

Analysis of the December 2014 electoral registers in England and Wales

The implementation of Individual Electoral Registration: progress report

February 2015

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Executive summary | 4 |
| Data issues affecting reporting..... | 4 |
| The December 2014 registers..... | 6 |
| Addressing the issues highlighted by our analysis of the 1 December registers . | 8 |
| After the May 2015 polls: what happens next? | 11 |
| 1 Introduction | 14 |
| Background..... | 14 |
| The December registers..... | 14 |
| This report..... | 16 |
| 2 The transition to IER | 17 |
| Confirmation Live Run..... | 17 |
| The write-out | 18 |
| The December 2014 registers..... | 20 |
| 3 The December 2014 registers | 24 |
| Limits to the analysis..... | 24 |
| Total electorate in England and Wales | 25 |
| Attainers | 27 |
| Postal voters | 28 |
| Overall composition of the registers | 29 |
| Local variation | 30 |
| Attainer and postal voter variation | 34 |
| Explaining the electorate changes | 35 |
| Additions to and deletions from the registers | 35 |
| Student registration | 38 |
| Entries retained on the registers | 41 |
| 4 Addressing the issues identified by our analysis of the 1 December registers | 44 |
| Household notification letters | 45 |
| National Voter Registration Day | 45 |
| Action to target students | 47 |
| Partnership working | 48 |
| The Commission’s public awareness campaign | 49 |
| 5 After the May 2015 polls: what happens next? | 50 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Decision on ending the transition to IER | 50 |
| Household canvass activity in 2015 | 51 |
| Measuring accuracy and completeness | 52 |
| Beyond the transition to IER | 52 |
| Appendix A – Electoral register entries by local authorities | 55 |

Executive summary

On 1 December 2014, Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) across England and Wales published revised electoral registers, the first since the start of the transition to Individual Electoral Registration (IER) in June 2014.¹ This is a key milestone - but it is not the end of the process, and the registers will not have remained static since then.

An analysis of the 1 December registers provides an indication of the progress with the transition to IER since the confirmation live run – the process of matching existing entries on the register against Department for Work and Pensions data and locally held data to identify which entries could be automatically transferred on to the new IER registers – which was completed in England and Wales in July and on which we reported in October.

As the transition in Scotland did not commence until September 2014 – following the independence referendum – EROs there have until 2 March 2015 to publish the revised registers. We will be reporting separately on the registers and progress with the transition in Scotland in April 2015.

Data issues affecting reporting

In order to be able to report on the 1 December registers, we sought to collect data from the 348 EROs across England and Wales.

Each ERO uses one of four Electoral Management Software (EMS) systems to manage their electoral register. The Cabinet Office contracted directly with the four EMS suppliers to ensure that they carried out the development work which was needed to ensure the EMS systems were able to deliver all aspects of the new system of IER. We have previously reported that some issues had been encountered with the functionality of these systems which has had some impact on the transition to IER in particular areas.

Despite providing the Cabinet Office - at an early stage in the EMS development process - with a clear indication of the data that both we and EROs would need in order to be able to make a full assessment of IER progress, our analysis has been limited because not all local authorities were able to provide the accurate management information data that we expected. The absence of some key data for many local authority areas and other data quality issues including inaccurate data, again for many areas, on the number of electors being retained on the registers, has affected the analysis we are able to do at this stage.

The data allows us to make an overall assessment of the state of the December registers and to look ahead to what this means for the May 2015 polls.

¹ EROs were required by law to publish their revised register by 1 December 2014 except in cases where there had been a by-election in their area during the period of the write-out, in which case they had the discretion to delay publication to up to 1 February 2015.

But we do not have a full set of data of a sufficient quality to enable us to undertake a detailed analysis of progress with the transition to IER in this report.

These data issues have not only had a significant impact on our ability to report on progress with implementing the transition to date. They have also raised a real risk that the Commission will not have sufficient information to be able to make a robust, evidence-based assessment and recommendation in June 2015 to inform the UK Government's decision on whether to make an Order that the end of the transition to IER should be brought forward to December 2015.²

It is therefore vital that Cabinet Office and EMS suppliers make urgent changes to the systems to ensure that the necessary data will be available to allow for a full and robust analysis in our next report of the state of the registers and progress with implementing IER. We will continue to work with the Cabinet Office and the suppliers in order to make this happen. Without reliable data about electoral registration in June 2015, it is highly unlikely that the Commission would be able to recommend in any circumstances that the end of the transition to IER should be brought forward to December 2015.

Our assessment in June 2015 will seek to consider the potential impact of ending the transition to IER in December 2015. The Electoral Commission's goal is that the electoral registers support and enable effective participation in elections and referendums by all those who want to take part. A significant number and range of polls are scheduled to take place across Great Britain in May 2016: elections to the Scottish Parliament; the National Assembly for Wales; the Mayor of London and London Assembly; Police and Crime Commissioners across England (except in London) and Wales; and local government elections in many areas of England. The revised registers to be published in December 2015 will form the basis of the registers to be used for these polls in May 2016.

Given the significance and potential impact of a decision to end the transition to IER a year earlier than currently provided for in legislation, our June 2015 report will consider not only changes to the overall number of entries on the register in force for the May elections, but also any available evidence about significant local geographic or demographic variations. Our aim will be to make a clear assessment of the effect on the registers of ending the transition in December 2015, and therefore removing entries for those electors not registered individually at that point.

² Under the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013, the transition to IER is due to end in December 2016. At this point, any entries for electors who have not either been confirmed or successfully made individual applications to register to vote will be removed from the registers. However, the legislation also allows Ministers to make an Order (during a specified three-month period between June and August 2015) which would end the transition 12 months earlier, in December 2015.

The December 2014 registers

The December registers contained approximately 920,000 fewer entries than the registers published in February/March 2014 following the 2013 canvass, which indicates a decrease of approximately 2%.³

The decrease in the electorate is likely to be the result of the lack of comprehensive household canvass activity in 2014. Household Enquiry Forms (HEFs) – which are designed to identify who is living at a property and eligible to register so that the ERO can invite them to register to vote – were only required to be sent to properties where no electors were registered, or where the ERO believed there may still be other people living at the address who were not registered.

This means that home-movers have not been captured as effectively as they would have been during a typical annual canvass where all households would receive a form. The processes followed in 2014 were unique in this regard; canvass activity in 2015 and all subsequent years will involve sending household enquiry forms to all properties to check who is resident at an address and to identify new electors who can subsequently be invited to register, and carrying out follow up activity as required.

To fill this gap, we raised in the autumn of last year the possibility of EROs sending household notification letters (HNL) to every household in their area. We have welcomed the recent announcement that the UK Government has provided funding which will allow EROs to send these letters in early 2015. These household notification letters will show who is registered to vote at that particular address and will prompt anyone who is not yet registered – including attainees – to do so. Further information on this activity can be found in Chapter 4 of our report.

Local variation

The majority of authorities reported a reduction in the total number of register entries of between 1% and 2%, with some other areas reporting no significant change or a small increase (between 1% and 2%). However, in some areas, though, the variations were more significant: in Ceredigion (-12%), Cardiff (-11%) and Oxford (-11%) the register has reduced in size, while in other areas, like Wellingborough (+6%) and East Devon (+5%), there has been an increase.

This variation depends on a number of factors, including the demographics of the local area and specific registration practices, such as at what point the ERO removed previously carried forward register entries.

In places like Ceredigion, we know that the drop in the registered electorate is primarily attributable to issues encountered with student registration. Our research has consistently shown that students are a typically under-registered group and the

³ The 2013 canvass was moved, to bring it closer to the start of the confirmation process, in order to maximise the accuracy and completeness of the registers sent for matching (and therefore to maximise the number of entries that could be matched and automatically transferred to the new IER registers). This meant that the registers following what is referred to as the 2013 canvass were published in February and March 2014.

change to the registration system has created new challenges in getting students registered at their term-time-address. While institutions can still provide details of students to EROs, they can no longer use these to register students as a block – something that some, but by no means all, institutions did previously – although EROs can use this information to invite students to register.

While EROs in those areas with large student populations have been - and are continuing - making concerted efforts to ensure that students register individually, there is still more that can be done to continue to target students at their term-time addresses in the run-up to the May 2015 polls. Chapter 4 of our report contains more information on the activities that EROs, the Commission and others are carrying out to maximise levels of student registration.

In contrast, in East Devon, where the challenges are different, there has been an increase in the number of entries on the register. The ERO has attributed this to the success of making visits to non-responding properties and individuals, which were carried out across the area in 2014 for the first time since 2010.

Attainers

The overall number of attainers - those who are not yet old enough to vote but will turn 18 (i.e. attain voting age) within the twelve month period starting on the 1 December after they make their application - has fallen by 33% from the February/March 2014 registers.⁴

The fall in the number of attainers does not mean that those who were previously included on the register as attainers have been removed: attainers on the February/March 2014 register will, in many cases, have reached voting age since they were first included on the revised register and so will now be shown as ordinary electors. However, it does mean that new attainers are not being added at the same rate as in previous years.

There is clearly a challenge for EROs and others to carry out further work to maximise the number of attainers on the electoral registers. Further details of work being undertaken to reach attainers and to increase the registration levels of that group can be found in Chapter 4 of our report.

Changes to the register

The electoral register is not a constant: changes are made throughout the year to the register, with, for example, additions made as a result of an individual moving into an area and deletions made where someone moves out of an address or dies.

The level of additions to the registers in 2014 has been lower than in previous years. The 2013 canvass – which took place between October 2013 and February/March 2014 - resulted in the addition of entries to the register equivalent to 12.3% of the total registered electorate in February/March 2014, whereas data gathered for this

⁴ Due to issues encountered in collecting this data, these estimates are not based on all local authorities in England and Wales.

report suggests that the roughly equivalent figure at the end of the 2014 write-out period was 3.3%.⁵

The change in the number of additions to the registers is largely mirrored by a change in the number of entries being deleted: 11.8% of the entries on the register at the start of the canvass in October were deleted on publication of the revised register in February/March 2014, whereas data provided by EROs suggests that following the write-out activity in 2014, 4.6% of register entries were deleted.

The 1 December 2014 registers therefore reflected significantly fewer additions and fewer deletions than the registers published in February/March 2014 following the previous canvass.

A significant proportion of additions and deletions in any given year relate to home movers, and we have no evidence to suggest that the number of those moving home in 2014 was significantly lower than in previous years.

Taken together, this again illustrates that the lack of comprehensive household canvass activity in 2014 has meant that home-movers have not been captured as effectively as they would have been during a typical annual canvass.

The change to levels of additions and deletions has clearly had an impact on the overall size of the electorate. However, this change will also have had a negative impact on the accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers (which were estimated to be around 87% and 85% respectively in February/March 2014).⁶

When someone with a register entry moves house they need to re-register at their new address in order to be considered 'complete' (under the Commission's definition) and their previous register entry needs to be deleted (because it is now inaccurate). This did not happen to the same extent in 2014 as it has following previous canvasses.

