a number of criminal offences relating to electoral fraud.

- The PSNI have a designated officer to lead on election-related crime.

- The Police Service can investigate any allegations that an offence may have taken place.

Registering to vote in Northern Ireland

- You need to be on the electoral register to vote in UK elections and referendums.

- Anyone wanting to have their name included in the register must provide their name, address, date of birth and national insurance number on an individually-signed form.

- In terms of the eligibility criteria, you can register to vote if you are:
    - 16 years old or over, and
    - a British or Irish citizen
    - or a Commonwealth or European Union citizen who is resident in the UK

  - If you are 16 or 17, you can only register if you will be 18 within the lifetime of the electoral register. You cannot actually vote until you are 18.

- To qualify to be on the electoral register, eligible individuals must demonstrate they have been resident in Northern Ireland for at least 3 months prior to their application for registration.

- In Northern Ireland you may be required to provide proof of identity/residency/ eligibility with your application to register to vote.

Different ways of voting in Northern Ireland

- In the UK there are three different ways you can cast your vote:

1. **Voting in person** (at a polling station)
2. **Voting by post** (where you fill out your ballot paper at home and post it)
3. **Proxy voting**

- *Voting in person:*

  − If you vote in person you will receive a poll card at your registered address

  − This polling card will include details of the location of your polling station, and the date and hours that it will be open

  − When voters get to the polling station they must present a specified form of photographic identification to confirm their identity. You will then be given a ballot paper for you to cast your vote. Acceptable identification in Northern Ireland includes:
    o A UK, Irish or EEA driving licence (photographic part)
    o A Senior Smartpass
    o A 60+ Smartpass
    o A War Disabled Smartpass
    o A Blind Person's Smartpass
    o An electoral identity card

  − You do not need your poll card to vote

  − You are provided with a booth in which you cast your vote. This ensures your vote is <u>private</u> and <u>anonymous</u>.

- *Voting by post:*

  - You have to give a reason to request a postal vote, for example if you will be away for work or a holiday.

  - Postal voters in Northern Ireland have to complete and return a declaration of identity form with their ballot papers. The declaration, which requires date of birth and signature of voter, must be signed by and in front of a witness. All postal voters are checked and cross-referenced with the information provided at the time of registration (date of birth, signature)

- *Voting by proxy, which is where somebody has been appointed to cast a vote on behalf of another person:*

  − People on the electoral register that can't attend polling station can apply for a proxy

  − The Voter:

    ▪ You can only apply for a long-term proxy vote if you have a specific reason such as a disability or being overseas

    ▪ Otherwise, to vote by proxy for just one election, you must have a reason, for example you will be on holiday or away due to work

    ▪ If you are suddenly incapacitated or taken ill, you can apply to vote by proxy for medical reasons up until six days before polling day

- To apply for a proxy vote you can download an application form to fill in

- If a voter can attend the polling station before their appointed Proxy, they are allowed to vote, effectively cancelling the proxy

- The Voter's Proxy:

  - Anyone who is eligible to vote in the election themselves can act as a proxy. However, you can only be a proxy for up to two people who are not members of your immediate family

  - If you are someone's proxy, you will be sent a proxy poll card with details of where you should go to vote

  - If you are going to the polling place, you would need to tell the staff there that you are voting as a proxy (although it would also be noted on the register) and they will tell you what to do.

  - As a proxy, if you can't attend the polling place you can apply for a proxy postal vote.

Appendix 4 – Pre-placed material introducing potential changes to voting processes and related pre-task

Overview of possible changes to the voting system in the UK

Listed out below are some potential changes to the electoral system in the UK. They are grouped by what type of voting they would affect, e.g. postal voting, proxy voting etc.

Please read over these carefully before the interview/group discussion. Again, this is just to help with our discussion - it's not a test.

Don't worry if you don't understand all the terms/words. You might have strong opinions about some of these ideas and others you might be less certain about.

POSTAL VOTING

Possible change 1: **Restricting the availability of postal voting in Great Britain**

Different ways or options to achieve this include:

a. <u>Abolishing postal voting on demand</u>. This would mean that postal voting across all ofGreat Britain would be restricted to those who are unable to attend the polling station for reasons of disability, illness, occupation or holiday (i.e. reverting to the pre-2001 system or the current Northern Ireland model).

b. Suspending postal voting <u>on demand</u> for a limited period in election areas where there had been recent proven cases of postal voting fraud. This <u>would not</u> affect those electors unable to access the polling station due to disability, illness, occupation or holiday.

c. Suspending postal voting for <u>all electors</u> for a limited period in election areas where there had been recent proven cases of postal voting fraud. This <u>would mean that</u> electors unable to access the polling station due to disability, illness, occupation or holiday could not vote by post.

Possible change 2: **Alternatives to postal voting in the event of restricted postal voting in Great Britain**

These could be brought in alongside any of the above restrictions. Options include:

a. Introducing mobile polling facilities (a physical voting facility that can be moved between locations).

b. Establishing a system of advance voting, where someone can vote in a polling station in advance of the official polling day.

c. Allowing electors to 'cancel' their postal vote and instead vote in person at a polling station if they felt they had been subjected to undue pressure when completing their postal ballot paper.

Possible change 3: **Stopping the handling of postal vote application forms and postal ballot packs by political parties, candidates, canvassers (people who visit voters to persuade them to support a political party) and campaigners**

Different ways or options to achieve this include:

a. Making it illegal for political parties, candidates, campaigners and supporters to handle postal vote applications and postal ballot papers.

b. Making it a legal requirement for completed postal vote application forms to be returned directly to the relevant Electoral Registration Officer's address. Sending completed postal vote application forms to an intermediary address, such as a local party office, would be prohibited.

c. Making it illegal for anyone other than the voter to hand in postal ballot packs at polling stations on polling day.

d. Making sure that the list of people entitled to vote by post is not made available to anyone before elections.

PROXY VOTING

Possible changes to the way proxy voting is run could include:

Possible change 4: **Requiring people who want to apply for a proxy vote for a particular election to have their application signed to legally certify that the details of the application are true, as is the case for those wanting a proxy vote on a permanent basis.**

Possible change 5: **Limiting the number of electors for which a person can be appointed as proxy (i.e. to vote on someone else's behalf) to two family members plus two others (four in total).**

Possible change 6: **Limiting the number of electors for which a person can be appointed as proxy (i.e. to vote on someone else's behalf) to two in total**.

Possible change 7: **Limiting the availability of proxy votes to special category electors, e.g. service voters, overseas voters and crown servants**.

POLLING STATION VOTING

Possible change 8: **Voters required to present photographic identification at polling stations**

There are several ways in which such a change could be implemented:

a. Require all voters to present an approved form of photographic identification when attending a polling station on polling day. Examples include a photographic driving license or a passport.

b. Temporarily require all voters in specific constituencies or other electoral areas where proven cases of personation (someone pretending to be someone else in order to cast a vote) had occurred at polling stations to present an approved form of photographic identification when attending a polling station on polling day. Examples include a photographic driving license or a passport.

Possible change 9: **Measures introduced to improve the security in or around polling stations**

Different ways or options to achieve this include:

a. Asking voters to sign for their ballot paper (and if they refuse to sign then their ballot paper will be withheld).

b. Asking voters to confirm their date of birth before receiving their ballot paper.

c. Introducing legally binding (rather than voluntary) rules for campaigners operating in and around polling stations/places.

