

## Transition to Individual Electoral Registration

29 October 2015

### Introduction

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Following the passage of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013, the end of the transition to Individual Electoral Registration (IER) in Great Britain was set at 1 December 2016, with a clause to allow the Secretary of State to bring forward the date by one year if the Government considered that appropriate. In July 2015, the Government announced it would do this and the Representation of the People, Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 (Transitional Provisions) Order was then tabled in Parliament providing for the end of the transition to be **1 December 2015**.

On 27 October, the House of Lords voted to approve this order. You can find our full briefing for the House of Lords debate [here](#).

### Our view

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The Commission had previously reported that the electoral registers used in May 2015 contained 1.9 million entries that were being retained under the transitional arrangements in place for the move to IER from the previous household system.

It is anticipated that the annual canvass activity that's currently being undertaken by Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) will significantly reduce this figure. However, taking this decision before the outcome of the annual canvass means the Government has acted without the most reliable information on how many redundant entries will be removed at the end of this year and how many eligible electors will need to re-register ahead of polls scheduled to take place in May 2016.

### What happens now?

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Any entry on the electoral register that has yet to be confirmed and moved onto the IER registers by 1 December 2015 will be removed.

EROs will continue to work up until the May 2016 polls to ensure their registers are as accurate and complete as possible and that any elector who may have been taken off the register as a result of this decision is contacted and encouraged to re-register.

Electoral Registration Officers across Great Britain will publish their electoral registers by 1 December 2015. However, where there has been a Parliamentary or local authority by-election in their area since 1 July 2015, EROs have the discretion to delay publication of their electoral registers until up to 1 February 2016. The Commission will analyse the registers and publish its findings to Parliament as quickly as possible after 1 February next year.

The Government's written ministerial statement on the end of the transition of Thursday 16 July announced £3 million of additional funding to target those entries being retained on the registers. We welcome the additional funding for EROs to help them ensure their registers are as accurate and complete as possible ahead of the end to the transition to IER.

## May 2016 Public Awareness Campaign

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The Electoral Commission will be running a national campaign across the UK to encourage people to register to vote ahead of the May 2016 polls. It will be targeted at all adults, with a focus on groups that our research has identified as being less likely to be registered to vote, such as people who have recently moved home, people who rent their home, students, young people, and people from black and minority ethnic communities.

Some of this work is being undertaken in partnership with organisations and private companies that represent these communities or have a reach into them. We also intend to run a mass-media public awareness campaign across a mix of TV, digital, social media, radio and outdoor media, and will be providing template resources and tools for EROs and ROs to use locally as part of their public engagement work. We will keep you up to date with our plans as they progress.

## Questions for your local ERO

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Should you wish to get more involved in electoral registration, contacting your local ERO (based at your local authority) could be a useful next step. You may want to ask your local ERO(s) about their engagement strategies and registration plans.

### **What the picture is for your area**

- How many entries are still retained under the transitional arrangements and what are you doing to encourage them to register individually?
- How are you using local records to identify and target new electors?
- The Cabinet Office has announced a £3 million fund to assist EROs in Great Britain in their targeting of non IER registered electors; have you applied for any additional funding?

## How activity is being targeted

- Please talk me through your public engagement strategy and registration plan.
- What are the key stages of the work you are doing between now and 1 December 2015 to engage with existing and new electors, and when are they taking place
- How do you plan to target attainers to maximise the number of eligible 16 and 17 year olds included on the electoral register?
- Do you have sufficient resources to deliver your plans effectively, including carrying out personal visits where necessary?
- How can I support your work using my local intelligence and networks?
- How can I stay updated on registration activity in my area?

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For further information, please contact **Umar Hanif** in our public affairs team on 020 7271 0536 or [uhanif@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:uhanif@electoralcommission.org.uk).