Addressing the issues highlighted by our analysis of the 1 December registers

The 1 December 2014 registers provided a snapshot of how the registers stood at that date, but work has and will continue to be done to ensure as many people as possible are registered to vote in respect of the correct address in advance of the May 2015 polls. While anyone on the 1 December registers will not be removed from the register before the May 2015 elections unless the ERO is no longer satisfied that they are entitled to remain registered at that address, more needs to be done to target those not yet included on the register at their current address.

EROs, the Commission and many others have already undertaken significant activity since publication of the revised registers - with National Voter Registration Day on 5

⁵ Due to issues encountered in collecting this data, these estimates are not based on all local authorities in England and Wales.

⁶ The Electoral Commission, [The quality of the 2014 electoral registers in Great Britain \(July 2014\)](#)

February a particularly good example of concerted effort to encourage registration by those not currently included on the register at their current address.

However, more work remains to target those not currently registered, particularly taking into account the findings of our research which has previously identified that approximately 7.5 million individuals are unregistered.

Since 1 December 2014, around 2 million registration applications have been made, with 80% of these having been made online. While this is clearly positive, it doesn't necessarily reflect an increase of that level in the number of entries on the electoral register: for example, some of these will be duplicate applications from those already included on the electoral register, and others will be from movers who are applying to be added at one address but will consequently be removed from the register at their previous address.

It is vital that everyone with an interest in democracy does all they can to help to maximise the number of people on the register at the correct address by the time of the registration deadline for the May polls on 20 April 2015, and we say more about this in Chapter 4 of the report.

Addressing issues identified by the December register data

The December registers highlighted a drop in the overall number of entries on the registers and in the overall number of additions and deletions to the registers, as well as specific issues in relation to registration levels of attainees and students.

To help to address the issues identified by the December register data and in particular the lack of comprehensive household canvass activity in autumn 2014, we have strongly recommended that EROs undertake an audit of their registers and write to all households – regardless of whether or not they currently have any registered electors - in early 2015, in good time before the May polls.

We have provided EROs with a template letter for this purpose. This 'household notification letter' (HNL) shows who is registered to vote at that particular address and prompts anyone who is not yet registered to do so.

This approach has a number of clear benefits, all of which can contribute to helping EROs to ensure that their registers are as accurate and complete as possible ahead of the May polls:

- Prompting those who have not yet registered to do so
- Helping to pick up those who have recently moved within or into the registration area
- Giving residents an opportunity to check their details on the register are accurate

The Commission welcomed Cabinet Office's January 2015 announcement that £6.8 million would be made available to EROs to support activity to maximise registration - many EROs have used their share to fund sending out HNLs.

All EROs in England and Wales have confirmed that they have or will be carrying out this activity or other comprehensive activity which seeks to address the issues identified by our analysis of the 1 December registers data. Early feedback from EROs where the activity is now well advanced has indicated that the HNL has had a positive impact on boosting the number of registration applications received.

Students

The December registers illustrate a specific challenge in registering students at their term-time address, adding to our previous research which had already identified students as a typically under-registered group.

All EROs have engagement strategies in place and those with a significant student population have specific activities planned to target students in their area.

Additionally, to help meet the challenges highlighted by the December registers, the NUS, the Association of Colleges (AoC), Universities UK, the Academic Registrars Council (ARC), the Association of Heads of University Administration (AHUA), GuildHE and the Commission have worked together to ask for the support of all Vice Chancellors and College Principals across England, Scotland and Wales in undertaking a few simple actions to let their students know about the importance of registering to vote, and reminding them that they can now register to vote online. These representatives have been asked to arrange for their institutions to email all their students with details of how to register, to hold registration drives in tutorials or lectures and to work with their local students' unions to share information about registering. These activities will complement the work of local EROs to target students and young people that will continue right up to the registration deadline.

To further support the work currently underway to encourage registration by students and young people, the Commission is working in partnership with Facebook. Following on from the activity that took place on National Voter Registration Day, Facebook users are also now able to add a 'Registered to Vote' Life Event to their Facebook Timeline which can then be shared with their contacts on Facebook to further increase awareness levels in young people. This is particularly important in relation to reaching students as they are one of the key demographics who interact with Facebook on a daily basis.

Partnership work

As part of our public awareness activity to support the write-out process in 2014, we began forming partnerships with a wide range of corporate, public and voluntary organisations to use their established communication channels to help extend our reach into groups we have identified as being typically under-registered.

Partnership working is important to help build on, promote and complement the work that is already going on to ensure that as many people as possible are registered to vote. We are working with organisations such as the National Union of Students (NUS), Citizens Advice Bureau, Operation Black Vote, the Learner Driving Centre and Mencap to draw on their experiences and target messages at various groups and encourage voter registration amongst their key target audiences, which include groups who are typically under-registered. Such organisations have far greater reach into under registered groups than any single national body could achieve by itself,

while they also help to explain the message in a way that resonates with voters in different contexts.

Further information on our partnership work can be found in Chapter 4 of the report.

Electoral Commission public awareness campaign

The Commission will also be running a national public awareness campaign which will begin on 16 March 2015 and will include television, catch-up TV and online advertising. The objective of the campaign is to encourage people to register to vote ahead of the 20 April deadline. It will reach 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, young people, and people from some black and minority ethnic communities.

We have updated our plans in light of the findings of our analysis of the 1 December registers and the particular challenges around the registration of students and young people. This has resulted in us pursuing two additional strands of activity: one to target students, focusing on the fact that they need to be registered at their term-time address in order to be able to vote in their university constituency; and another to target young people, emphasising to those who have just turned 18 or will do so before the May 2015 polls that they need to take positive action in order to ensure they are registered.

Taken together, the activity being carried out across the electoral community – by EROs, the Commission and many others – will go a long way towards helping to ensure that anyone who is not currently registered at the correct address takes the necessary action before the 20 April deadline so that they are able to participate in the May 2015 polls.

After the May 2015 polls: what happens next?

Everyone's focus now needs to be on maximising registration ahead of 20 April – which is not only the registration deadline for the May 2015 polls but also another key staging point in the transition to IER. However, while this is another important milestone, it is by no means the end of the process.

June 2015 report and decision on ending the transition to IER

In June 2015, we will report again, this time on the state of the registers in force at the May 2015 polls and on progress with the transition to IER to that point. As outlined above, our ability to conduct a comprehensive analysis and to be able to make a robust, evidence-based recommendation to inform the UK Government's decision on whether to make an Order to bring forward the end of the transition to IER to December 2015, will be dependent on Cabinet Office and EMS suppliers taking urgent action to ensure we can base our analysis on reliable data.

Under existing legislation, the transition to IER is due to end in December 2016. At this point, any entries for electors who have not either been confirmed or successfully made individual applications to register to vote will be removed from the registers. However, the legislation also allows Ministers to make an Order (during a specified three-month period between June and August 2015) which would end the

transition 12 months earlier, in December 2015. A statutory instrument containing such an Order would not need to be debated by Parliament, but could be annulled by a resolution of either House of Parliament.

In order to ensure our assessment is as up-to-date as possible we intend to collect local authority-level data from all EROs immediately after the last date for registering to vote ahead of the May 2015 elections. As highlighted above, without reliable data about electoral registration in June 2015, it is highly unlikely that the Commission would be able to recommend in any circumstances that the end of the transition to IER should be brought forward to December 2015.

If the data allows, our assessment will consider the potential impact of ending the transition to IER in December 2015. The Electoral Commission's goal is that electoral registers support and enable effective participation in elections and referendums by all those who want to take part. A significant number and range of polls are scheduled to take place across Great Britain in May 2016: elections to the Scottish Parliament; the National Assembly for Wales; the Mayor of London and London Assembly; Police and Crime Commissioners across England (except in London) and Wales; and local government elections in many areas of England. The revised registers to be published in December 2015 will form the basis for the registers to be used for these polls in May 2016.

We also recognise, however, that electoral registers will continue to be used for other purposes, in particular determining the distribution and boundaries of parliamentary constituencies and other electoral areas. The registers published in December 2015 will be used as the basis for calculating the size of constituencies as part of the next scheduled UK Parliamentary boundary review. Our analysis of the registers in place for the May 2015 elections will therefore be of interest in that context – although this will not be its primary focus – and it is for governments and legislatures to consider how best to use electoral data in any future boundary revision exercise. We expect that the current inquiry by the Political and Constitutional Reform Select Committee on the redrawing of Parliamentary boundaries will consider these issues in more detail, and we look forward to its conclusions and recommendations.

Given the significance and potential impact of a decision to end the transition to IER a year earlier than currently provided for in legislation, our June report will consider not only the overall number of entries on the electoral registers, including how many of those are individually registered, but also any evidence about significant local geographic or demographic variations. Our aim will be to make a clear assessment of the effect on the registers of ending the transition in December 2015, and therefore removing entries for those electors not registered individually at that point.

2015 annual canvass

In the summer of 2015, EROs across Great Britain will be carrying out the annual canvass which, unlike in 2014, will involve sending HEFs to **all** properties.

As part of the canvass, any new potential electors identified by each ERO will be sent an invitation to register and a registration application form. If no response is received, EROs must take specified steps – including issuing two reminders and a personal visit - to follow up with any non-responders.

EROs' activity will also include a push to try to ensure that as many existing electors who are still not registered individually successfully complete an individual registration application.

Revised registers must be published by 1 December 2015 on conclusion of the canvass.

Beyond the transition to IER

The transition to an individual electoral registration system in Great Britain will mark a significant step in the transformation of electoral registration for the UK. Our research on the accuracy and completeness of electoral registers in the UK has shown that there is nevertheless still significant scope for further improvements to the electoral registration process, and the transformation of electoral registration should not stop at the end of the transition.

The Electoral Commission and others with an interest in ensuring accurate and complete electoral registers, including EROs, political parties and elected representatives, will expect and seek further improvements to current processes, considering innovative and challenging proposals such as:

- The potential for using confirmation matching processes to compare information about potentially eligible electors collected during the canvass against data held by DWP, which could significantly reduce the number of people who need to provide their date of birth and National Insurance number in order for EROs to be able to verify their identity.
- The potential to build on the many interactions citizens already have with a wide range of public services to help increase both the accuracy and completeness of electoral registers, prompting people to register to vote or update their registration details at key points when they use other public services, such as applying for or receiving benefits or tax credits, changing their GP, applying for a driving license or renewing their passport.
- The potential for more direct registration, using trusted information supplied by other government and public agencies to directly enrol electors or update their details on the electoral register, to significantly improve the accuracy and completeness of electoral registers.

The UK Government will continue to be responsible for developing policy and legislation for electoral registration, and it will need to ensure that it retains the capacity to focus on and manage further change in the medium and long term.

1 Introduction

Background

1.1 In Great Britain, the household system of electoral registration has now been replaced by Individual Electoral Registration (IER) whereby each person is responsible for registering to vote individually. In addition, people can now register to vote online.