Your thoughts on possible changes to the electoral system in the UK

Please do this exercise after having read the background information documents A and B.

The potential changes to the electoral system in the UK outlined in document B are listed in the table below. They are grouped by what type of voting they would affect, e.g. postal voting, proxy voting etc.

Please write in the table to record your thoughts. Think carefully about each of the ideas – the exercise will take you up to 20 minutes so give yourself plenty of time to complete it. If you have any questions at all please let us know.

You might have opinions about some of these ideas and others you might be less certain about – there are no right or wrong answers at all so just put down what you feel!

POSTAL VOTING

Possible change 1: **Restricting the availability of postal voting in Great Britain**

Specific policy proposal	Please note whether overall you feel this is a: a) good idea b) not a good idea, or c) that you don't know enough about it to judge	If you said you don't feel you know enough about it to judge, then please write in what else you would need to know about this policy to help you decide	Please write in one possible <u>benefit</u> you feel might come from introducing this policy	Please write in one possible <u>drawback</u> you feel might come from introducing this policy
Example policy	*Good idea*	*I would need to know how it would affect....* *I would want to find out more about the current way that....*	*One advantage of this change might be that...*	*One disadvantage to this change might be...*
a. Abolishing postal voting on demand.				
b. Suspending postal voting <u>on demand</u> for a limited period in election areas where there had been recent proven cases of postal voting fraud.				
c. Suspending postal voting for <u>all electors</u> for a limited period in election areas where there had been recent proven cases of postal voting fraud.				

Possible change 2: **Alternatives to postal voting in the event of restricted postal voting in Great Britain**

Specific policy proposal	Please note whether overall you feel this is a: a) good idea b) not a good idea, or c) that you don't know enough about it to judge	If you said you don't feel you know enough about it to judge, then please write in what else you would need to know about this policy to help you decide	Please write in one possible <u>benefit</u> you feel might come from introducing this policy	Please write in one possible <u>drawback</u> you feel might come from introducing this policy
a. Introducing mobile polling facilities (a physical voting facility that can be moved between locations)				
b. Establishing a system of advance voting, where someone can vote in a polling station in advance of the official polling day				
c. Allowing electors to 'cancel' their postal vote and instead vote in person at a polling station if they felt they had been subjected to undue pressure when completing their postal ballot paper.				

Possible change 3: **Stopping the handling of postal vote application forms and postal ballot packs by political parties, candidates, canvassers (people who visit voters to persuade them to support a political party) and campaigners**

Specific policy proposal	*Please note whether overall you feel this is a:* *a) good idea* *b) not a good idea, or* *c) that you don't know enough about it to judge*	*If you said you don't feel you know enough about it to judge, then please write in what else you would need to know about this policy to help you decide*	*Please write in one possible <u>benefit</u> you feel might come from introducing this policy*	*Please write in one possible <u>drawback</u> you feel might come from introducing this policy*
a. Making it illegal for political parties, candidates, campaigners and supporters to handle postal vote applications and postal ballot papers.				
b. Making it a legal requirement for completed postal vote application forms to be returned directly to the relevant Electoral Registration Officer's address. Sending completed postal vote application forms to an intermediary address, such as a local party office, would be prohibited.				
c. Making it illegal for anyone other than the voter to hand in postal ballot packs at polling stations on polling day.				
d. Making sure that the list of people entitled to vote by post is not made available to anyone before elections.				

PROXY VOTING

Specific policy proposal	Please note whether overall you feel this is a: a) good idea b) not a good idea, or c) that you don't know enough about it to judge	If you said you don't feel you know enough about it to judge, then please write in what else you would need to know about this policy to help you decide	Please write in one possible drawback you feel might come from introducing this policy	Please write in one possible benefit you feel might come from introducing this policy
Possible change 4: Requiring people who want to apply for a proxy vote for a particular election to have their application signed to legally certify that the details of the application are true, as is the case for those wanting a proxy vote on a permanent basis.				
Possible change 5: Limiting the number of electors for which a person can be appointed as proxy (i.e. to vote on someone else's behalf) to two family members plus two others (four in total).				
Possible change 6: Limiting the number of electors for which a person can be appointed as proxy (i.e. to vote on someone else's behalf) to two in total.				

Possible change 7: Limiting the availability of proxy votes to special category electors, e.g. service voters, overseas voters and crown servants.				

POLLING STATION VOTING

Possible change 8: **Voters required to present photographic identification at polling stations**

Specific policy proposal	Please note whether overall you feel this is a: a) good idea b) not a good idea, or c) that you don't know enough about it to judge	If you said you don't feel you know enough about it to judge, then please write in what else you would need to know about this policy to help you decide	Please write in one possible benefit you feel might come from introducing this policy	Please write in one possible drawback you feel might come from introducing this policy
a. Require all voters to present an approved form of photographic identification when attending a polling station on polling day. Examples include a photographic driving license or a passport.				

b. Temporarily require all voters in specific constituencies or other electoral areas where proven cases of personation (someone pretending to be someone else in order to cast a vote) had occurred at polling stations to present an approved form of photographic identification when attending a polling station on polling day. Examples include a photographic driving license or a passport.			

Possible change 9: **Measures introduced to improve the security in or around polling stations**

Specific policy proposal	Please note whether overall you feel this is a: a) good idea b) not a good idea, or c) that you don't know enough about it to judge	If you said you don't feel you know enough about it to judge, then please write in what else you would need to know about this policy to help you decide	Please write in one possible <u>benefit</u> you feel might come from introducing this policy	Please write in one possible <u>drawback</u> you feel might come from introducing this policy
a. Asking voters to sign for their ballot paper (and if they refuse to sign then their ballot paper will be withheld).				
b. Asking voters to confirm their date of birth before receiving their ballot paper.				
c. Introducing legally binding (rather than voluntary) rules for campaigners operating in and around polling stations/places.				

Appendix 5 – Stimulus materials used in depths/groups

NB. All stimulus was presented to participants on A4 cards rather than in a table format as shown below.

a) Policy options

| Postal voting	Possible change 1: Restricting the availability of postal voting in Great Britain	a) <u>Abolishing postal voting on demand.</u> This would mean that only people who are unable to attend the polling station because of disability, illness, occupation or holiday would be allowed to vote by post.
		b) Suspending postal voting <u>on demand</u> for a limited time in election areas where there had been recent proven cases of postal voting fraud. This would <u>not affect</u> those electors unable to access the polling station due to disability, illness, occupation or holiday.
		c) Suspending all postal voting for <u>all electors</u> for a limited time in areas where there had been recent proven cases of postal voting fraud. This <u>would mean</u> that electors unable to access the polling station due to disability, illness, occupation or holiday could not vote by post.
	Possible change 2: *Alternatives to postal voting in the event of restricted postal voting in Great Britain*	a) Introducing mobile polling stations that that can be moved and temporarily set up in different locations
		b) Establishing a system of advance voting, where someone can vote in a polling station in advance of the official polling day.
		c) Allowing electors to 'cancel' their postal vote and instead vote in person at a polling station if they felt they had been subjected to undue pressure when completing their postal ballot paper.
	Possible change 3: *Stopping the handling of postal vote application forms and postal ballot packs by political parties, candidates, canvassers and campaigners*	a) Making it illegal for political parties, candidates, campaigners and supporters to handle postal vote applications and postal ballot packs.
		b) Making it a legal requirement for completed postal vote application forms to be returned directly to the relevant Electoral Registration Officer's address. Sending completed postal vote application forms to an intermediary address, such as a local party office, would be prohibited.
		c) Making it illegal for anyone other than the voter to hand in postal ballot packs at polling stations on polling day.
		d) Making sure that the list of people entitled to vote by post is not made available to anyone before elections
Proxy voting	<u>Possible change 4:</u> Requiring people who want to apply for a proxy vote for a particular election to have their application signed to certify that the details of the application are true, as is the case for those wanting a proxy vote on a permanent basis.	

