

Individual Electoral Registration

Introduction

The Government will be introducing a new system for anyone wishing to register to vote called Individual Electoral Registration (IER). This new system commenced on 10 June 2014.

Current system

Under the current system of electoral registration an annual canvass form is sent to every residential property in the borough. One person in the household is responsible for completing this, to register everyone who lives at that address.

The new proposals

From June 2014, each person wishing to be entered on the Electoral Register will be required to register to vote individually, rather than by household.

In the new system, residents will be asked to provide identifying information, such as a date of birth and national insurance number. This will enable their application to be verified with the Department for Work and Pension's (DWP) records before they are added to the register. In specific circumstances people who cannot provide this information will be able to prove their identity using an alternative form of evidence. A new Individual Electoral Registration form will replace the annual canvass form and online registration will also be introduced for everyone who is eligible.

Rationale for change

One of the main reasons why IER is being introduced nationally is to help tackle electoral fraud and improve its perception and to promote the integrity of the election process. The government also believes that IER will help to provide a more convenient, secure and modern way of registering and maximise both the accuracy and completeness of the electoral register.

Those residents who are automatically registered

Most people who are currently registered to vote will be registered automatically under the new system. They will not need to do anything. This will happen because we will verify our Electoral Register with the DWP's records to confirm who people are.

Nationally the live matching of elector details against DWP records will be undertaken in July/August 2014.

Those residents who are not automatically registered

Those who are not automatically registered under the new system as their details did not successfully verify with the DWP's records will be invited to provide their personal identifiers. This process will involve the distribution of invitations, reminders and personal canvassing throughout a transitional canvass period in the autumn of 2014. The personal identifiers will then be matched against the DWP database and entries confirmed as appropriate.

It is important to note that failures by relevant electors to provide valid personal identifiers will not, in the transitional stage, lead to that elector's details being automatically removed from the register. Their details will be carried forward to the revised register published by 1 December 2014, thus enabling them to vote in the UK Parliamentary Election on Thursday 7 May 2015.

Household Enquiry forms

In instances where a potential change of residency at a property has been identified, a Household Enquiry Form (HEF), which is similar to the existing canvass form, will be sent out. All new electors identified on HEFs will then invited to provide their personal identifiers. Failure to supply them will mean that those names are not added to the register.

In the autumn of 2015, the first full IER canvass will take place. Every household will be required to respond to the HEF. As at present, it will be a criminal offence to fail to provide the information requested and/or to provide false information. A specified number of forms and personal attempts at contacting residents where responses are not received will be made.