1.2 The transition to IER began with a data matching exercise to compare existing electors' details with the details held on the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) database – a process known as the 'confirmation live run' (CLR).⁷ This took place from 10 June 2014 in England and Wales and from 19 September 2014 – after the independence referendum – in Scotland.

1.3 We published a report on the conclusion of the first stage of the transition – the confirmation live run exercise – on progress with the transition in England and Wales in October 2014, and reported separately on the transition in Scotland in November 2014.⁸

1.4 Following the CLR, the 'write-out' phase of the transition commenced, with EROs sending confirmation letters to those who had been confirmed and so automatically transferred onto the new IER registers; and invitations to register to those existing electors who had not been confirmed.

1.5 Alongside the write-out to existing electors, EROs also sent household enquiry forms (HEF) to addresses where they believed this would enable them to identify any potential eligible electors who were not already registered to vote at that address so that they could invite them to register. This arrangement was unique to 2014; in 2015 and future years HEFs will be sent to all properties.

1.6 EROs are required by law to follow up where there is no response to an invitation to register or household enquiry form by taking specified steps – including issuing two reminders and a personal visit - to follow up with any non-responders.

The December registers

1.7 EROs in England and Wales were required by law to publish revised registers by 1 December 2014, except in areas where there had been a recent by-election, where the publication could be delayed up to 1 February 2015.

⁷ A dry-run of this process – known as the 'confirmation dry run' or 'CDR' – was carried out in summer 2013.

⁸ Reports on the Confirmation Live Run in both England & Wales and Scotland can be accessed on the Electoral Commission's website: <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/our-work/our-research/electoral-registration-research>

1.8 The publication of these registers is a key milestone in the progress of the transition to IER but is by no means its conclusion. It is important to remember that the registers have not remained static since then; work to maximise registration is and will be continuing right up to the registration deadline of 20 April 2015 to ensure as many people as possible are registered to vote in the May 2015 polls.

Data collection

1.9 We sought to collect data from all 348 EROs in England and Wales to enable us to report on the state of the December registers and on progress with the transition to IER to that point.

1.10 Each ERO uses one of four Electoral Management Software (EMS) systems to manage their electoral register. The Cabinet Office contracted directly with the four EMS suppliers to ensure that they carried out the development work which was needed to ensure the EMS systems were able to deliver all aspects of the new system of IER. We have previously reported that some issues had been encountered with the functionality of these systems which has had some impact on the transition to IER in particular areas.⁹

1.11 Despite providing the Cabinet Office - at an early stage in the EMS development process - with a clear indication of the data that both we and EROs would need in order to be able to make a full assessment of IER progress, our analysis has been limited because not all local authorities were able to provide the accurate management information data that we expected. Our report is therefore less precise than we had hoped – we have had to focus on headline measures only.

1.12 These data issues also create a real risk that we will not have the information we would need to be able to make a robust, evidence-based recommendation in June 2015 to inform the UK Government's decision on whether to recommend to Parliament that the end of the transition to IER should be brought forward from December 2016 to December 2015.¹⁰

1.13 Unless Cabinet Office and EMS suppliers make urgent changes to the systems to ensure that the necessary data will be available to allow for a full and robust analysis in our next report of the state of the registers and progress with implementing IER, it is highly unlikely that the Commission would be able to recommend in any circumstances that the end of the transition to IER should be brought forward to December 2015.

⁹ Further information can be found in The Electoral Commission, [Analysis of the Confirmation Live Run in England and Wales](#) (October 2014):

¹⁰ Under the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013, the transition to IER is due to end in December 2016. At this point, any entries for electors who have not either been confirmed or successfully made individual applications to register to vote will be removed from the registers. However, the legislation also allows Ministers to make an Order (during a specified three-month period between June and August 2015) which would end the transition 12 months earlier, in December 2015.

This report

1.14 This is the second in a series of reports we are publishing on progress with the transition to IER in England and Wales. A separate assessment for Scotland will follow in April 2015 following the publication of the registers by 2 March 2015

1.15 This report analyses the progress of the transition from the end of the confirmation exercise up to the publication of the revised registers in England and Wales, and provides an analysis of the state of the registers at that point in time.

1.16 **Chapter 2** of this report provides details of the IER transition process from June to December 2014.

1.17 **Chapter 3** contains an analysis of the December 2014 registers published by EROs in England and Wales, including an assessment of the total number of entries on the electoral registers and levels of variations in the number of entries on the registers for different local authority areas.

1.18 **Chapter 4** focuses on the work that is needed to ensure that as many people as possible are registered to vote ahead of the May 2015 polls.

1.19 **Chapter 5** summarises what happens after the registration deadline for the May 2015 polls, including the work the Commission intends to do to report on progress in June 2015 to inform the UK Government's decision on whether to recommend to Parliament that the end of the transition to IER should be brought forward.

2 The transition to IER

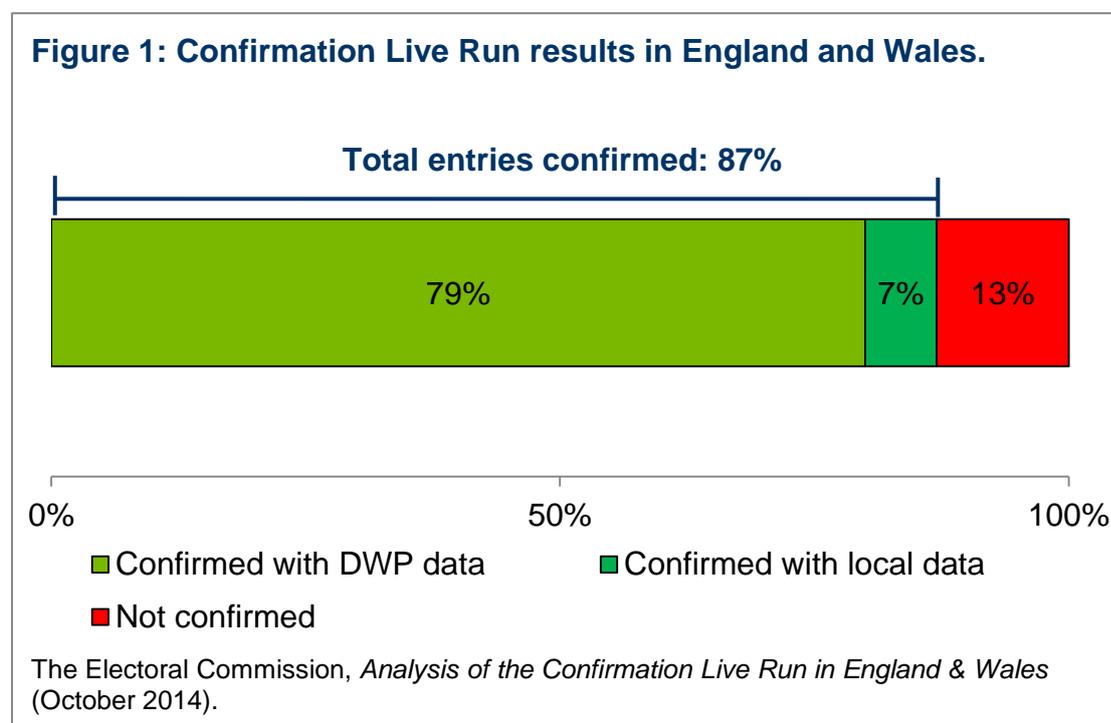
Confirmation Live Run

2.1 The first stage in the transition to IER involved the matching of existing entries on the electoral registers against the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) database as well as locally held data, in order to identify which records could be automatically transferred to the IER registers. This process, known as the Confirmation Live Run (CLR), took place in June and July 2014 in England and Wales.

2.2 Entries for electors that could be positively matched were confirmed and transferred directly to the new IER register. Those individuals not matched were written to by their ERO and asked to re-register by providing additional information (National Insurance number (NINO) and date of birth).

2.3 Based on the CLR data matching (figure 1 below):

- 87%¹¹ of entries on the June registers in England and Wales – totalling 36.9 million register entries - were positively matched and directly transferred to the new IER register;
- 13% of entries – totalling approximately 5.5 million - could not be matched.¹²



¹¹ Figures in the chart above are rounded.

¹² The full dataset can be accessed on the Electoral Commission's website:

<http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/our-work/our-research/electoral-registration-research>

2.4 The confirmation results also gave each ERO a clear indication of the specific challenges in their local area. For example, the proportion of entries matched at local authority and ward level varied considerably. Across local authorities it ranged from 59% in Hackney to 97% in Epping Forest and by ward the rate ranged from 7% in Oxford's Holywell ward to 100% in Lancaster's university ward.¹³

2.5 In addition, our published analysis of the CLR results – carried out at ward level using demographic data – found that areas with higher concentrations of private renters, young people, students and people not born in the UK had a lower match rate. People in these groups were also found to be less likely to be correctly registered, mainly as a result of population movement (more likely to move home) and participation in the electoral process (less likely to vote).¹⁴

2.6 On receipt of their CLR results, EROs were able to review their public engagement strategies – which had been developed based on results from a dry-run of the confirmation process carried out in summer 2013 - in order to ensure they had the right plans in place to be able to target those who were not confirmed or not currently registered at all.

2.7 We worked with EROs and their staff during this period to support them with reviewing their plans and, subsequently, to monitor their progress with delivering them. We targeted our support at EROs in those areas where the scope and scale of the challenge of implementing IER was the greatest, including those with relatively large numbers of unconfirmed electors.

The write-out

2.8 The write-out involved EROs sending confirmation letters to those electors who were confirmed through the CLR process and so could be automatically transferred onto the new IER register; and invitations to register to those who were not confirmed. In England and Wales this process began from July 2014.¹⁵

2.9 Electors who were positively matched as part of the confirmation process were sent a confirmation letter informing them that they had been automatically transferred on to the IER registers and did not need to take any additional action.

¹³ The ERO for Lancaster used data from the University Registrar to increase the match rate in University ward from 0.3% following DWP matching to 100% following local data matching. The ERO understood that some of the electors confirmed will be students who are no longer resident on campus (e.g. they completed their degree in June 2014 and will not return to the campus in September/October) and so followed up with the university in order to access more up to date information after the start of term. This allowed them to start the process of removing from the register entries relating to those students who have left campus.

¹⁴ The Electoral Commission, [Analysis of the Confirmation Live Run in England and Wales](#) (October 2014)

All our studies on electoral registration found a strong link between population mobility and turnout and electoral registration. Reports are available on the Electoral Commission's website:

<http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/our-work/our-research/electoral-registration-research>

¹⁵ The precise start date of the write-out varied between local authority areas as a result of factors including the timing of their matching against the DWP database, whether they were carrying out local data matching and the time this took, and practical factors such as IT systems and arrangements for printing and delivering letters and forms.