	Possible change 5: Limiting the number of electors for which a person can be appointed as proxy, to four people – two family members and two others	
	Possible change 6: Limiting the number of electors for which a person can be appointed as proxy to two people	
	Possible change 7: Limiting the availability of proxy votes to special category electors, e.g. service voters, overseas voters and crown servants.	
Polling station voting	Possible change 8: Voters required to present photographic identification at polling stations	a) Require all voters to present an approved form of photographic identification when attending a polling station on polling day. Examples could include a photographic driving license or passport
		b) Temporarily require all voters in specific electoral areas where proven cases of personation (someone pretending to be someone else in order to cast a vote) to present an approved form of photographic identification when voting at a polling station on polling day. Examples could include a photographic driving license or a passport.
	Possible change 9: Measures introduced to improve the security in or around polling stations	a) Asking voters to sign for their ballot paper (and if they refuse to sign then their ballot paper will be withheld).
		b) Asking voters to confirm their date of birth before receiving their ballot paper.
		c) Introducing legally binding (rather than voluntary) rules for campaigners operating in and around polling stations/places.

b) *Facts about the incidence of reported fraud in the UK*

- *406 cases of <u>alleged</u> electoral fraud were reported in 2012.*
- *66% of cases reported in 2012 were resolved with no further action.*
- *12% alleged cases are under investigation*
- *1% alleged cases led to court proceedings*
- *No cases have resulted in a conviction.*
- *No cases are known to have affected the outcome of any election.*

These statistics are accurate as of 30th April 2013

Breakdown of 406 cases of alleged electoral fraud (2012)

- Campaigning offences
- *Voting offences*
- Registration
- Nomination

41%

26%

23%

6%
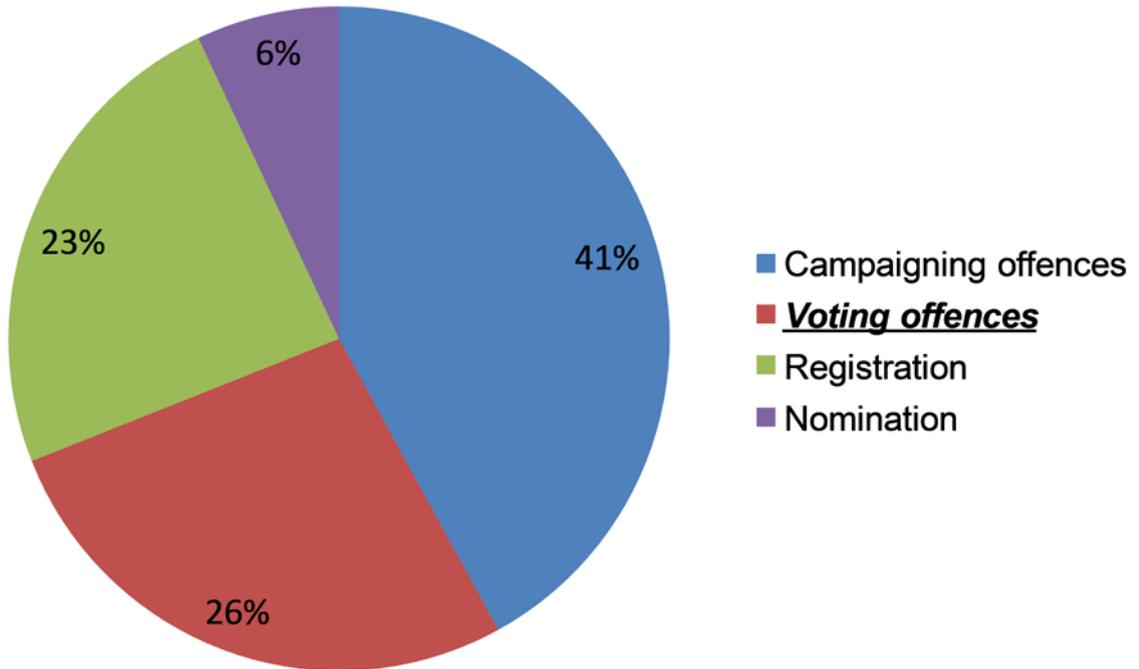
The remaining 4% of alleged electoral fraud cases fall into other categories

Breakdown by alleged voting offence

- Personation - polling station
- Personation - postal voting
- Personation - proxy voting
- Tampering with ballot papers
- Bribery
- Treating
- Undue influence

24%

44%

9%

4%

4%

2%

13%
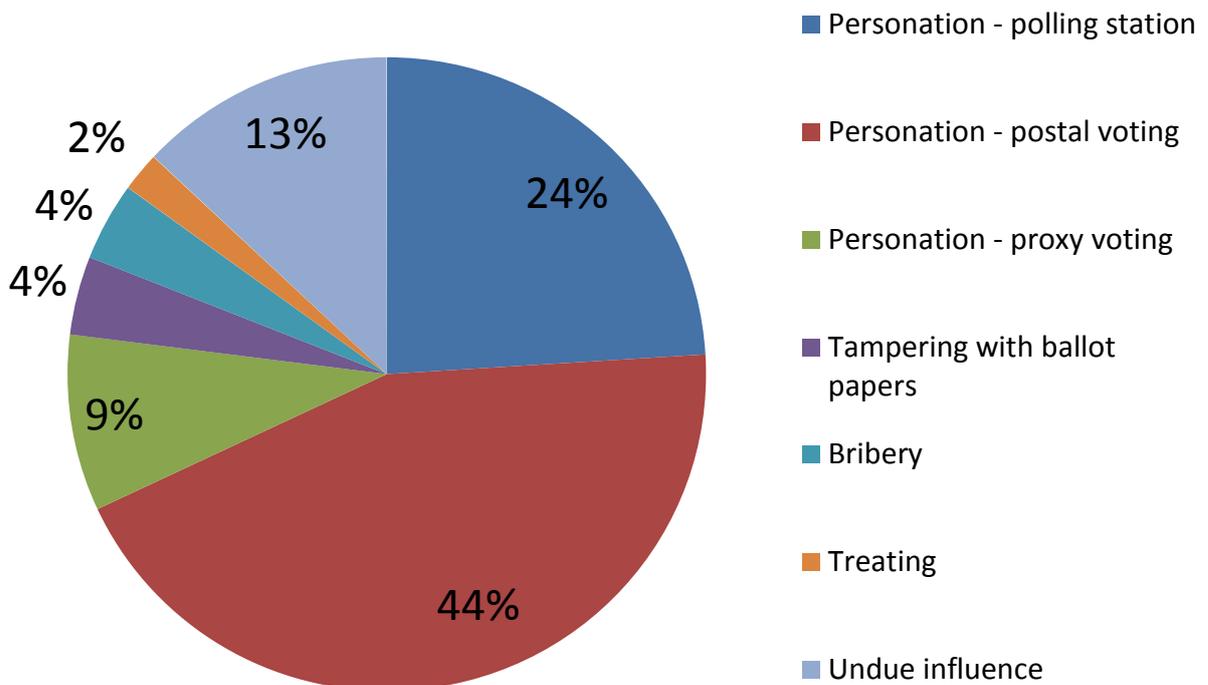
c) Undue influence scenarios

Having a discussion with friends/family about politics and persuading someone to change their mind about who to vote for
A party leaflet that threatens the use of force against some voters
Having representatives of political parties canvass for your vote
Having representatives or of political parties in the vicinity of the polling station
Someone completing another person's postal vote without their knowledge
Someone completing another person's postal vote with their knowledge and consent
Being persistently asked by someone to reveal who you will vote for
Being accompanied to the polling station
Having a discussion as a family about who to vote for and all deciding on the same party/candidate
Having a discussion as a family then one person making a decision about who everyone will vote for
A person threatens someone in order to stop them from voting
A person threatens someone to make them vote in a certain way

