



# ELECTORAL INTEGRITY PROGRAMME

## BUSINESS CHANGE POLICY EXPLAINER

### NEW BURDENS FUNDING

#### What is the policy?

A New Burden is defined as a **policy or initiative which increases the cost of providing local authority services**. In 2010, the Cabinet agreed that all New Burdens on local authorities must be **properly assessed** and **fully funded** by the relevant department.

The introduction of the Electoral Integrity Programme will place a burden on all local authorities in various ways, including, for example, the time administrative staff will need to process applications for Voter Authority Certificates, additional equipment that may be required for some offices or polling stations, or additional poll clerks that may need to be hired for polling day. **DLUHC are therefore responsible for providing local authorities with funding for this additional burden.**

#### Who does this policy affect?

This applies to **all local authorities and Valuation Joint Boards in the UK.**

#### How will funding be provided?

Funding will be provided through a hybrid approach comprising of grant payments and Justification Led Bids.

**Grants** will enable a proportion of the allocation to be distributed early in the year, via a single grant payment.

**Justification Led Bids** will release funds to local authorities later in the year, retrospectively on the basis of evidence of spend.

### **When will local authorities receive their funding?**

Local authorities will receive their initial grant funding in **November 2022**.

Further grant payments will be provided in **April 2023 and April 2024**.

The JLB window for local authorities to retrospectively claim additional funding will be in **Summer/Autumn 2023 and 2024**.

### **What will the funding cover?**

Below is the breakdown of cost lines for the accessibility policy changes and the introduction of voter identification.

The funding for other changes being introduced after May 2023 is still being finalised and will be communicated in due course. Funding for by-elections will be provided by JLB (in summer/autumn 23 and 24).

#### **Accessibility:**

- **Equipment** - *via grant in Nov 22 and JLB in Summer/Autumn 23:*
  - funding will be provided for local authorities to purchase a range of equipment to support disabled people to vote.
  - The purchase of equipment is at the discretion of Returning Officers, who must have regard to EC guidance, and may include:
    - general accessible equipment;
    - assistive writing devices such as pencil grips; and
    - additional seating for those less able to stand.
- **Staff time** – *via JLB in Summer/Autumn 23:*
  - 10 minutes of additional set up time for accessibility related equipment.
- **Training for electoral administrators** – *via grant in April 23 and April 24:*
  - one additional day of training to cover both accessibility and voter identification policies.
- **Training for polling station staff** – *via grant in April 23 and April 24:*
  - 10 minutes additional training.

## **Voter identification:**

- **Electoral Staff admin time (processing time)** – *via grant in Nov 22, April 23, April 24 and JLB in Summer/Autumn 23 and 24:*
  - Funding will cover the additional time it takes to process Voter Authority Certificate applications.
    - On average, this is assumed to take 6 minutes for an online application, 8 minutes for a paper application.
- **Staff** – *via grant in April 23 and 24 (poll clerks) and JLB in Summer/Autumn 23 and 24 (contact centre staff):*
  - One additional poll clerk per polling station for year 1 (2023/24) and 2 (2024/25) and in every UKPGE year of the policy; and
  - One temporary contact centre staff member for the first two years of implementation for two months before elections.
- **Equipment** - *via JLB in Summer/Autumn 23:*
  - The purchase of one camera and one printer-scanner per local authority (if required); and
  - one privacy screen and mirror per polling station (if required).
- **Poll card costs** – *via grant in April 23 and 24*
  - Difference between current poll card and new poll card (A4 and enveloped) will be funded.
- **Storage** – *via JLB in Summer/Autumn 23 and 24:*
  - Additional storage space to store additional equipment.
    - The required spaced is assumed to be 75 square feet and it is estimated around 2/3 of LAs will need it.
- **Training for administrators** – *via grant in Nov 22, April 23 and April 24:*
  - one additional day of training to cover both accessibility and voter identification policies.
- **Training for polling station staff**– *via grant in April 2023/24:*
  - 30 minutes additional training.

## **Who has been consulted during development of the funding model?**

Significant engagement with local authorities has taken place over several years in order to build a reliable evidence base and to ensure the funding models are as accurate as possible.

More recently, assumptions, approaches and individual cost lines have been tested with the Expert Panel, which is made up of a range of sector organisations and local authorities from across Great Britain, who have provided critical feedback on the funding model. We have also received feedback and evidence through numerous cost surveys since 2019.

### **What are the next steps?**

We will be sending letters to all local authorities in September to provide a written commitment that DLUHC will be providing funding for implementation of the Elections Act under the New Burdens doctrine. This is to provide Financial Directors the assurance they need to begin to commit funding, for example for the hiring and training of staff.

**Formal Grant Determination Letters will be sent to all local authorities at the end of October**, setting out the final funding allocations for each local authority and providing guidance on costs.

Initial New Burdens funding will be provided to local authorities by the end of November. The way local authorities will receive their payments depends on where in the UK you are:

- For local authorities in **England**, payments will be made via **Section 31 grants**;
- For local authorities in **Wales**, payments will be made via **Section 31 grants**;
- For local authorities and Valuation Joint Boards in **Scotland**, payments will be made to the relevant bodies via the **UK Internal Market Act Section 50**; and
- For local authorities in **Northern Ireland**, funds to the Electoral Office of Northern Ireland will be paid through the **Northern Ireland Office**.