2.10 Electors who could not be positively matched and automatically transferred to the new IER registers were sent an invitation to register, informing them that they needed to re-register by providing some more information and providing details of how to do this.

2.11 Anyone who could not provide the required information – National Insurance Number (NINO) and date of birth – could use an exceptions or attestation process in order to become individually registered.¹⁶

2.12 No-one will be removed from the register as a result of the change to the registration system before the end of the transition period.

2.13 To support the write-out, the Commission ran a public awareness campaign in England and Wales from 3 July until 10 August which included TV, outdoor and online advertising. The aim of the campaign was to support local ERO activity by encouraging people to look out for their letter.

2.14 We undertook tracking research to evaluate the effectiveness of the campaign, which found that:

- 54% of respondents recognised any element of our campaign, which met our key performance measure (KPM) of between 50-60%
- 56% of respondents reported being aware of the change to the voter registration system, meeting our KPM of between 50-60%
- 72% of respondents stated it was true that they needed to look out for a letter about registering to vote from their local council, which exceeded our KPM of 40-50%

Household enquiry forms

2.15 EROs were also required to send Household Enquiry Forms (HEFs) – which are designed to identify who is living at a property and eligible to register so that the ERO can invite them to register to vote – to those properties where no electors were registered, or where the ERO believed there may still be other people living at the address who were not registered.

2.16 The processes followed in 2014 were unique in this regard; canvass activity in 2015 and all subsequent years will involve sending household enquiry forms to all properties to check who is resident at an address and to identify new electors who can subsequently be invited to register.

¹⁶ The *exceptions* process is used by EROs when an elector cannot be matched against DWP records or using local data sources and where the applicant cannot provide some or all of the required personal identifiers required to register. It involves asking the applicant to provide documentary evidence to prove their identity. Where the applicant cannot be matched and cannot provide the required personal identifiers or documentary evidence, the *attestation* process is used. This involves a 'person of good standing' on the electoral register verifying the identity of the applicant. Further information on both processes is available in [Part 4 of our guidance for Electoral Registration Officers](#).

When does an ERO remove an entry from the register?

2.17 An elector will remain registered at a particular address unless and until the ERO determines that:

- the person was not entitled to be registered in respect of the address, or
- the person has ceased to be resident at the address or otherwise ceased to satisfy the conditions for registration

2.18 An entry can only be deleted from the electoral register in the following circumstances:

- Where an ERO receives:
 - a death certificate confirming that the elector has died
 - a notification by the registrar of births and deaths confirming that the elector has died
 - a notification by the digital service or another ERO confirming that the elector has moved and is now registered elsewhere
 - two pieces of evidence from two different sources confirming that the elector is no longer entitled to be registered at that address
- Where an ERO believes an elector is no longer entitled to be registered and they have undertaken a formal 'review' of that elector's entitlement to remain on the register at a particular address.¹⁷

The December 2014 registers

2.19 Following the write-out process explained above, EROs in England and Wales were required to publish their revised register by 1 December 2014. If, however, there had been a by-election in the during the 2014 write-out period, the ERO had the discretion to delay publication until up to 1 February 2015.

2.20 The publication of the revised registers in December 2014 was a key milestone in the progress of the transition to IER, but it is important to note that the registers will not have remained static from that point, and considerable work is being, and will continue to be, undertaken to maximise the number of people registered for the May 2015 polls.

2.21 As we highlighted in our October 2014 report, there were delays to the start of the write-out in some areas as a result of IT issues. This meant that not all processes for following up with electors or households who have not responded to the write-out - which were initially planned to have been concluded by the end of November - were completed by the time of the publication of the revised registers.

¹⁷ Reviews are quasi-judicial processes where electors are notified of the fact that their entitlement to remain is being reviewed, giving the reasons why. Depending on the type of review, electors are given the opportunity to request a hearing or supply further information in connection with their entitlement to remain registered. In some limited circumstances, the ERO will notify the elector that they intend to hold a hearing between 3 and 7 working days.

2.22 Additionally, work to encourage university students to register at their term-time address, could only begin following the start of the university academic year in late September/early October 2014.

2.23 The December registers will therefore not reflect in full the outcomes of the work that has been undertaken to target these particular groups of electors.

Who should have been included on the December registers?

2.24 The December registers in England and Wales should have included the following:

- Electors who were included in the register before the transition and were confirmed.
- Electors who were included in the register before the transition and who were not confirmed but have responded to the write-out and successfully completed an individual registration application.
- Electors who were not previously registered in an area but have now successfully completed an individual registration application in respect of a particular address.
- Electors who were included in the register before the transition but were not confirmed and have not successfully completed an individual registration application subsequent to the write-out. These electors are no longer entitled to vote by post or proxy unless they submit a successful application to register individually and an application to vote by post or proxy. They can, however, vote in person at their allocated polling station and will not be removed from the register because of the change to IER until the end of the transition, which will be in December 2016 unless there is a change in the law.

Who would not have been included in the December registers?

2.25 There are only two circumstances in which an entry which previously appeared on the register would not have been included in the revised register published on 1 December:

- EROs will have removed any existing entries where they were satisfied that the individual is no longer entitled to remain registered at that address.
- EROs were required to remove any entries for individuals in households who did not respond to the 2013 canvass which were carried forward on to the

February/March 2014 registers, and where the individual has not subsequently responded to the ERO's enquiries.¹⁸

2.26 Entries in the first category will be those in respect of which the ERO has obtained additional new information since June 2014 causing them to believe that the individual is no longer entitled to be registered at a particular address. Except in a number of limited circumstances (i.e. notification by the registrar of births and deaths, death certificate, notification by another ERO or the digital service), the ERO will have needed either information from two separate sources or to have completed a formal 'review' of that elector's entitlement to remain on the register at that address before they can remove an entry from the electoral register. A change to council tax records, for example, could indicate to the ERO that an elector has moved, but they would need a second piece of evidence to support this before they would be able to remove the entry from the register.

2.27 On publication of the February/March 2014 registers, EROs could carry forward entries for electors whose household had not responded to the 2013 canvass. By law, EROs in England and Wales were required to delete entries relating to any such carried-forward electors at the end of the 2014 write-out process if they had not received a completed HEF with their name included on it or if the individual had not made a successful individual registration application.

2.28 Under the previous registration system, if the ERO was not able to satisfy themselves that the elector was still entitled to be registered at that particular address they would have been removed after having been carried forward for one year. In 2014, under the transitional provisions, in order to be able to retain an elector who hadn't responded to the 2013 canvass, some active response was required (for example, through the inclusion of their name on a completed HEF) and EROs could not retain such individuals without this additional response even where data matching suggested that they may still be resident.

2.29 The following table illustrates which entries should and would not have been included in the December 2014 registers:

¹⁸ The 2013 canvass was moved, to bring it closer to the start of the confirmation process, in order to maximise the accuracy and completeness of the registers sent for matching (and therefore to maximise the number of entries that could be matched and automatically transferred to the new IER registers). This meant that the registers following what is referred to as the 2013 canvass were published in February and March 2014.

Table 1 – Categories of elector and their inclusion on December registers

| Type of elector | Included on revised register? |
|---|---|
| New electors who have made a successful application |  |
| Confirmed existing electors who were matched against official records |  |
| Unconfirmed existing electors who could not be matched, were invited to register, and made a successful application |  |
| Unconfirmed existing electors who could not be matched, were invited to register, but did not respond or were unsuccessful |  |
| Carry-forward electors – those who did not respond to the 2013 canvass – who have returned a HEF with their name included on it and been confirmed, or have made a successful application to register |  |
| Carry-forward electors – those who did not respond to the 2013 canvass and have not returned a HEF which included their name; or their name is crossed off on a returned HEF; or they have not made a successful application to register |  |
| No longer eligible – electors deleted where the ERO has reviewed an elector’s entry; or received confirmation that the elector has died; or has moved |  |

3 The December 2014 registers

3.1 Data presented in this section demonstrates the state of the registers published by the 348 local authorities in England and Wales on 1 December 2014. Our analysis includes data from the 18 local authorities who postponed the publication of their registers as a result of by-elections which took place in their area during the write-out period.

3.2 Our analysis is based on figures provided to us by EROs via their Electoral Management Software (EMS) systems, research studies conducted on the registers and historic data.¹⁹

Limits to the analysis

3.3 Each of the 348 EROs in England and Wales uses one of four Electoral Management Software (EMS) systems to manage their electoral register. The Cabinet Office contracted directly with the four EMS suppliers to ensure that they carried out the development work which was needed to ensure the EMS systems were able to deliver all aspects of the new system of IER. We have previously reported that some issues had been encountered with the functionality of these systems which has had some impact on the transition to IER in particular areas.

3.4 Despite providing the Cabinet Office - at an early stage in the EMS development process - with a clear indication of the data that both we and EROs would need in order to be able to make a full assessment of IER progress, our analysis has been limited because not all local authorities were able to provide the accurate management information data that we expected.

3.5 Our report is therefore less precise than we had hoped – we have had to focus on headline measures only. In addition, some of the data reported below is for a sample of authorities (e.g. those using a particular EMS supplier). Where data is presented throughout this chapter, information on limits and number of authorities included in the analysis is noted.

3.6 While the data allows us to make an overall assessment of the state of the December registers and to look ahead to what this means for the May 2015 polls, we do not have a full set of data of a sufficient quality to enable us to undertake a detailed analysis of progress with the transition to IER in this report.

3.7 These data issues have not only had a significant impact on our ability to report on progress with implementing the transition to date, but they have also created a real risk that the Commission will not have sufficient information to be able to make a robust, evidence-based recommendation in June 2015 to inform the UK

¹⁹ Our research studies on electoral registration can be accessed at: <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/our-work/our-research/electoral-registration-research>

Government's decision on whether to recommend to Parliament that the end of the transition to IER should be brought forward.

3.8 It is therefore vital that Cabinet Office and EMS suppliers make urgent changes to the systems to ensure that the necessary data will be available to allow for a full and robust analysis in our next report of the state of the registers and progress with implementing IER. We will continue to work with the Cabinet Office and the suppliers in order to make this happen. Without reliable data about electoral registration in June 2015, it is highly unlikely that the Commission would be able to recommend in any circumstances that the end of the transition to IER should be brought forward to December 2015.

Total electorate in England and Wales

3.9 Based on the data collected for all 348 EROs, the total number of register entries on the December 2014 registers in England and Wales was **41,409,333**.

3.10 This is a **decrease of approximately 2%** in the size of the England and Wales electorate compared to that published in February/March 2014 following the final household canvass before the introduction of IER. This equates to approximately **920,000 fewer entries on the electoral registers**.²⁰

3.11 The electoral registers in England contained 39,162,877 entries (-2% compared to February 2014) while in Wales there were 2,246,456 electoral register entries in December 2014 (-4% compared to the March 2014 register).

3.12 It is important to note that each entry on the electoral register may not necessarily equate to an actual resident elector in an area, as the register may contain redundant and duplicate entries.²¹ For example, when an elector moves to a new address there will often be a lag before their register entry at their previous address is removed.

