

THE ELECTORAL OFFICE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

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PRESS RELEASE

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FINAL ANNUAL ELECTORAL CANVASS GETS UNDERWAY

Over two million Electoral Registration forms will be arriving at homes across Northern Ireland, following the start of what will be the last annual electoral canvass.

During the coming weeks Canvassers will call to collect the completed forms before the campaign ends on 13 November. If a canvasser calls and finds no one at home then a prepaid envelope will be left so individuals can return forms by post.

Completed registration forms will be processed by staff at the nine Area Electoral Offices in Northern Ireland and everyone is encouraged to return the forms as early as possible.

Details of individuals who return their completed forms by the November deadline will appear on the new Electoral Register which will be published in early December.

The requirement for an annual canvass is removed by the Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006. This Act makes provision for the introduction of a new electoral registration scheme which will replace the annual canvass with a system of more extensive continuous updating of the Electoral Register in order to enhance comprehensiveness and remove the need for individual electors to re-register every year.

Being on the Electoral Register guards your democratic right to vote and ensures that you have your say in elections.

Speaking at the launch of the canvass Douglas Bain the Chief Electoral Officer said

“Northern Ireland is well ahead of England and Scotland in having an electoral register that is both comprehensive and accurate and it’s important that we keep it that way. Even if individuals don’t intend to exercise their democratic right to vote, it still remains a legal obligation to register. I would ask everyone to take just a few minutes to complete the registration form to secure their vote.”

The original plan was to post the canvass forms out on 21 August. By delaying this for two days the tax payer will save almost £12,000 as a result of Royal Mail’s new postal charges.