

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



1 OCTOBER 2007

DON'T GET MISSED – GET ON THE LIST! ELECTORAL OFFICE LAUNCHES REGISTRATION AWARENESS WEEK

DON'T GET MISSED – GET ON THE LIST! – That is the message to everyone in Northern Ireland from Douglas Bain, Chief Electoral Officer, as Northern Ireland's first Electoral Registration Week gets underway.

A week long series of around 30 public events aimed at reminding people of the importance of being included on the Electoral Register was launched today (Monday 1 October at 11.00am) in Parliament Buildings. Among those attending and giving their support to the new initiative were First Minister, Rt Hon Dr Ian Paisley MP, MLA and Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness, MP, MLA.

While Electoral Registration Week is aimed at everyone in Northern Ireland, this year special emphasis has been placed on people who have a disability. The Electoral Office along with Disability Action, MENCAP, RNID, RNIB, and other leading groups representing people who live with disabilities have come together to make sure that those with special needs have every opportunity to exercise their democratic right to vote and enjoy the many other benefits of being on the Electoral Register.

Speaking at the launch Douglas Bain said:

“Electoral Registration Week is about making sure that everyone can exercise their democratic right to vote and that means that they must be on the Electoral Register. It's now easier than ever, continuous registration has replaced the old annual canvass, so rather than having to complete a form every year, people now only have to register once and they can do that at anytime of the year. After that, people just need to let us know if they change their name or address.

“This year I am making a special effort to encourage people with disabilities to complete forms and secure their vote because I believe that they are under represented on the register. As Chief Electoral Officer I am committed to doing everything I reasonably can to remove any barrier, perceived or otherwise, to registration and full participation in our democratic process.

“So to everyone the message is simple, *Don't Get Missed- Get On The List!*”

Also supporting the launch was Dan Gordon, Actor and Broadcaster, Dr Monica Wilson OBE, Chief Executive Disability Action, Dr Henrietta Campbell CB, Commissioner, Electoral Commission, Dr Janet Gray MBE, President and Director of Disability Sport NI (Three times World Disabled Water Ski Champion), and Mr William Hay MLA, Speaker of the Northern Assembly who hosted the event.

Note for Editors

Electoral Registration Week 2007 will run from 1-6 October. In addition to the launch event there will be nearly 30 other public events at locations across Northern Ireland and details of these can be found at www.eoni.org.uk

A person is eligible to register if they -

- Are 17 or over (they cannot vote until they are 18)
- A British, Commonwealth, Irish or EU member state citizen
- Have lived in Northern Ireland for the last 3 months.

People must tell the Electoral Office if they become eligible to register or if they change their name or address. Approximately 160000 people in NI change their name or address each year.

People can register for the first time or change their registration details throughout the year not just during Registration Week.

Registration forms are available on www.eoni.org.uk, can be obtained by phoning **0800 4320 712** or at any Electoral Office (addresses in phone book or from website or freephone number)