

THE ELECTORAL OFFICE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

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“DON'T GET MISSED GET ON THE LIST” – AND YOU COULD WIN UP TO £500

Douglas Bain, the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland, today announced details of a new initiative by the Electoral Office to encourage everyone not on the Electoral Register or who have changed their name or address, to “get on the list”.

Around 180,000 people in Northern Ireland who are eligible to be included on the Electoral Register which ensures their right to vote, have not yet registered and it is estimated that there are also more than 160,000 changes to names or addresses in Northern Ireland each year.

From today, anyone notifying the Electoral Office of a change of name, address or registering for the first time will have the chance of winning up to £500.

Draws will take place every 3 months with prizes of £500, £300 and two prizes of £100 on each occasion. Anyone during the preceding 3 month period, who is added to the electoral register or whose name or address details are changed will be eligible.

Speaking at the launch Douglas Bain said:

“This new initiative is being piloted to encourage more people to complete and forward registration forms to us. This is the first time that an initiative such as this has been run as part of a year long campaign to encourage registration in the United Kingdom. It is hoped that the incentive of winning £500 will have a significant impact on increasing registration numbers here.

“Being on the electoral register enables you to have your say in how we are governed and is particularly important with the possibility of both a general election and a European Parliamentary election next year.

“Other advantages include the opportunity to apply for a free electoral identity card which many people use both for air travel and as proof of age.

“Anyone not on the electoral register will not be able to vote, may have difficulty in getting credit, and may even face prosecution.”

Anyone who is not sure whether they are on the register or who wants an application form or advice on what they need to do should phone our Helpline on 0800 4320 712.”

Notes for Editors

From September 2007 a system of continuous registration has been in place in Northern Ireland, this has greatly simplified the process of registration for everyone and electors only have to fill in an electoral registration form whenever they change their name or address or wish to be registered for the first time.

A pool of twenty potential winners will be randomly selected from all those who's application to register or to change their name or address are approved during a three month period. All will be asked to confirm that they are willing to enter the draw. Only those who agree will be eligible for the ballot to select the winner.

The pool of potential winners will be selected using well respected random number generation software.

The first draw is likely to take place at the Electoral Office in Belfast on 7 August.

The other draws will take place in early November and in February and May of next year and are will take place at different locations across Northern Ireland.

All draws will take place in the presence of an independent witness.

Electoral Office staff and their families are not eligible to enter the draw.

Rules for the draw are available on the electoral office website www.eoni.org.uk.