



12 September 2023

Rt Hon Kemi Badenoch MP
Secretary of State for Business and Trade
Department of Business and Trade

Digital voting in trade union elections

Dear Kemi Badenoch MP,

I am writing with regarding to the prohibition on trade unions using digital voting in our internal elections. The legal requirement for us to conduct these elections by post is antiquated and stems from a time when the technology that facilitates digital participation in our everyday lives had yet to be invented.

There is a clear desire among our membership to be able to participate in the BDA's democracy by digital means and already, where the law does not prevent us from doing so, we conduct fair and secure elections through digital voting.

Digital voting is now widespread across society, including in membership organisations like the National Trust. The Conservative Party has even used digital voting to elect its leader; clearly demonstrating that it can be done safely and fairly.

The 2017 Knight Review recommended that the Government work with trade unions to trial digital voting, but, regrettably, this has not been progressed. It is our view that in the intervening six years there is clear evidence of the security of online voting, as indicated by its use by your own Party.

We would therefore urge you to bring forward legislative changes promptly to free trade unions to conduct statutory elections and other statutory ballots by secure and transparent digital means. If you remain of the view that trials are necessary, then the BDA and our members would be eager to participate and demonstrate that digital voting can be a success.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Martin Woodrow', is positioned above the printed name.

Martin Woodrow
Chief Executive and Returning Officer, British Dental Association