

Hacking fears delay UK's Conservative leadership vote

August 3 2022

Voting in Britain's Conservative party leadership election has been delayed after government cyber experts raised concerns over potential hacking of members' ballots.

The [delay](#) might benefit Rishi Sunak, who trails in polls of Tory members against Liz Truss in the race to succeed Prime Minister Boris Johnson, and is hoping to claw back ground in a campaigning blitz.

A letter from party headquarters to members, revealed by the Spectator magazine late Tuesday, said ballots due to go out this week would arrive by August 11 at the latest.

"This is because we have taken some time to add some additional security to our [ballot](#) process which has delayed us slightly," the letter said.

It said the party has ditched a hybrid system, in which members could [vote](#) first by post but later change their mind and vote online using a special security code.

Instead, only the first vote cast—whether by mail or online—will count. The deadline for voting remains September 2, with the result due to be announced three days later.

The Daily Telegraph said the party had acted on advice from the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), which it said feared the

potential for hackers to alter a large number of votes online late in the race.

There was no specific threat identified from a hostile state, the newspaper said, although Russia in particular has been accused of meddling in Western votes including the US [presidential election](#).

In a statement, an NCSC spokesperson confirmed the agency had "provided advice to the Conservative party on [security](#) considerations for online leadership voting".

The delay comes after a poll for The Times found that 60 percent of party members were backing Foreign Secretary Truss, against 26 percent supporting ex-chancellor of the exchequer Sunak.

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