3.13 This means that while the overall drop in the number of entries on the register is around 920,000, a proportion of these entries may refer to individuals who were previously inaccurately registered at an old address but it does not imply that all inaccurate entries have been removed from the published December registers. Our latest study into the quality of the electoral registers in Great Britain found that 13% of entries on the February/March 2014 registers were inaccurate.²²

²⁰ The 2013 canvass was moved, to bring it closer to the start of the confirmation process, in order to improve the accuracy and completeness of the register sent for matching (and therefore to improve the match rate). This meant that the registers following what is referred to as the 2013 canvass were published in February and March 2014, and not December 2013.

²¹ Inaccurate register entries may relate to entries which have become redundant (for example, due to home movement), which are ineligible and have been included unintentionally, or which are fraudulent.

²² The Electoral Commission, [The quality of the 2014 electoral registers in Great Britain](#) (July 2014)

3.14 Between 2006 and 2012, there was a steady increase in the total number of register entries in England and Wales. The total registered electorate then fell slightly in February/March 2014 (-0.3%).

3.15 In our report on the conduct of the final household canvass we attributed this small decrease to the decline observed in the number of electors ‘**carried forward**’ on the conclusion of that canvass.

3.16 Carried forward electors are those who did not respond to the canvass but were kept on the registers. The decrease in register entries observed in February/March 2014 could be explained by the decision of some EROs not to exercise the carry forward facility in preparation for the transition to IER, given that electors who were carried forward could not be automatically transferred to the new IER register following confirmation.

Table 2: Total number of entries on the local government electoral registers in England and Wales: 2010 – 2014.

| Year | Total number of register entries | Variation from previous year |
|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| December 2010 | 41,780,278 | - |
| December 2011 | 42,147,967 | 0.9% |
| December 2012 | 42,438,371 | 0.7% |
| February/March 2014 ²³ | 42,330,279 | -0.3% |
| December 2014 | 41,409,333 | -2.2% |

Source: ONS Electoral statistics and Electoral Commission.

3.17 The decrease in the electorate is likely to be the result of the lack of comprehensive household canvassing in 2014. Many households were not directly canvassed in 2014 because household enquiry forms (HEFs) were only required to be sent to properties where no electors were registered, where an ERO believed there may still be other people living at the address who were not registered, where there were no entries on the register or where the ERO was not confident in who was resident at a particular address. This means that home-movers and new electors have not been captured as effectively as they would have been during a typical annual canvass where all households receive a form. This situation is unique to 2014 and full household canvassing will take place in 2015. This issue is explored further below.

²³ The 2013 canvass was moved, to bring it closer to the start of the confirmation process, in order to maximise the accuracy and completeness of the register sent for matching (and therefore to maximise the number of electors confirmed and moved automatically onto the new IER registers). This meant that the registers following what is referred to as the 2013 canvass were published in February and March 2014, and not December 2013.

Attainers

3.18 Attainers are those who are not yet old enough to vote but will turn 18 (i.e. attain voting age) within the twelve month period starting on the 1 December after they make their application.

3.19 Due to the data issues described above figures on attainers are available for 339 local authority registers. We have no data for 9 local authorities. Moreover, there are doubts over the accuracy of some of the figures as checks conducted using different data sources highlighted inconsistencies in the reported numbers of attainers.

3.20 Based on the data available (339 authorities), there were 266,144 attainers on the electoral registers in England and Wales in December 2014. When compared against the figures from the same authorities, this suggests that there has been a **reduction of approximately 33%** from February/March 2014, equating to roughly 132,000 fewer attainers. When the same rate is applied also to the 9 authorities for which we don't have data, the reduction in total number of attainers would be 134,000.

3.21 The fall in the number of attainers does not mean that those who were previously included on the register as attainers have been removed: attainers on the February/March 2014 register will, in many cases, have reached voting age since they were first included on the revised register and so will now be shown as ordinary electors. However, it does mean that new attainers are not being added at the same rate as in previous years.

Table 3: Total number of attainers on the local government electoral register in England and Wales: 2010 – 2014

| Year | Total number of register entries | Variation from previous year |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| December 2010 | 434,732 | - |
| December 2011 | 429,707 | -1.2% |
| December 2012 | 418,890 | -2.5% |
| December 2013 ²⁴ | 406,099 | -3.1% |
| December 2014 | 266,348* | -33.2% |

Figures for 2014 are based on 339/348 local authorities. The variation between 2013/2014 is based on the 339 authorities for which data is available in both years.

3.22 There is clearly a challenge for EROs and others to carry out further work to maximise the number of attainers on the electoral registers. The household

²⁴ ONS electoral statistics always refer to the December publication of the registers even when the actual publication is different – February and March 2014 in this case.

notification letter (HNL), which is discussed further below, will be a significant mechanism for increasing the number of attainers registered. In addition, EROs should be working directly with schools and colleges within their area as this will also be beneficial.

3.23 Further details of work being undertaken to reach attainers and to increase the registration levels of that group can be found in Chapter 4 below.

Postal voters

3.24 Any existing elector who was not registered individually by the time of publication of the revised register – whether as a consequence of having been confirmed or as a result of having completed a successful application to register individually – will have lost their absent vote entitlement. These electors remain on the register however and can still vote in person at their allocated polling station, but they will not be able to vote by post at the 7 May 2015 elections unless they apply to register individually and re-apply for a postal vote before 5pm on 21 April 2015.

3.25 Data provided by 268 EROs shows that the total number of electors registered for a postal vote in December 2014 was 4,942,109. This means that, based on the number of authorities for which data is available, there were 134,724 fewer postal voters than the total number of postal ballot papers issued for the 22 May 2014 European Parliament elections. This equal to **3% fewer registered postal voters**.

3.26 Based on a subsample of 192 local authorities, of those postal voters not confirmed through the CLR process - 7% of all postal voters on the registers at the time - 26% lost their postal vote because they failed to respond to invitation to re-register (this equates to approximately 119,000 postal voters)²⁵. The overall decrease is also likely to be due to some postal voters actively choosing to cancel their postal vote.²⁶

3.27 In order to ensure that those who want to vote by post or proxy are able to do so, EROs are required by law to write to all electors who have lost their absent vote entitlement on publication within one month of the publication of the revised registers, explaining what they need to do if they wish to continue to vote by post or by proxy and providing information on how to register individually. That activity has been happening between the publication of the December registers and the publication of this report.

3.28 Our guidance to EROs emphasises the importance of targeting this particular group in order to maximise the number of electors able to vote using their preferred method of voting at the scheduled polls in May 2015.

²⁵ As numbers of postal voters confirmed/not confirmed following the CLR process were not available for 22 authorities, this figure is calculated by applying CLR match rate and IER monitoring results on the number of postal ballot papers issued at the 2014 European Parliament elections.

²⁶ This information is available only from 192 authorities that provided this information. Other authorities either did not respond or could not provide reliable data via their EMS system.

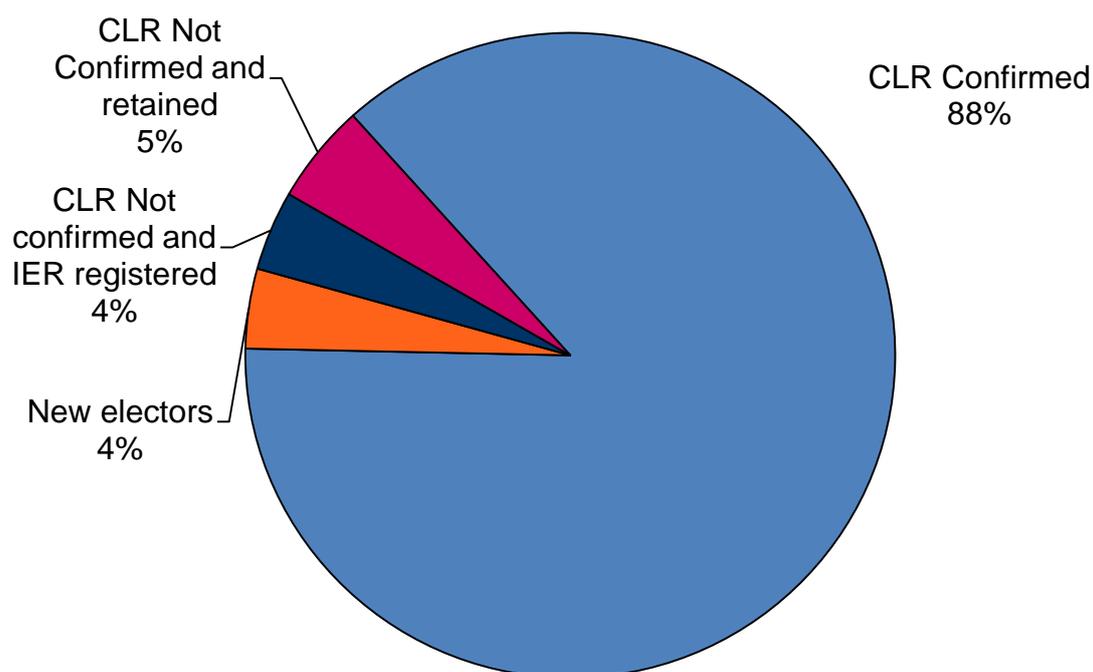
Overall composition of the registers

3.29 As set out in chapter 2, under the arrangements put in place for IER transition, the December 2014 registers should include the following electors:

- Electors who were included in the register before the transition and were confirmed through the CLR.
- Electors who were not confirmed through CLR but have responded to the write-out and successfully completed an IER application.
- New electors who registered under IER in respect of their new address.
- Electors who were not confirmed through the CLR, have not successfully completed an IER application and have been retained.²⁷

3.30 The figure below represents the composition of the December 2014 registers based on the above categories. The figures are based on data for the 158 local authorities able to provide it.²⁸ They are therefore to be treated as estimates.

Figure 2: Estimated composition of the December 2014 electoral registers based on the category of the IER transition.



Figures based on data from 158 local authorities in England and Wales, all using the same

²⁷ As explained in paragraphs 3.24, if these electors were absent voters, they are no longer entitled to vote by post or proxy unless they submit a successful application to register individually and an application to vote by post or proxy. They can, however, vote in person at their allocated polling station and will not be removed from the register because of the change to IER until the end of the transition, which will be in December 2016 unless there is a change in the law.

²⁸ 190 EROs could not provide this data either at all or in a reliable format due to various issues described in the report with the automated reporting function of their EMS supplier.

3.31 Nine electors out of ten (88%) on the December 2014 registers were transferred directly as their details were positively matched against DWP or locally held data through the CLR process.²⁹

3.32 The other three groups listed in the table above make up, almost equally, the remaining 12% of electoral register entries.