Appendix 6 - Discussion Guide

DISCUSSION GUIDE
1934 – EC – Electoral Fraud Perceptions Research Stage 2
Depths (1 hour) and Groups (1.5 hours) and Recontact telephone depths (30 mins)

Notes on Qualitative Questioning:

1. *This guide indicates the areas to be explored in the discussion, the likely order in which topics will be covered and the kinds of questions and techniques that may be used. As it is qualitative research, there will be diversions taken within the dynamics of each interview in order to fully explore participants' data. (Timings given are for guidance only and will not be strictly adhered to – times spent on each section will be dependent upon the knowledge/interests of each respondent/group)*
2. *The objectives of the research may be addressed through direct questioning, indirect questioning, observation of non-verbal response in response to stimulus, or analysis of data post hoc.*

Moderator notes
The overall requirement of this research is to gain further understanding of why a proportion of the public are concerned about electoral fraud and hold views that are not in line with reported volumes.

Stage 2 Overall: **To build on stage 1 findings in order to understand how EC can best address concern levels around electoral fraud amongst the general public and to explore any changes that should be made to the current electoral system.**

Specifically:

- Test out possible policy recommendations / options with the public.
    - o What do people think about the potential policy recommendations?
    - o How much impact is the recommendation expected to have on preventing electoral fraud?
    - o What are the potential drawbacks?

- Understand perceptions of whether policy changes are necessary, or should there be more focus on educating people around existing security measures or both?
    - o Messaging - what information will help improve confidence in the integrity of the electoral system
    - o If further information is required, what information would improve confidence and how should it be communicated.

- Understand which messages should go to who? (e.g. picking up on the Stage 1 finding that for participants who had less personal experience of voting and voting processes there tended to be more personal concern and that new information prompted them to imagine gaps and weak points in the system)

- Understand how perceptions of electoral fraud are blurred with more general concerns around community issues and local politics
    - o What drives these perceptions / what evidence are they based on? This may

cover at which point (if at all) specific behaviours cross from inappropriate to illegal, e.g. undue influence.
  o Do people think certain behaviours should be illegal that aren't currently?

Stimulus for all sessions – See Stimulus Pack
- **Overview of electoral system**
- **Policy options on cards**
- **Undue influence cards**
- **Overview of alleged electoral fraud 2012**
- **Breakdown of cases of alleged electoral fraud**
- **Breakdown by alleged voting offence chart**

Rotation

Discussion order:

Respondents with **Pre-placement 1** to follow this order of discussion: **1, 2, 3, 4, 5** (Pre-placement 1 includes information about the way the electoral system operates in Great Britain *or Northern Ireland as appropriate* only)

Respondents with **Pre-placement 2** to follow this order of discussion: **1, 3, 2, 4, 5** (Pre-placement 2 includes information about the way the electoral system operates in Great Britain and information about potential changes to the system. This pack also contains a self-completion exercise to enable participants to think about potential changes in advance of the session)

Policy options order:

All groups to discuss policy options in the following order:
  1) Polling station voting
  2) Postal voting
  3) Proxy voting

Policy options to be rotated fully across all depths.

- Depths sample to be split between Pre-placement 1 and Pre-placement 2[30]
- All recontacts to be given pre-placement 2[31]
- All group participants to be given pre-placement 2

---

[30] Except for Northern Ireland depths sample who will receive NI-specific Pre-placement 1
[31] Recontacts from Northern Ireland to be given NI-specific Pre-placement 1

---

1. Introductions and Background
(5 mins in depths, 10 mins in groups, 5 mins in recontacts)

- *Moderator to introduce self and explain the process of social research to participants (MRS/SRA guidelines, confidentiality and recording), and the format of the interview /discussion (some topics for discussion and occasional exercise for them to do)*
- *Permission to record audio*
- **Explain that we are here to talk about the electoral process in the UK and discuss some changes that could potentially be implemented to both improve the security and increase public confidence, any thoughts about this and experiences they may have**
- Explain that first, however, we'd like to find out a little more about them as individuals ...
- For depths and groups: Brief respondent 'warm up' questions– select questions as necessary until warmed up:
  - o First name and age
  - o Who lives at home?
  - o What do you do for a living/what occupies your daily life?
  - o Any hobbies or interests?
  - o Favourite TV programme? Favourite film? Internet sites?
- For recontacts:
  - o Remind me about your personal 'profile':
    - ▪ Who lives at home?
    - ▪ What do you do for a living/what occupies your daily life?
  - o Off the top of your head, what do you remember mostly about the previous session you took part in? What impression did it leave you with?

---

2. Overall knowledge, understanding and experience of the electoral system
(10 mins in depths, 15 mins in groups, 5 mins in recontacts)

All participants:

Explain to respondent that we would like to discuss some of the features of the electoral system as outlined in the pre-information document 'overview of the electoral system in the UK'...

- **Pre-information 'Overview of the electoral system in the UK'[32]**

Overall:

What did you think about the information we gave you to read? *Explore all spontaneous responses fully before probing in general as follows*
- Anything new/surprising/interesting?
- Any questions/anything confusing? How much of it did they understand overall?
- Anything you found reassuring? Or concerning?

Then explore each topic area[33] in turn. Moderator to make a note of any security concerns raised by participants but do not prompt on this specifically for the time being.
- Anything new/surprising/interesting?
- What would you say works well/less well about that process?
- What were your thoughts on the **different ways of voting**? What would you say works

---

[32] See Appendix for outline of specific security measures in NI

[33] Topic area defined as 'Electoral Commission', Police, Registering to Vote, Different Ways of Voting. We expect more detail on these to be covered on the last topic when discussing potential changes as participants are likely to refer back to current process. To cover each element of the topics in more granular detail here would mean compromising on time spent discussing potential changes.

well and less well about these?
- Anything new/surprising/interesting?
- Were you aware of each of these methods?
- Was there any method you were less familiar with?
- Were you aware of <u>postal voting</u>?
- What did you know about postal voting before you read this? *Moderator probe for detail on what was known/not.* What is new information/additional detail for you?
- Were you aware of <u>proxy</u> voting?
- What did you know about <u>proxy</u> voting before you read this? *Moderator probe for detail on what was known/not.* What is new information/additional detail for you?
- Did anything in the information change your views in any way? What and how?

