

THE ELECTORAL OFFICE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Chief Electoral Officer: Douglas Bain CBE TD Advocate

3rd Floor, St Anne's House, 15 Church Street, Belfast BT1 1ER



FRIDAY 18 APRIL 2008

ELECTORAL OFFICE REVIEWS POLLING STATIONS

The Electoral Office constantly strives to improve its services and part of that process is to regularly review the location and facilities at polling stations.

From now until 11 July, anyone who has found their polling station difficult to use should contact Douglas Bain, the Chief Electoral Officer. Comments from groups and organisations would also be welcomed. All responses will be carefully considered and taken into account.

As a result of engaging with community organisations following last year's Assembly elections, the Electoral Office is already planning improvements, including a new scheme to allow those with restricted mobility to vote at an alternative polling station. This will be the first such scheme in the United Kingdom.

Douglas Bain said: **"I am committed to do all that I can to make voting as straightforward as possible for everyone who wants to have their say in how we are governed.**

"I am now inviting any member of the public, especially those with disabilities, who may have had difficulty using their polling station at the last election, to let me know.

"All responses should clearly identify the polling station involved. I will personally consider all suggestions received."

Comments should be sent to arrive no later than Friday 11 July 2008 to:

Polling Stations
Electoral Office for Northern Ireland
15 Church Street
Belfast BT1 1ER

Alternatively, comments may be sent by email to: pollingstations@eoni.org.uk.

A comments form is also available on our website: www.eoni.org.uk.

Notes to Editors:

1. The law provides for a complete review of the Polling Station Scheme every four years. The next such review is due in December 2009 which is after the next European Parliamentary elections. Between reviews the Chief Electoral Officer can relocate individual polling stations if they are unsuitable or unavailable for a particular election.
2. This is one of a number of initiatives being undertaken by the Electoral Office this year to make it easier for everyone to vote whilst still maintaining robust safeguards against abuse. Details of the other initiatives are set out in the Electoral Office Business Plan 2008/09 which is available on www.eoni.org.uk.
3. At the Assembly elections in 2007 there were polling stations at 620 different premises across Northern Ireland. Many of them had similar names. For example there were 18 different St Mary's Primary Schools. It is important that anyone submitting a response gives the postal address of the polling station concerned.