



British public supports extension of the right to vote to every resident in local and Parliamentary elections.

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BRITISH PUBLIC SUPPORTS VOTING RIGHTS FOR ALL RESIDENTS

A new representative public opinion poll commissioned by Migrant Democracy Project shows the British public supports the right to vote for all migrants in local elections and settled migrants in General Elections.

The poll, conducted between 21-23 June by Opinium with a representative sample of 2063 UK adults, shows:

- **Majority support for residence-based voting rights in local elections for all migrants with lawful status.**
 - 54% believe “all adults living in the UK, regardless of citizenship, should have the right to vote in local elections”. The support for this proposal increases to 64% for migrants with Settled Status or Indefinite Leave to Remain.
 - This contrasts with 31% not supporting this policy proposal, with 15% responding “don’t know”.
 - Labour and Liberal Democrat 2019 voters show the highest support at 66%, with 45% of 2019 Conservative voters also supporting this proposal.
- **Majority support for residence-based voting rights in general elections for all migrants with Settled Status or Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR).**
 - 60% believe that “all adults with Settled Status or Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK should have the right to vote in general elections.”
 - This contrasts with only 24% not supporting this policy proposal, with 17% responding “don’t know”.
 - Liberal Democrat 2019 voters show the strongest support for this policy at 78%, closely followed by Labour voters at 75%. Notably, this policy enjoys majority support amongst 2019 Conservative voters, with 52% support.

[\(Full results here\)](#)

Dr Alex Bulat, Labour County Councillor and Migrant Champion at Cambridgeshire County Council, said:

“Expanding the franchise is a pragmatic, popular and principled policy.

Scotland and Wales already have a successful residence-based model of voting rights where all residents, no matter their nationality, can vote in local and devolved elections in the country they call home. Having a UK-wide approach to voting rights is the pragmatic and cost-effective thing to do from a local authority perspective.

This latest polling confirms popular support for the policy, despite anecdotal-based assumptions that the majority of the British public would not support it.

Above all, having an inclusive democratic system is the principled thing to do. Your nationality does not matter when you’re paying your council tax, so it is only fair that everyone contributing to UK society should have a say in how their taxes are spent and be able to hold politicians to account at the ballot box.”

Lara Parizotto, Co-Director of Migrant Democracy Project, said:

“Migrant Democracy Project meets migrants who have made the UK their home and want to actively participate in democracy every day. Through our usual voter registration drives, we encourage eligible migrants to register and vote. We always tell them that registering to vote improves their credit score in the UK. It is heartbreaking, however, when we have to tell some migrants that they cannot vote because of their citizenship. There is nothing fair about the exclusion of some migrants from democracy and now this poll shows that this is a view shared by most. We want a real universal franchise and want to empower every resident to actively participate and shape their society. This is already the case in Scotland and Wales and should be extended to England and Northern Ireland.

Politicians can now confidently support the Our Home Our Vote campaign knowing that residence-based voting rights is what migrants and the general public want.”

Fabiano Farias, Brazilian resident in London, said:

“I have lived in the UK for 16 years and have never been able to vote once in my home - London. I have always worked really hard to support myself and my family. I have worked as a cleaner, delivery driver, Uber driver, and now I am training to become a black cab driver. I know every nook and cranny of London. I speak to people in the back seat of my car all the time - giving advice to tourists and often debating politics with the more passionate passengers. When alone, I am listening to the radio and debating with myself. I know the UK. I live and participate here. I have views and interests as a migrant and as a worker. Yet, I have never been able to vote. I hope this poll helps politicians see what I already know from conversations I have every day, that is, that there would be nothing wrong with me voting.”

Notes for editors

Migrant Democracy Project (MDP) is an organisation campaigning for the extension of the right to vote for all residents in the UK. The [#OurHomeOurVote](#) campaign wants all migrants, no matter their nationality, to have a vote in their home, the UK. Voting rights for all residents is already a policy in Scotland and Wales where all residents with lawful status can vote in local and devolved elections, including the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Parliament. In England and Northern Ireland, however, voting rights are more restricted.

At the moment, British, Irish, and Commonwealth citizens can vote in all elections, including referendums.

In local elections, EU citizens can also vote but residents from other countries such as Brazil, the United States, and Japan do not have any right to vote.

By “lawful status”, we mean any resident with Limited Leave to Remain/pre-settled status or Indefinite Leave to Remain/pre-settled status. This includes refugee status.

Settled Status/Indefinite Leave to Remain generally means at least 5 years of residence in the UK and legal confirmation from the Home Office of the person’s status. In many cases, Indefinite Leave to Remain takes much longer than 5 years after migrants complete their immigration journey in the UK paying visa fees and immigration health surcharge.

Amendments were proposed to the Elections Bill to make residence-based voting rights in both local and general elections a reality. See amendment [155A](#) in the House of Lords from the Liberal Democrats for the extension of the right to vote in local elections and Amendment [NC14](#) in the House of Commons’ Committee Stage from the Labour Party for the extension of the right to vote in General Elections.

Further information can be found on our website - <https://www.migrantdemos.org.uk/> and on Twitter - @MigrantDemos