For Northern Ireland participants only:
- What are your thoughts on the current system whereby to get a postal vote you have to give a specific reason?
    o What difference does this make to the electoral system overall?
    o What is the main benefit/drawback to this?
    o Should the policy be kept in place or changed? Why? Explain if necessary: in the rest of Great Britain you don't have to give a specific reason for a postal vote, anyone can apply. Does this change your views in any way? How / why?
- What are your thoughts on the current arrangements where electors must present photographic identification at the polling station?
    o What difference does this make to the electoral system overall?
    o What is the main benefit/drawback to this?
- Should the requirement to provide photographic ID be kept in place or changed? Why? If it should change, what should it be changed to?
- Do you think there are any elements of the system inGreat Britain that would be of benefit to introduce to NI? Why? [Moderator refer to Appendices 1 & 2 as required]

All participants:
- What were your thoughts about the **role of the [people/bodies –see below]** in relation to the electoral system?
- Anything new/surprising/interesting?
- *Do not probe at this stage but listen out for perceptions of the role of each in making the system more or less secure from fraud*
- Explore each of the following one by one:
    o **Police** and **prosecuting authorities**
    o **Returning Officers** and other **election staff**
    o **Candidates** and **agents**
    o **Tellers**
    o **Postal workers**
    o **Electoral Commission**

In relation to electoral fraud:
- Do you think there is any scope for improvement with the electoral system in the UK[34]?
  Listen for spontaneous responses then prompt with, in terms of:
    o Efficiency?
    o Accuracy?
    o Safety/security?
    o Complexity?

---

[34] Deliberately probing on 'improvement' here rather than 'issues' to understand the extent to which fraud arises spontaneously

- How safe/secure do you think/feel the voting system in the UK is?
- What makes you think it is safe/secure? Anything else? *Explore fully*
- What makes you think it is not safe/secure? Where, if at all, do you think there are vulnerabilities? Anything else? *Explore fully and probe if required: at the polling station? In the home? In the postal vote system? Proxy vote system? Etc.*
- If not raised spontaneously above, probe how important do you think the roles or these people/organisations are in terms making the system more or less secure from fraud?
  - o Which people/organisations are more and less important and why?

---

3. Responses to policy options
(25 mins in depths, 50 mins in groups, 15 mins in recontacts)

For England/Scotland/Wales participants only:

For those who have received pre-placement Pack 2 only:

Where policy options have been seen in advance (those given pre-placement pack 2a and 2b), explain that we'd like to discuss their thoughts on these in detail:

- **Overall**
  - What were your overall thoughts about these potential changes?
  - In brief: Did any of them stand out as particularly good/beneficial ideas? Which ones and why?
  - Did any stand out as being particularly unhelpful/not useful ideas? Which ones and why?

When moving on to discuss each option in turn, explain that they can draw from their pre-task form as they wish but we will collect it from them at the end of the session.

For those who received pre-placement Pack 1 only:

Moderator to explain that we would now like to discuss some potential changes to the electoral system in the UK. We will talk about various options for different stages or different types of voting, e.g. proxy, postal, polling station, etc to gather their thoughts on each.

For all England/Scotland/Wales participants:

<u>NB. For all groups, policy options to be covered in the following order: polling station voting / postal voting / proxy voting</u>

<u>Policy options to be fully rotated across depths</u>

Use cards to introduce for face to face sessions, or use pre-placement document for recontacts) and take each specific change suggested (e.g. <u>each</u> postal voting restriction option) in turn.
If definitions of the following words/terms are required, moderator to explain as follows:
- *Canvasser: a person who visits voters to persuade them to support a political party*
- *Proxy voting: this is the process by which someone can vote on someone else's behalf*
- *Personation: this is someone pretending to be someone else in order to cast a vote*

If other examples of photographic ID are required, moderator can refer to range of approved ID used in NI:
- *A Senior Smartpass*
- *A 60+ Smartpass*

- *A War Disabled Smartpass*
- *A Blind Person's Smartpass*
- *An electoral identity card*

Probe as follows:

- **Policy options**
  - What are your thoughts about this specific proposed change?
  - If you heard this was happening what would your thoughts be?
  - What difference would this make to the electoral system?
  - What difference would this make to the electors?
  - Would it affect any particular group of people? Who? How would it affect them?
  - Do you think it would change people's voting behaviour at all?
    - If this was introduced, do you think this would have any impact on people's willingness/ability to vote? Why?
  - What do you think might be <u>benefits of this change</u>? How might it improve the electoral system? *Moderator to explore fully and listen out for reference to safety/security impact but do not probe on this specifically.*
  - What do you think might be a drawback to this change? How might it have a negative impact on the electoral system?
  - How practical would this be to put into place?
  - **Depths only**: What do you think the likely cost would be (probe in relative terms, e.g. high/low versus benefit, rather than specific amount)?
  - **All**: Who do you think should make any changes with regard to this and who tell you about them? *Probe on role of EC, Govt, Local council, police etc and whether those who make changes and tell people about them are different*
  - Overall then, weighing up the pros and cons of this idea as we have discussed it, do you think this would be worthwhile to bring this change in? Why/why not?

  - *For policy option 2c (Allowing electors to cancel their postal vote...) moderator to explain as required that: due to a 100% checking procedure, the cancelled vote should not get counted accidently and this change would not create any extra administrative burden on the system.*

For England/Scotland/Wales participants - groups and face to face depths only: *Moderator to make two piles as work through policy options.*

Once all policies have been discussed, moderator to ask respondent/s to prioritise the changes in terms of which they think should definitely be implemented, down to those they don't think should be implemented. Take the top three ideas and probe as follows:
- What would the overall effect of these changes be?
- Do the benefits outweigh the potential drawbacks? Why?
- What difference would these polices make to the safety/security of the electoral system? Why?
- Only **if identify presentation of ID at polling stations raised here**, *explain that 'in a recent survey, a large majority of the public said that requiring people to show some form of identification at their polling station would be an effective way of preventing electoral fraud, with 64% calling it "very effective" and 26% saying "quite effective".* Does this affect your views in any way?
- How would you like to hear about any changes if they were to be made? *Probe on mode of communication, level/broad scope of information given, etc*

Once all polices have been discussed, moderator to show charts explaining context of electoral fraud: overview of alleged fraud cases, pie chart showing 'Breakdown of cases

of alleged electoral fraud (2012)' and pie chart showing 'Breakdown of alleged cases of voting offences (2012)' and prompt as follows:
- Does this information change your views in any way about the policy options you've discussed?

**4. Perceptions and understanding of undue influence
(15 mins in depths, 15 mins in groups, 5 mins in recontacts)**

All participants:

- **Definitions of undue influence**

*Moderator to explain: one of the Electoral Commission's key principles is that: **there should be no undue influence in the way our elections and our political finance system work**. [Show statement]*
- What sort of thing do you think 'undue influence' relating to elections (not party finance) might cover? *Reassure as required:* don't worry about the official definition for the time being, just give me any examples you feel would sensibly fall into this category...

