

When the right to vote is being restricted on the basis...

Published: January 13, 2026, 9:34 am

As the [Guardian has reported](#) this morning:

Controversial rules governing voter identification led to racial and disability discrimination at this year's local elections in England, according to a damning report co-written by one of the former ministers responsible for introducing them.

MPs and peers on the all-party parliamentary group on democracy and the constitution will publish a report on Monday saying that the rules caused more harm than they prevented when they came into force in May, and will call for changes, including the acceptance of a greater range of ID documents.

They note that:

The report, which has been seen by the Guardian, says: "The current voter-ID system is, as it stands, a 'poisoned cure' in that it disenfranchises more electors than it protects."

Crucially they note:

The authors found that "polling clerks are more likely to fail to compare a photo ID to the person presenting that document if the person is of a different ethnicity".

They also highlighted the case of Andrea Barratt, who is immunocompromised and was blocked from entering a polling booth after refusing to remove her mask for an identification check.

And they added:

Anecdotal evidence in the all-party group report suggested some people may have been unfairly treated because of their race.

It says: "A disproportionate number of electors who were not permitted to vote appeared to be non-white passing. By contrast, all of those who were observed being

permitted to vote without presenting ID were white-passing."

While there is no evidence this changed the outcome of the local elections, the APPG report warns that if repeated at a general election, it could help swing the result of up to 16 constituencies.

I apologise to the Guardian for the length of the quotes from their (much longer) report, but this is a vital issue - and key to the future of democracy.

If, as seems very likely, the right to vote is now being removed from some people on the grounds of race and disability (as well as on the basis of income, which we already know restricts access to voter ID), then the pretence that we are a democracy is very hollow.

There appeared to be no Labour comment on this report in the Guardian article.

Will there be one, plus a promise for the wholesale electoral reform that we will need to ensure that this country can maintain its claim to be a democracy? I am not holding my breath, even though the party has apparently appointed a shadow minister for democracy. On current form, an excuse for inaction is bound to be found.