3.33 Approximately one in ten of the current register entries (9%) refer to individuals who were on the previous registers but were not confirmed through the CLR process:

- 4% of entries (approx. 1.6 million) relate to electors who were not confirmed but have since successfully applied to be registered individually;
- 5% of entries (approx. 2-2.5 million) relate to electors who were not confirmed and have not yet registered individually (these are the entries which would be removed at the end of transition).

3.34 Finally, 4% of entries are from electors who were not previously registered or have moved home and registered at their current address.

3.35 These figures vary quite significantly at local level: this is due to demographic characteristics of the population in the area (more information is available later in the chapter).

3.36 We further consider what these figures tell us about the progress of IER transition process below.

Local variation

3.37 While the total number of electoral register entries in England and Wales decreased by 2% against the February/March 2014 figures, the variation at local level ranges from -12% to +7%. It is likely that there is even greater variation by electoral ward although we do not have detailed data at this level.

3.38 Table 4 below presents these variations by number of authorities. It shows that most areas (268) recorded a loss in the total number of register entries from February/March 2014. Most of them (149) decreased by a range between 1% and 2% and three authorities between 10% and 12%.

3.39 Forty-seven authorities saw almost no variation (0%) while 33 electoral registers increased in size.

Table 4: Total number of electoral register entries - Variations as percentage of February/March 2014 register

²⁹ This figure, like the other ones presented in this section, are estimated and based on 153 local authorities. The overall percentage of electors confirmed after the CLR process was 87%. Considered the overall reduction of register entries, and even though some electors confirmed may have moved and updated their registration status, the percentage of electors CLR confirmed makes up a larger portion of the composition of the current registers.

| Difference in total number of register entries - December 2014 register against February/March 2014 register | Number of local authorities in this range |
|---|--|
| Between +5% and +7% | 2 |
| Between +3% and +4% | 4 |
| Between +1% and +2% | 27 |
| No variation (0%) | 47 |
| Between -1% and -2% | 149 |
| Between -3% and -4% | 77 |
| Between -5% and -7% | 32 |
| Between -8% and -10% | 7 |
| Between -11% and -12% | 3 |

3.40 Tables 5 and 6 below show those authorities that reported the largest decrease or increase in number of register entries as percentage of the February/March 2014 registers. At the opposite ends of the range are Ceredigion (-12%), Cardiff (-11%) and Oxford (-11%) where the register has reduced in size while in East Devon (+5%) and Wellingborough (+7%) there has been an increase.

Table 5: Local authorities' register with largest percentage decrease in number of entries compared to the February/March 2014 register

| Local authority | Variation against Feb/Mar 2014 | Total number of entries against Feb/Mar 2014 |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Ceredigion | -12% | -6,988 |
| Cardiff | -11% | -28,462 |
| Oxford | -11% | -12,093 |
| Southampton | -10% | -17,119 |
| Newcastle upon Tyne | -9% | -17,405 |
| Haringey | -9% | -15,851 |
| Charnwood | -9% | -12,332 |
| Westminster | -8% | -10,659 |

| | | |
|-----------|-----|--------|
| Blackpool | -8% | -9,396 |
| Reading | -8% | -9,226 |

Table 6: Local authorities' register with largest percentage increase in number of entries compared to the February/March 2014 register

| Local authority | Variation against Feb/Mar 2014 | Total number of entries against Feb/Mar 2014 |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Wellingborough | 7% | +3,420 |
| East Devon | 5% | +4,665 |
| Tonbridge and Malling | 4% | +3,825 |
| Allerdale | 3% | +1,787 |
| Arun | 3% | +2,970 |
| Ashfield | 3% | +2,724 |
| Cornwall | 2% | +6,625 |
| Shropshire | 2% | +5,303 |
| Barnet | 2% | +4,671 |
| Northampton | 2% | +3,007 |

3.41 These variations are likely to be due to a combination of demographic factors and electoral registration practices which are explored in more detail below. For example, the lack of comprehensive household canvassing will have had more of an impact in areas with larger population churn – such as large cities – than it will in places which experience less home movement. In addition, some of the local differences may be explained by a combination of the following:

- **Timing of register publication** – anecdotal feedback from many EROs suggests that many were at different points in their processes at the point when they published the December registers. For example, some areas had processed a large number of removals before publication while others were planning to do so in early 2015.
- **Use of the carry forward** – any register entry which had previously been carried forward onto the February or March 2014 register (and had not therefore responded to the last household canvass) could not be retained on the registers published in December, unless the elector had responded to the write out during 2014. It is clear that some, but not all, of the areas showing larger decreases in electorate are those where a larger proportion of their February/March 2014 register were carried forward records, which they have now been required to delete. Three authorities in Table 5 above – Charnwood,

Westminster and Blackpool – had approximately 9-10% of carried forward electors on their February/March 2014 register. These entries were less likely to be accurate than most of the register and – unless these electors responded to the ITR letter or were found on a HEF form – had to be removed before December 2014.

- **Specific challenges such as student registration** – there is evidence that some areas with large concentrations of students have recorded larger than average decreases in their electorate, although this is not universal. In places like Ceredigion, for example, we know that the drop in the registered electorate is primarily attributable to issues encountered with student registration. Our research has consistently shown that students are a typically under-registered group and the change to the registration system has created new challenges in getting students registered at their term-time-address. While institutions can still provide details of students to EROs, they can no longer use these to register students as a block – something that some, but by no means all, EROs did previously – although EROs can use this information to invite students to register. For more details on students see paras 3.59-3.69 below.
- **Use of house to house enquiries** – for example, in East Devon there has been an increase in the number of entries on the register. The ERO has attributed this to the success of making visits to non-responding properties and individuals, which were carried out across the area in 2014 for the first time since 2010.

3.42 The percentage increases and decreases are useful to illustrate variation but mask examples where a large number of entries, which represent a smaller proportion of a large register, have been removed. Table 7 below sets out the twenty areas with the largest absolute decrease in electorate. When considering how the picture in relation to the overall electorate relates to local level changes it is worth noting that the decreases in these twenty authorities account for nearly one-third of the overall net decrease in England and Wales.

Table 7: Local authorities' register with largest decrease in the total number of entries compared to the February/March 2014 register

| Local authority | Tot. number of entries | Number of entries lost | Variation against Feb/Mar 2014 |
|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Cardiff | 234,476 | -28,462 | -11% |
| Durham | 376,934 | -26,808 | -7% |
| Liverpool | 304,907 | -20,218 | -6% |
| Bradford | 331,494 | -19,388 | -6% |
| Newcastle upon Tyne | 184,401 | -17,405 | -9% |
| Southampton | 160,076 | -17,119 | -10% |

| | | | |
|--------------------|---------|---------|------|
| Cheshire East | 272,909 | -16,788 | -6% |
| Haringey | 159,360 | -15,851 | -9% |
| Brighton and Hove | 192,325 | -14,842 | -7% |
| Nottingham | 191,363 | -12,999 | -6% |
| Manchester | 368,265 | -12,665 | -3% |
| Kirklees | 300,627 | -12,606 | -4% |
| Leicester | 224,750 | -12,389 | -5% |
| Charnwood | 123,786 | -12,332 | -9% |
| Oxford | 99,730 | -12,093 | -11% |
| Wigan | 234,261 | -11,649 | -5% |
| Doncaster | 210,826 | -11,165 | -5% |
| Kingston upon Hull | 180,740 | -10,757 | -6% |
| Westminster | 127,541 | -10,659 | -8% |
| York | 146,322 | -10,494 | -7% |

Attainer and postal voter variation

Attainers

3.43 Figures show that 318 out of 339 authorities recorded a decrease in the total number of attainers compared to the February/March 2014 registers. 25 local authorities reported having lost more than 90% of attainer entries while one authority reported an increase of 207%. As noted previously, the accuracy of some of these figures is questionable, and we are working with EMS suppliers to explore this in more detail, however, in general, they give an indication of how the picture varies across England and Wales.

Table 8: Total number of attainers - Variations as percentage of February/March 2014 register

| Difference in total number of attainers - December 2014 register against February/March 2014 register | Number of local authorities in this range |
|--|--|
| Between +93% and +207% | 2 |
| Between +12% and +25% | 5 |

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Between +5% and +10% | 5 |
| Between +1% and +3% | 7 |
| No variation (0%) | 2 |
| Between -1% and -3% | 11 |
| Between -4% and -9% | 14 |
| Between -10% and -24% | 121 |
| Between -25% and -49% | 103 |
| Between -51% and -74% | 22 |
| Between -76% and -89% | 22 |
| Between -90% and -98% | 25 |

3.44 As with the headline electorate, the drop in the number of registered attainers is likely to be primarily due to the lack of full household canvass activity in 2014. As set out above, household enquiry forms (HEFs) were only required to be sent to specific properties and the opportunities for EROs to identify new attainers and invite them to register to vote were therefore limited.

Postal voters

3.45 There was also some variation between local authority areas in the changes in the number of registered postal voters.

- 219 authorities reported a decrease between -1% and -12%,
- 15 authorities recorded no change (0%).
- 34 authorities an increase between +1% and +12%

Explaining the electorate changes

3.46 As explained in para 3.3-3.8, several issues were experienced by local authorities in generating reliable electoral register data due to problems with their EMS suppliers.

3.47 As a result, the analysis available in this section is based on subset of data from groups of local authorities and the figures are therefore to be treated as estimates. The number of authorities on which these figures are based is noted in tables, charts, footnotes and main body of the text together with other caveats.

Additions to and deletions from the registers

3.48 The data (for 2014) in this section is based on returns from 251 local authorities. Although they cover almost three quarters of all authorities in England

and Wales, these may not be representative of the overall population and figures are to be treated as estimates. In some cases, historic data for these authorities was not available.

3.49 Table 9 provides a useful insight into how the 2014 write-out results compares with the 2012 and 2013 canvasses and corroborates the analysis above on the impact of the lack of comprehensive household canvassing in 2014.^{30 31}

3.50 The data collected for 2014 indicates that the levels of additions and deletions were significantly smaller following the 2014 write-out activity compared to previous canvasses. Considered against the previous household canvass, additions as percentage of the new register decreased by 9% and deletions as percentage of the old register by 7.2%. While both have reduced, importantly in 2014 the level of additions is smaller than the level of deletions. The reverse is usually the case and this is the simplest reason for the decline in the total electorate.

Table 9: Additions and deletions: 2012-2014.

| Canvass/ Write-out | Additions as % of the new register | Deletions as % of previous year register |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| Sep – Dec 2012 | 10.1% | 9.5% |
| Oct – Feb/Mar 2014 | 12.3% | 11.8% |
| Jun – Dec 2014 | 3.3% | 4.6% |

Figures in the table are not based on the same sample of authorities. 2012 and 2013 data cover more than the 251 authorities on which the 2014 estimates are based on.

3.51 Local authority areas with more mobile populations have historically reported (in previous Commission data collection exercises) a relatively high level of changes to the registers – additions and deletions – following the annual canvass. This was simply because their populations changed more between canvasses and households were therefore more likely to make a change to the register, using the canvass form when they received it.