Moderator to spread scenario cards in front of respondent/s and explain: These are a range of scenarios that other people have suggested might count as 'undue influence'. Note: as they are suggestions, however, they are not necessarily based on common occurrences[35].
Give participants 2-3 mins to read over and explain: we would like you to think about these scenarios in terms of morality *and sort them into two piles accordingly. So, in one pile would be examples that you class as 'wrongdoings' or things that are morally bad. In the other pile will be scenarios that you consider morally acceptable behaviour. Once this exercise completed probe as follows:*
- Tell me why you've split the cards in this way...
- What are the main differences between the scenarios in this pile vs. the other pile? *Explore fully*

Moderator explain: So you have sorted the scenarios into what you think is right/wrong, we'd now like you to consider how the law might categorise them....
- Tell me why you've split the cards in this way...
- What are the main differences between the scenarios in this pile vs. the other pile? *Explore fully*

Moderator to then ask: Can you now sort these into two piles, one of which has scenarios which you feel describe illegal/criminal behaviour, *and those that you feel are* not breaking the law.
- Tell me why you've split the cards in this way...
- Is there anything else you'd need to know about this scenario to order to decide?[36]
- What are the main differences between the scenarios in this pile vs. the other pile? *Explore fully*
- Do you think there are any behaviours in the 'legal pile' that should be made illegal? Why? What difference would that make?

Moderator then probe against each scenario as follows[37]:
- How much of an issue do you think this type of scenario is, in terms of:
  o Frequency?

---

[35] For moderator information only: only small % of allegations of EF relate to UI – 13% of all voting related allegations in 2012
[36] Note: this is to understand whether stimulus needs to be adjusted
[37] Ensure covered thoroughly in depths and recontacts

- - - - - - - o Impact on electoral process?
        o Impact on those who are a victim of this?
- What do you think helps ensure this does not happen currently? What else could help prevent this from happening?
- *Moderator to listen for spontaneous reference to the privacy/anonymity of (polling station) voting then prompt with:*
- What does the polling station offer that postal voting doesn't? Does this mean this scenario might have more or less of an impact on those with a postal vote?
- Do you think this type of thing happens in your local area? Why do you say that?
- Is there anyone this is more/less likely to affect? Why?
- Do you think it is more likely to happen:
        o at particular times? (Probe - particular times of the year?)
        o at particular elections or all elections? (Probe as relevant – which ones, why?)
        o in particular areas? (Probe as relevant – which ones, why?)
- Who do you think does this, if anyone? Why do they do it / what are their aims?
- Have you ever heard about or experienced any of these?
        o For any examples from personal or close experience raised, explore all as appropriate
            ▪ What happened? Was it reported to the police? Why/why not? What was the outcome?
- How important do you think it is that a particular effort is made to eradicate this type of behaviour/scenario?
        o Who should do this? Explore spontaneous suggestions
        o Probe if necessary: what about the Police and the Electoral Commission? Either/both – why/why not?
- *If yes:* What do you think would help ensure that these things don't happen? What difference would that make? Can you think of any pros or cons with this?
- Which example scenario(s) are most concerning to you?

---

5. Summing up (5 mins)

- Overall how do you feel about our discussion today?
- How safe/secure do you think the electoral system is in the UK today?
- What did you learn/find out from the pre-information/our discussion that impacted on your opinion about the safety/security of the electoral system in the UK?
        o Do you feel it is more/less secure than before? Why? What made the difference? What specific information made you think this?

Thank and close
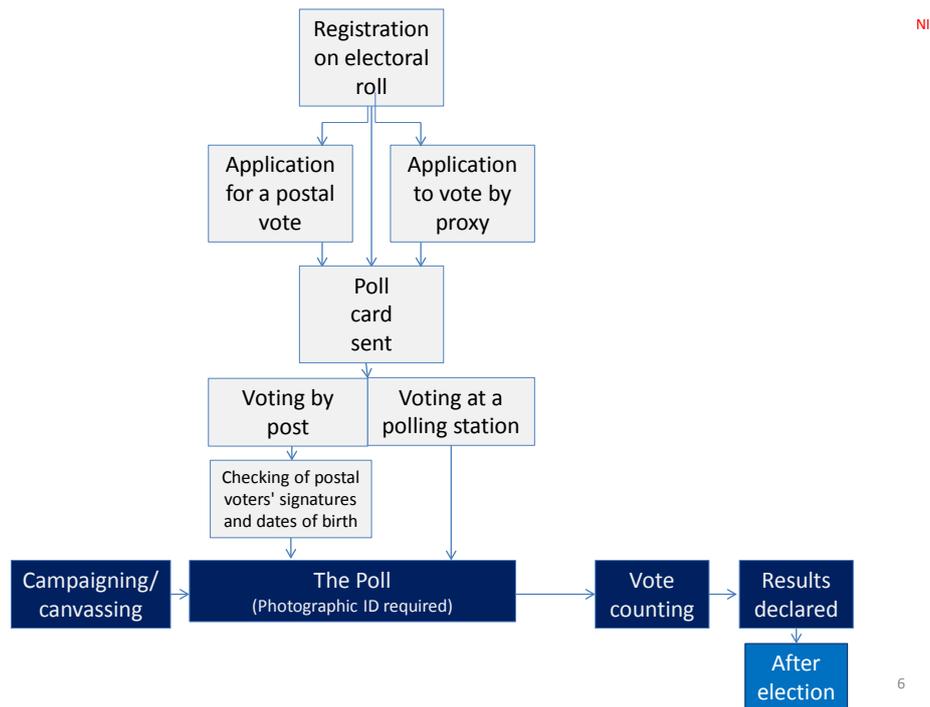
- Anyone wanting to have their name included in the register must provide their name, address, date of birth and national insurance number on an individually-signed form.
- At the moment you cannot request a postal vote on demand. You have to give a reason.
- Postal voters in Northern Ireland have to complete and return a declaration of identity form with their ballot papers. The declaration, which requires date of birth and signature of voter, must be signed by and in front of a witness. All postal voters are checked and cross-referenced with the information provided at the time of registration (date of birth, signature).
- Voters must present photographic identification at their polling station to confirm their identity.
- To qualify to be on the electoral register, eligible individuals must demonstrate they have been in Northern Ireland for at least 3 months prior to their application for registration.

The Electoral Commission
- The Commission provides resources to people such as the Chief Electoral Officer, candidates, agents, the police and prosecutors to help uphold and improve the integrity of the electoral process.

Police
- The Representation of the People Act 1983 specifies a number of criminal offences relating to electoral fraud.
- The Police Service has designated officers to lead on election-related crime and who will give advice to local police officers.
- The Police Service can investigate any allegations that an offence may have taken place.

Appendix 2 - Existing measures in Great Britain
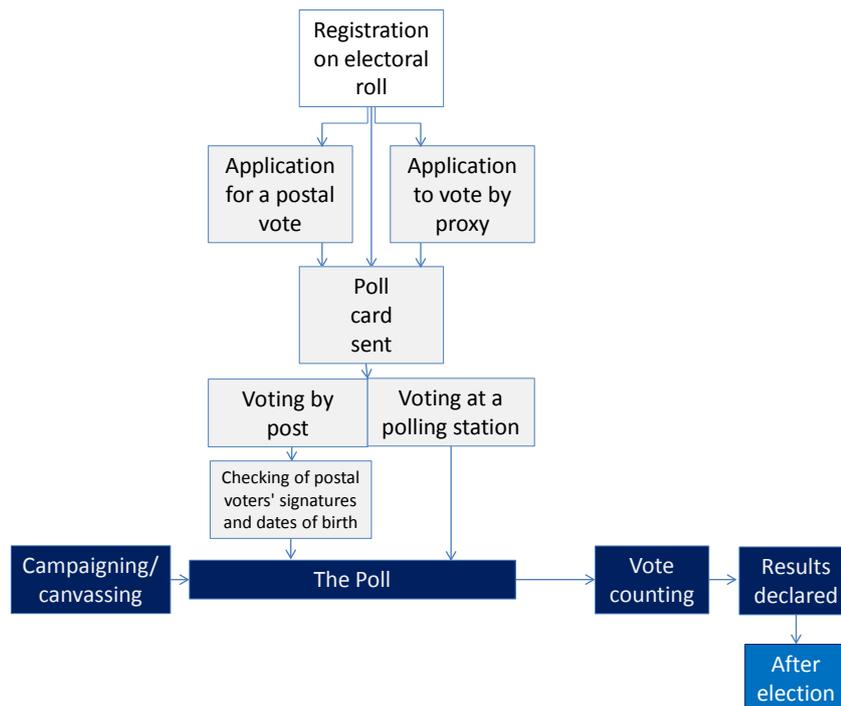
Postal voting
- Since 2007, electors have had to provide their signature and date of birth when applying to vote by post, and also when casting their postal vote.
- Both records are checked. If they don't match, the ballot paper is rejected.

