

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



Monday 3 December 2007

OVER 50,000 NEW VOTERS ON ELECTORAL REGISTER

The newly published December 2007 edition of the Electoral Register shows an increase of 50,863 in the number of people registered as electors compared with the same time last year. The total number of people on the register has now reached 1,125,979.

Douglas Bain, Chief Electoral Officer said; **“The new register shows a significant increase in the number of people entitled to vote at elections in Northern Ireland. We have been working closely the Electoral Commission and all the political parties across Northern Ireland to achieve this increase.**

“Over the next few months I will be bringing forward a number of new initiatives that will allow us to build on this success and further increase the number of people who can exercise their democratic right to vote.

“I would again encourage anyone who has not yet registered or whose name or address has changed since they last registered to secure their vote and the many other benefits of registration by sending in a registration form.”

Notes to editors

1. The Chief Electoral Officer is the electoral registration officer for the whole of Northern Ireland and is required by law to publish a new electoral register each December.
2. The new register published today contains the names and addresses of 1,125,979 individuals which is an increase of 50,863 since December 2006.

3. In previous years there was a full canvass of electors prior to the publication of the new register. The last canvass took place in autumn 2006. The significant increase achieved this year is under the new continuous registration process which replaced the canvass.
4. Initiatives to encourage registration undertaken during the year by the Chief Electoral Officer and his colleagues at the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland have included –
 - an Electoral Registration Week with nearly 50 events at locations across Northern Ireland
 - the introduction of a new simplified electoral registration form
 - making that form available in a range of languages other than English
 - the full use of information provided by District Councils on new residential properties

The Chief electoral Officer has worked closely with the Electoral Commission and the political parties all of whom have played an important role in encouraging electoral registration.

5. Whilst the new register shows a net increase of nearly 51,000 electors nearly double that number of changes were made to the register during the year. The register has to be changed when a new person is added to it, an existing person is removed from it (usually on death) or a registered person changes their name or address.
6. The increase in the number of people registered was achieved without any reduction in the accuracy of the register. During the year a number of more rigorous evidence requirements were introduced to guard against both inaccuracies on the register and the risk of identity theft.
7. Electoral registration forms and advice on registration issues can be obtained by phoning 0800 4320 712 or visiting www.eoni.org.uk.