3.52 The lack of a comprehensive canvass in 2014 has therefore inevitably affected more metropolitan areas and authorities with a higher concentration of students (where a large number of people change address within a similar timeframe each year)

3.53 The table below presents the ten authorities that saw the largest percentage decrease in their additions to the register (as percentage of the December register): five in ten are London boroughs while the other ones are cities, some with high

³⁰ The data here covers slightly different periods – September to December in 2012, October 2013 to February/March 2014 and June to December in 2014 – however we do not believe that this invalidates the analysis and the conclusions reached.

³¹ The publication of the registers after the 2013 canvass was delayed. The registers were published in February/March 2014 instead of December 2013.

concentration of students. These authorities also saw a considerable reduction in level of records deleted: as people move home, their old register entries should be removed from the register but the data shows that this did not happen in 2014 to the same extent as in previous years.

Table 10: Additions and deletions: changes to the December 2014 register against changes to the February/March 2014 registers

| Local authority | Register entries (Dec 2014) | Additions 2013 – 2014 | Deletions 2013 - 2014 |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Coventry | 223,654 | -21% | -14% |
| Cambridge | 91,230 | -21% | -20% |
| Tower Hamlets | 172,515 | -21% | -10% |
| City of London | 6,604 | -20% | -13% |
| Southampton | 160,076 | -18% | -16% |
| Wandsworth | 223,562 | -17% | -11% |
| Newcastle-under-Lyme | 94,494 | -17% | N/A |
| Ceredigion | 50,568 | -16% | -6% |
| Camden | 146,122 | -16% | N/A |
| Leeds | 533,653 | -16% | -13% |

The ten authorities in the table above are the ones that reported the largest decrease in additions as percentage from previous year.

3.54 The reduction in the number of attainers is also clearly linked to the decrease in levels of additions. In 2013, even though attainers accounted for only 1% of all register entries, they made up 8% of all additions to the registers following the canvass.

Impact on accuracy and completeness³²

3.55 The change to levels of additions and deletions has had some impact on the overall size of the electorate as set out above. However, while fewer additions and deletions do not necessarily result in fewer register entries (if, for example, the

³² We use two measures to evaluate the quality of the registers: accuracy and completeness. Full definitions can be found here:

http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/169889/Completeness-and-accuracy-of-the-2014-electoral-registers-in-Great-Britain.pdf

In February/March 2014, these were estimated to be around 87% and 85% respectively in February/March 2014).

reduction of addition and deletions is equivalent), this change will have had a negative impact on the accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers (which were estimated to be around 87% and 85% respectively in February/March 2014).³³

3.56 When someone with a register entry moves house they need to re-register at their new address in order to be considered ‘complete’ (under the Commission’s definition) and their previous register entry needs to be deleted (because it is now inaccurate). This did not happen to the same extent in 2014 as it has done following previous canvasses.

3.57 We have not measured the accuracy and completeness of these registers (our next assessment is currently planned for the first registers published following the end of transition) and cannot therefore say specifically what the level of accuracy and completeness was for the December 2014 registers. However, logically, both measures must have decreased as a result of the lower levels of additions and deletions. It is likely that completeness has declined more than accuracy because many of the register entries which have been removed will have been inaccurate (many were carried forward records) but we cannot quantify this. There will also be significant local variation for many of the demographic and other reasons discussed previously.

3.58 Registration activity taking place in early 2015 – including sending a letter to all households to help pick up those who have recently moved within or into a registration area, and to give residents an opportunity to check their details on the register are accurate – will be crucial in addressing the likely decline in accuracy and completeness ahead of May 2015 elections. Further information on this work is set out in Chapter 4.

Student registration

3.59 As set out above, the data we have received and anecdotal feedback from EROs suggest there has been a specific challenge in registering students at their term time address. Students are able to choose whether to register to vote at their home address, term-time address or both, but can only vote once at a UK Parliamentary election.

3.60 While our research has consistently shown that students are a typically under-registered group, the fact that EROs can no longer use information provided by institutions to register students as a block – something that some, but by no means all, EROs did previously.³⁴ Although they can use this information to invite students to register.

³³ The Electoral Commission, The quality of the 2014 electoral registers in Great Britain (July 2014): http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/169889/Completeness-and-accuracy-of-the-2014-electoral-registers-in-Great-Britain.pdf

³⁴ Our research studies on electoral registration can be accessed at: <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/our-work/our-research/electoral-registration-research>

3.61 Table 11 below shows the change in the electorate for the local authorities with the largest student population (full time students as a proportion of their usual 16+ resident population).

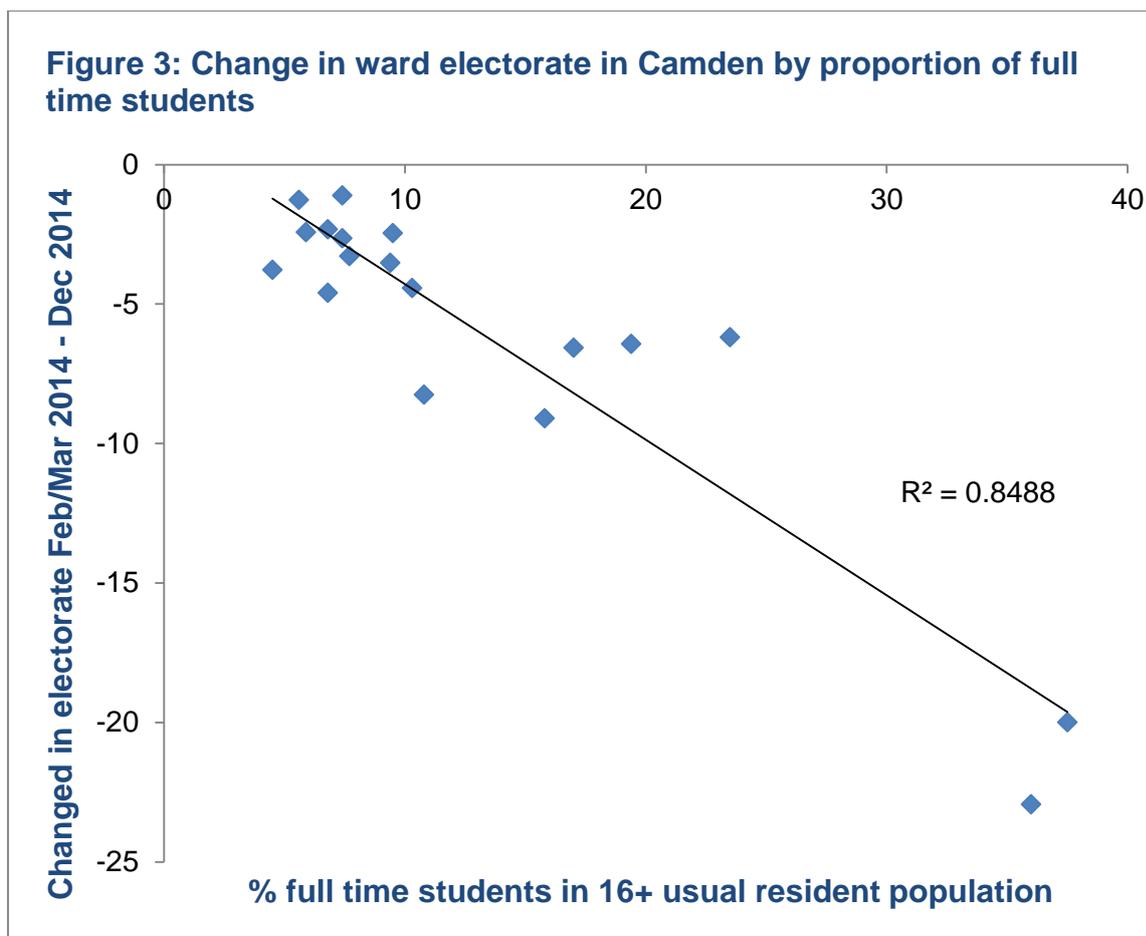
Table 11: Changes to electoral register entries in December 2014 against February/March 2014 for the ten local authorities with the highest concentration of students.

| Local authority | Variation against Feb/Mar 2014 | Total number of entries against Feb/Mar 2014 |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Cambridge | -2% | -1,872 |
| Canterbury | 0% | -396 |
| Ceredigion | -12% | -6,988 |
| Exeter | -7% | -6,198 |
| Manchester | -3% | -12,665 |
| Newham | -1% | -1,071 |
| Nottingham | -6% | -12,999 |
| Oxford | -11% | -12,093 |
| Southampton | -10% | -17,119 |
| Swansea | -5% | -10,144 |

3.62 Most of these areas show larger than average decreases in their electorates which suggest some link between student numbers and falling electorates. Although it is important to note that some of these areas show either no decrease or a level in line with the England and Wales average. In addition, these are not simply student areas, several are also large metropolitan areas that may have seen decreases for other reasons (see above on additions and deletions).

3.63 However, in some cases we have also received ward level electorates from EROs and this does indicate a clearer link between students and declining levels of registration. In Camden for example there has been an overall decrease in the electorate of approximately 6% but in the two wards in Camden where students make up over one-third of the population there were decreases of 20% and 23%. The chart below illustrates the relationship between the proportion of students and the change in the electorate.

Figure 3: Change in ward electorate in Camden by proportion of full time students



3.64 It is worth noting that these changes in levels of student registration do not necessarily translate into a decline in the overall completeness of the registers. As explained in para 3.59, students can be registered at their home or term time addresses. In terms of the Commission’s definition of completeness, a student registered at home and not at their term time address (or vice versa) would count as ‘complete’.

Explaining variation in student registration

3.65 From our work to monitor and support EROs it is clear that in many areas significant work has already been undertaken to promote registration with students.

3.66 In Sheffield, for example, where the drop in numbers has been less pronounced than in some other areas with a high student population, they have undertaken work to tie in electoral registration with the student enrolment process. When students register with the university, they are also given the opportunity to indicate whether they would like to be included on the Sheffield electoral register, and the information required for a registration application is then securely transferred to Sheffield City Council who can process this in the same way as any other application. Lancaster have undertaken similar work to tie in registration to enrolment, and have also used their Lancaster smartphone app, which is used by around 75% of students, to raise awareness of voter registration. These examples are in the process of being evaluated by the local authorities, with a view to enabling other local authorities to benefit from them by the start of the next academic year.

3.67 It is also important to keep in mind that the timing of the transitional activity has meant that, in many areas, work to invite students to register at their term-time address and for applications to be made subsequent to this had not all been concluded by the time of the publication of the revised registers. The outcomes of this work will therefore not have been reflected in full on the December registers.

3.68 Additionally, we have heard anecdotal feedback from some EROs that some students are actively choosing not to register at their term-time address, possibly because they are already registered at their home address and are choosing to vote there; previously, block registration by the university authorities meant that they would be registered at their term time address even if they were also registered (and intended to cast their vote) at their home address.