Police
- The Representation of the People Act 1983 specifies a number of criminal offences relating to electoral fraud.
- Every police force has a designated person to lead on election-related crime and who will give advice to local police officers.
- The relevant police force can investigate any allegations that an offence may have taken place.

The Electoral Commission
- The Electoral Commission provides resources to Returning Officers, electoral administrators, candidates, agents, postal workers, the police and prosecuting authorities to help uphold and improve the integrity of the electoral process. This includes:
    - producing guidance for local authorities – e.g. checks should be made where a large number of electors are registered at a property (8 or more).
    - producing pocket guides for postal workers and police to help them detect fraud.
    - providing a code of conduct with political parties for the handling of postal vote applications and postal ballot packs by political parties, candidates and canvassers.
    - reporting each year on allegations of electoral malpractice made to the police.
    - producing guidance and holding training with police representatives each year to update their knowledge to help them detect fraud.

Appendix 7 - Recruitment Questionnaire

RECRUITER SCRIPT: Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is (…) from **Define Research and Insight.** We are an independent market research company.

For re-contacted participants: You may remember that you took part in a research discussion group/interview in January/February this year which was about the way we vote in the UK. [Wait for respondent to confirm]. As mentioned at the time, we are re-contacting some of the people who were involved in this research earlier in the year, to take part in a further telephone interview on the same topic area.

For new participants: We are looking for people to take part in an informal social research discussion group or interview in your local area to find out what they think about the way we vote in the UK.

For all: We will be giving you a 'thank you' to all those participating of £30 [1 hour F2F depth] £25 [45 mins tel depth] or £30 [1.5 hour group]. Any discussion will be completely confidential. I can give you more details of where and when it is being held if you fit the criteria we are looking for.

So I need to ask you a few simple questions first to see if you are right for our study – this will only take about 5 minutes. Please do answer all the questions honestly, we don't mind what your responses are as long as you say what you feel. This questionnaire is totally confidential and details of who you are won't be passed on to anyone else.

RECRUITER, ENSURE THAT RESPONDENT UNDERSTANDS THAT THE INCENTIVE RELATES TO ATTENDING A GROUP DISCUSSION/DEPTH INTERVIEW AND NOT COMPLETION OF THIS RECRUITMENT INTERVIEW.

Please ensure that the respondent understands that anything they say in the discussion will not be used with their name attached and their name will not be passed on to anyone other than the researchers working on the project.

Ascertain from Welsh participants whether they would prefer the screening to be undertaken in Welsh, English or they don't mind. If Welsh is specified, explain that we need to arrange a screening session with a Welsh speaker and take contact details so this can be arranged. If arises, contact office ASAP.

QA. Please tell me if: a) you; or b) any of your immediate family or friends work or have ever worked in any of the following trades/sectors mentioned here?

	a)	b)
Market Research	1	1
Marketing	2	2
Journalism	3	3
Advertising	4	4
Public Relations	5	5
Political Activism	6	6
Any Political Party	7	7
Central / National Government*	8	8
Local Government in a role that relates to voting and elections **	9	9
The Police	10	10

*explain further if required as: a job in any Government department (e.g. Department for Work and Pensions, Department of Health, Department for Education, HMRC, etc).

**anyone working in a different type of role within Local Government (e.g. a council) can be included.

Other public sector organisations such as emergency services can be included.

RECRUITER: Close if code 1-10 on either a or b to any of the above. There is one exception - police can code b.

QB. Have you ever taken part in a market research depth interview or group discussion on any subject?

Yes	………………………..	1	**GO TO QC**
No	………………………..	2	**GO TO QFa**

Q.C   When did you last take part in a market research group discussion/depth interview?

In the last 6 months	………	1	**CLOSE**
More than 6 months ago		2	**GO TO QD**

Q.D   How many times have you taken part in a market research group discussion/depth interview?

1-2	…………………………	1	**GO TO QE**
3-5	…………………………	2	**CLOSE**
6+	…………………………	3	**CLOSE**

Q.E   What was the subject of the last group discussion/depth interview?

....

RECRUITER: Please ensure that none have taken part in research relating to elections and voting before. If mentioned please close.

QFa. What is the occupation of the head of your household?
....
A   B   C1   C2   D   E   **CHECK QUOTA FOR SESSION**
RECRUITER: Aim for spread of occupations
QFb. Which of the following best describes your current working status?

I am working full time	1
I am working part-time	2
I am currently a student	3
I am currently at home looking after my children	4
I am currently unemployed	5
I am retired	6

RECRUITER: A spread of working status to be included across sample as a whole, with all represented at least once in each nation

QG. Male/Female ....   **CHECK QUOTA FOR SESSION**
RECRUITER: Ensure a minimum of at least 3 of each gender in groups, check quotas for depths

QHa. What is your age?   …………….years (write in)   CHECK QUOTA FOR SESSION AND CODE BELOW

Depths	Groups - England	Groups – Wales and Scotland

17-20	1	**Younger: 17-35**	6	<25	8 – close or recruit to depths
21-29	2			**Mid: 25-50**	9 – must code
30-44	3	**Older: 36-60+**	7	<50+	10 – close or recruit to depths
45-59	4				
60+	5				

RECRUITER: Ensure a good spread of ages within each age band recruited. Cover any older age as long as respondent is appears able to take part in a research session.
QI. What is your current living situation?

Single, no children	1
Married/co-habiting, no children	2
Single/Married/Co-habiting children living at home	3
Single/married/co-habiting children now not living at home	4

RECRUITER: Aim for a spread

QJ. Which of these best describes you?

White British	1	Pakistani	9
White Irish	2	Bangladeshi	10
Any other white background	3	Any other Asian Background	11
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	4	Caribbean	12
Mixed - White and Black African	5	African	13
Mixed - White and Asian	6	Any other Black background	14
Any other mixed background	7	Chinese	15
Indian	8	Any other (please write in below)	16

RECRUITER:
- **Aim for spread appropriate to area and inform office on recruitment of EM to enable overall quotas to be managed.**
- **Min 12 EM participants in depths sample**
- **Min 3, max 9 EM participants in <u>overall</u> groups sample**
- **Ensure spread of SEG/gender/age across EM quota**

QKa. Which of the following would you say is your first language?

