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Impact of Voter ID:

In my view, the Government should have done more to publicise the introduction of this policy. Indeed, I note the Electoral Commission found that at least 14,000 people were turned away from polling stations at May's local elections because they lacked the right ID, with the overall number denied a vote likely to be considerably higher.

In addition, I share the concerns that have been raised that young people have less options for acceptable ID. For example, young persons' travel cards are not including in the approved list. Ministers have repeatedly maintained that this is due to other travel cards having more robust application processes. I am also aware that research from the Electoral Commission has highlighted that young people are the least likely to be aware of the new voter ID requirements.

After the local elections, the Electoral Commission collected data about the application of voter ID on that day. The Commission has since published a report into the policy's impact. This report reiterates that mandatory voter ID risks having a disproportionate effect on poorer people, those with disabilities and people from minority ethnic backgrounds. In my view, the report's findings are extremely concerning.

This policy is denying legitimate voters of their right to have a say over how their services and society are run. I note the Commission called on Ministers to urgently address these issues, including by expanding the types of ID that can be used.

Unfortunately, in November 2023, the Government rejected calls for additional types of ID to be accepted and indicated that it is broadly satisfied with the way the voter ID policy has been implemented.

I believe that this is the wrong approach. I would like to see a review and response to the evidence collected by the Electoral Commission and other groups. In my view, no legitimate voter should be locked out of our democracy.

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