

Monitoring the introduction of individual electoral registration

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Individual registration will mark a significant change to the way registers are compiled in Great Britain

- Current system of registration during canvass by one individual household member unchanged since Victorian era
- Individual registration has been implemented in Northern Ireland since 2002, including continuous registration from 2006 onwards
- PPE Act 2009 provides for phased implementation, with ongoing monitoring and assessment of progress until 2014

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Commission's
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progress

- The PPE Act sets out requirement for the Commission to monitor and assess implementation of the voluntary phase:
 - The state of the electoral registration system in Great Britain
 - The effectiveness of EROs in ensuring completeness and accuracy of electoral registers
 - Whether any changes would be required to the registration system to implement successfully the compulsory phase of individual registration

The Electoral Commission

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- The PPE Act specifically requires the Commission to report annually on implementation of the voluntary phase:
 - First report in year *after* the year in which provisions are commenced (i.e. in 2012 if 2011 is the first time that duty to collect identifiers arises)
 - In 2014 our report must be submitted to the Secretary of State by 31 July, and then laid before Parliament
 - If 2014 report recommends system is ready, Parliament must vote on next steps

The Electoral Commission

The
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scrutinise
legislation,
provide
guidance and
support public
awareness

- PPE Act requires the Electoral Commission to be consulted on draft legislation
- We will provide guidance for EROs and keep it under review while individual registration is being implemented
- We will develop and coordinate a programme of public awareness activity so that electors understand new system

Changes to the registration system should be underpinned by some broad principles

- The system should not prevent anyone who is eligible to take part in elections in Great Britain from registering to vote
- The system should improve integrity of the electoral process and increase the confidence of electors, candidates and political parties
- Changes to the system should be easily explained to, and understood by, electors
- The system should ensure that all personal data is properly managed and protected
- The system should be capable of being implemented efficiently and without a detrimental impact on the existing duties and responsibilities of EROs

The Electoral Commission

We will need to
assess the
whole package

- Legislation – timing, workability and likelihood of achieving policy objectives
- Processes and performance – robustness of systems, funding, performance by EROs against standards
- Voters – response to voluntary request for identifiers, reasons for refusals, perceptions and attitudes during voluntary phase, possible impact on specific groups
- The registers – changes in completeness and accuracy during the voluntary phase

We will use a range of information and data sources to inform our assessment

- Public opinion research – quantitative and qualitative
- Views from other users – candidates, parties, MPs/Cllrs, Government/agencies
- Views from system deliverers – EROs, electoral administrators, suppliers
- Population data – census 2011
- Electoral registration data – provision of identifiers, canvass/registration numbers, changes over time

We want
feedback on
our approach

- We'll put out a short paper on our approach to monitoring and assessing the implementation of individual registration next month
- We'd like to hear your views
- We'll listen to any points raised during the summer and early autumn
- We'll publish our final proposed approach by November 2010

The
Electoral
Commission

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