Welsh	1	GO TO QKb
English	2	GO TO QLa – MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE
Other	3	GO TO QKc

QKb. Would you prefer to be interviewed in Welsh or English?

English	1	GO TO QKc
Welsh	2	GO TO QLa
Don't mind	3	GO TO QKc

RECRUITER: Respondents coding 2 (Welsh preference) to be recruited to depths only

QKc. Are you sufficiently fluent enough in English to take part in detailed discussion comfortably and without a translator?

Yes	1	GO TO QLa

No	2	CLOSE

RECRUITER: Respondent must be able to take part in discussion in English unaided.

QLa   Are you registered with a disability of any description?

Yes	1	**GO TO Q7b**	**CHECK QUOTAS**
No	2		

Q7b   What is this disability…………………………………………………………………………………

RECRUITER: Please note and understand if respondent has any specific accessibility requirements that need to be accommodated. If qualify on other parts of screening (see below), recruit as appropriate to group or depth.

MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE

Q1a Is your name on the electoral register, that is the official list of people entitled to vote?

Yes	1	**GO TO Q2**
No	2	**GO TO Q1b**

Q1b You mentioned that you are not registered to vote, is that because you are not eligible to vote?

Yes	1	**CLOSE**	**All participants must be eligible to vote**
No	2	**GO TO Q2**	
Don't know	3	**CHECK FOR ELIGIBLITY ON SHEET**	

Q2 RESPONDENTS IN LEICESTERSHIRE, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE, OXFORDSHIRE, SUFFOLK, AND SURREY ONLY:
Did you vote at the last local elections on 2nd May 2013?

Yes	1	**GO TO Q3**
No	2	**GO TO Q3**

RECRUITER:
- **AT LEAST ONE DEPTH to have voted on 2nd May 2013 in each of the following areas: Leicestershire, Suffolk , Nottinghamshire and Oxfordshire**
- **Min 2 per group to have voted on 2nd May 2013 in Leicestershire, Suffolk and Surrey**

Q3 Which of the following best describes your attitude towards voting? READ OUT

I always vote in elections when I can	1	**GO TO Q4**
I tend to vote in some elections and not others	2	**GO TO Q4**
I only really vote occasionally	3	**GO TO Q4**
I choose not to vote	4	**GO TO Q4**
I've never voted before	5	**GO TO Q4**

RECRUITER: Check quotas – minimum of THREE RESPONDENTS OVERALL IN DEPTH SAMPLE and maximum ONE DEPTH PER AREA to code 4 or 5. NO RESPONDENTS FOR GROUPS to code 4 or 5

Q4 And what type of voting method do you use/have you used before/would you use if you voted? READ OUT

Polling station	1	**GO TO Q5**
Postal vote	2	**GO TO Q5**
Mix of polling station and postal voting	3	**GO TO Q5**

RECRUITER: Ensure a good spread of polling station and postal voters in each location across sample and at least two of each type in each group.

Q5 How much do you think the following happen on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 is not at all and 4 is a lot

Issue	Not at all Hardly at all A little A lot
a) Benefit fraud	1……….……….2…..…….……….3…...…..……4
b) False insurance claims	1……….....…….2…....….……….3……….…..…4
c) Electoral fraud, that is fraud relating to elections and voting	1……….…..….2……....…….….3……..…..……4

RECRUITER:
- **All recontact telephone depths to code 3 or above for C.**
- **In depths: even split between those coding 1-2 and 3-4**
- **In groups: 2 in each group to code 1-2 and 4 in each group to code 3-4**

Q6 From the following statements, which best describes how you feel about politics and current affairs?

I am <u>very interested</u> in politics and current affairs	1	**GO TO Q7**
I am <u>interested</u> in politics and current affairs	2	**GO TO Q7**
I am <u>not very interested</u> in politics and current affairs	3	**GO TO Q7**
I have <u>no real interest</u> in politics and current affairs	4	**GO TO Q7**

RECRUITER: Aim for a spread of level of interest within groups and across sample

Q7 ENGLAND/WALES/SCOTLAND ONLY: Only ask if respondent coded 1-3 at Q3.
   Do you mind telling us who you voted for in the last general election?
[RECRUITER: If respondent expresses concern about revealing party affiliation, please reassure that we are asking this question to ensure that people who take part represent a range of the population and are not biased to one particular group. All recruitment screener data is kept fully confidential and is only used for the purposes of this research project]

Conservatives	1	**GO TO Q8**
Liberal Democrats	2	**GO TO Q8**
Labour	3	**GO TO Q8**
Scottish National Party	4	**GO TO Q8**
Plaid Cymru	5	**GO TO Q8**
Green	6	**GO TO Q8**
UKIP	7	**GO TO Q8**
Other	8	**GO TO Q8**
Refused/rather not say/didn't vote	9	**GO TO Q8**

RECRUITER: Aim for a spread per group and across depths

Q8 From the following statements, which best describes your understanding of processes of voting and elections in the UK?

I <u>know a lot</u> about voting and election processes in the UK	1	**Q9**
I <u>know a fair amount</u> about voting and election processes in the UK	2	**Q9**

I <u>know a bit</u> about voting and election processes in the UK, but I am unsure about some things	3	**Q9**
I <u>don't really know anything</u> about voting and election processes in the UK	4	**Q9**

RECRUITER: Aim for a spread of level of awareness within groups and across sample

Q9   How, if at all, do you stay up to date with current news? Please state what sources you access (e.g. Daily Mail, Sun, Guardian), how you access it (e.g. newspaper, online, Smartphone) and how frequently you use it.

Source	Format (e.g. online, newspaper etc.)	Frequency
1)		
2)		
3)		
4)		

RECRUITER: Aim for representation of range of news consumption across whole sample

Q10 NORTHERN IRELAND ONLY: Regardless of whether they actually practice a particular religion, most people in Northern Ireland are perceived to be members of either the Protestant or Roman Catholic communities. Please indicate the community to which you belong by ticking the appropriate box below: Show respondent: USE SHOW CARD

[RECRUITER: If respondent expresses concern about revealing community, please reassure that we are asking this question to ensure that people who take part represent a range of the population and are not biased to one particular group. All recruitment screener data is kept fully confidential and is only used for the purposes of this research project]

I am a member of the Protestant community	1	**CHECK QUOTA**
I am a member of the Catholic community	2	**CHECK QUOTA**
Neither	3	**SEE BELOW**
I'd rather not say	4	**CLOSE**

RECRUITER: Check quotas (see details on front of questionnaire).

CLOSING

<u>**FOR RECRUITMENT OF MINI GROUPS:**</u>
As part of the research we are looking to talk to some people in groups– is this something you would be comfortable with?

RECRUITER NOTE: TAKE NOTE OF WHETHER COMFORTABLE TO TAKE PART IN GROUPS

Thank you very much for taking the time today to help us

RECRUITER SCRIPT
We very much hope you can take part in a group discussion/one on one interview. Recruit respondent and explain procedures.

Thank you very much for taking the time today to help us with this survey

If you need to call us to check any details or re-arrange a time then please do so on 020 8346 7171. Please ask for Alison Samuel.

I confirm that this interview was administered according to the MRS Code of Conduct.

Signature of Recruiter: ....

Interviewer: _____

Respondent _____

Address: _____

_____Post Code: _____

Tel._____ (Hm) _____ (Wk)_____(Mobile)

Please note method of recruitment: (street/snowballing*) …………………………………………………