3.69 While EROs in those areas with large student populations have been - and are continuing - making concerted efforts to ensure that students register individually, there is still more that can be done to continue to target students at their term-time addresses in the run-up to the May 2015 polls. Chapter 4 of our report contains more information on the activities that EROs, the Commission and others are carrying out to maximise levels of student registration.

Entries retained on the registers

3.70 At the end of the transition to IER any register entry which has not either been confirmed or registered under IER (by proving personal identifiers) will be removed from the registers.

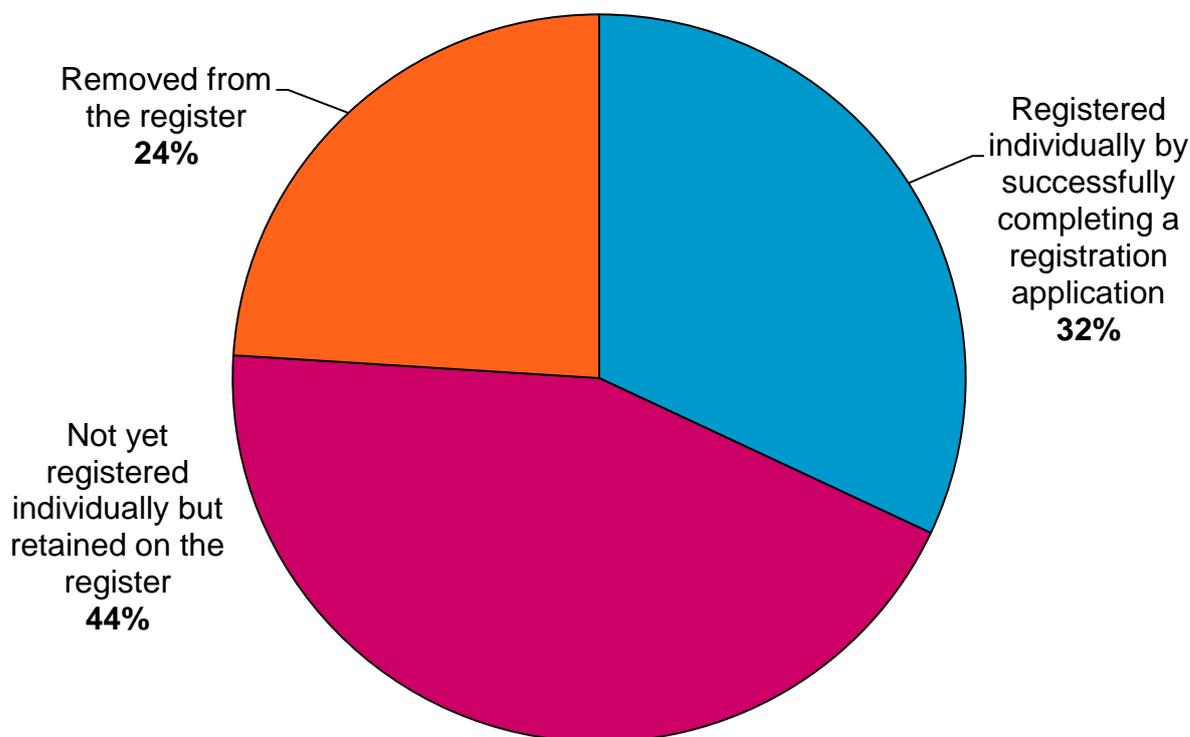
3.71 At the end of the CLR process, 13% of entries (approximately 5.5 million) on the registers at that time were not positively matched with either DWP or locally-held data and could not therefore be directly transferred to the new IER register. As part of the write-out in 2014, these individuals were written to and invited to register under IER by providing personal identifiers (NINO and date of birth).

3.72 Broadly, these entries, as of 1 December 2014, could be categorised as follows:

- The elector had responded to the ITR, providing identifiers and re-registered under IER;
- The ERO had at least two pieces of evidence that the entry on the register was not accurate (i.e.: the elector no longer lived at the property) and removed the elector;
- The elector had not yet responded to the ITR and is being retained on the register under the carry forward arrangements in place during the transition to IER.

3.73 The table below provides a breakdown of the status of electors not confirmed on the 1 December 2014. These figures are based on data provided by 158 local authorities and are to be treated as indicative estimates.

Figure 4: Electors not confirmed after the CLR process - Their status as at 1 December 2014.



Figures based on data from 158 local authorities in England and Wales, all using the same EMS system.

3.74 The data suggests that approximately:

- one in three electors who were not confirmed have since been registered individually (either as a result of successfully completing a registration application or having gone through the exceptions or attestation route)
- one in four have been removed because the ERO had two proofs of evidence that the elector was no longer living at that address (or because the entry had been carried forward at the conclusion of the 2013 canvass and so was required by law to be removed).
- One in two are being retained because he/she has either not responded to the invitation to register or because the ERO has not enough evidence that the elector has moved.

3.75 As set out in para 3.29-3.36, electors in this last category (retained) are estimated to make up approximately 5% of entries (approximately 2-2.5 million) on the December 2014 registers. As with the other findings in this chapter, this level varies across the country from roughly 1% to 20% although it is important to note that this range is based on the authorities for which we have received data.

3.76 In metropolitan areas it is significantly higher than in areas with a more stable population. In fifteen areas the percentage of electors retained exceeds 10%. Eleven

of these are London boroughs – for example, 20% of register entries in Hackney are made up of electors retained.

3.77 Some of these entries may still relate to electors resident at that address but in areas with a younger, mobile population many of these entries are likely to be inaccurate, referring to a previous occupant at an address.

3.78 We will continue to monitor this group of electors in order to inform our recommendation on when the transition should end. As noted above, these figures are indicative estimates based on 158 local authority areas. We are working with EMS suppliers and Cabinet Office to improve the robustness of the available data in this area for future reports.

Conclusions

3.79 The data presented in this chapter have shown that the December 2014 electoral registers decreased by 2% when compared to the ones published in February/March 2014. This reduction corresponds to approximately 920,000 fewer entries on the register. However, this does not necessarily mean there are 920,000 electors missing from the register as some of these entries were likely to be inaccurate. The December 2014 registers show a more significant reduction in the number of attainers.

3.80 The reduction in numbers is likely to have been caused by a combination of factors with the main reason being the lack of comprehensive household canvassing in 2014. The impact of this is seen in the lower levels of both additions to and deletions from the registers which has caused an overall decrease in entries because additions have fallen by more than deletions. Areas with a younger and more mobile population have been most affected by the absence of a full canvass. Areas with higher proportions of students also saw large drops in their electorate most likely because under IER EROs can no longer register students as a block.

3.81 The overall size of the electorate did not decrease as sharply as the levels of additions to and deletions from the registers because these changes were similar and therefore balanced each other to some extent. However, this will have had a negative impact on the accuracy and completeness of the registers.

3.82 Approximately 2-2.5 million electors on the December 2014 register to electors who were not confirmed after the CLR and have not responded to the invitation to register under IER (or have not completed a successful application). This equates to 5% of all register entries and 44% of electors not confirmed at the end of the CLR process.

3.83 Registration activity that has been taking place in early 2015 – including sending a letter to all households to help pick up those who have recently moved within or into a registration area, and to give residents an opportunity to check their details on the register are accurate – will be crucial in addressing the likely decline in accuracy and completeness ahead of May 2015 elections. Further information on this work is set out in Chapter 4.

4 Addressing the issues identified by our analysis of the 1 December registers

4.1 The 1 December 2014 registers provided a snapshot of how the registers stood at that date, but work has and will continue to be done to ensure as many people as possible are registered to vote in respect of the correct address in advance of the May 2015 polls. While no-one on the 1 December registers will be removed from the register before the May 2015 elections unless the ERO is no longer satisfied that they are entitled to remain registered at that address, more needs to be done to target those not yet included on the register at their current address.

4.2 As detailed in our analysis in Chapter 3, the December registers have highlighted a drop in the overall number of entries on the registers, and in the overall number of additions and deletions to the registers, as well as specific issues in relation to registration levels of attainments and students.

4.3 EROs, the Commission and many others have already undertaken significant activity since publication of the revised registers - with National Voter Registration Day on 5 February a particularly good example of concerted effort to encourage registration by those not currently included on the register at their current address.

4.4 However, more work remains to target those not currently registered, particularly taking into account the findings of our research which has previously identified that 7.5 million individuals are unregistered.

4.5 Since 1 December 2014, around 2 million registration applications have been made, with 80% of these having been made online. While this is clearly positive, it doesn't necessarily reflect an increase of that level in the number of entries on the electoral register: for example, some of these will be duplicate applications from those already included on the electoral register, and others will be from movers who are applying to be added at one address but will consequently be removed from the register at their previous address.

4.6 It is vital that everyone with an interest in democracy does all they can to help to maximise the number of people on the register at the correct address by the time of the registration deadline for the May polls on 20 April 2015. This chapter provides information on some of the work being undertaken by EROs, the Commission and a wide range of other organisations to meet the challenges highlighted in our analysis and to promote registration more generally in order to ensure that as many people as possible are able to participate in the 7 May 2015 elections.

Household notification letters

4.7 To help to address the issues identified by the December register data and in particular the lack of comprehensive household canvass activity in autumn 2014, we have strongly recommended that EROs undertake an audit of their registers and **write to all households** – regardless of whether or not they currently have any registered electors - in early 2015, in good time before the May polls.

4.8 This recommendation builds on our September 2013 guidance for EROs in which we highlighted the importance of EROs in England and Wales undertaking an audit of their registers in early 2015 between publication of the 2014 revised register and the May 2015 polls.

4.9 In December 2014, we provided detailed guidance to support EROs in preparing for and carrying out this registration activity and a template letter for this purpose. This ‘household notification letter’ (HNL) shows who is registered to vote at that particular address and prompts anyone who is not yet registered to do so.

4.10 This approach has a number of clear benefits, all of which can contribute to helping EROs to ensure that their registers are as accurate and complete as possible ahead of the May polls:

- Prompting those who have not yet registered – including 16 and 17 year olds - to do so
- Helping to pick up those who have recently moved within or into the registration area
- Giving residents an opportunity to check their details on the register are accurate

4.11 The Commission welcomed Cabinet Office’s January 2015 announcement that £6.8 million would be made available to EROs to support activity to maximise registration - many EROs have used their share to fund sending out HNLs.

4.12 All EROs in England and Wales have confirmed that they have or will be carrying out HNL activity or other comprehensive activity which seeks to address the issues identified by our analysis of the 1 December registers data. Early feedback from EROs where the activity is now well advanced has indicated that the HNL has had a positive impact on boosting the number of registration applications received.

National Voter Registration Day

4.13 National Voter Registration Day (NVRD) took place on Thursday 5 February 2015 and was supported by a wide range of organisations and individuals across the UK, including the Commission.

4.14 NVRD saw a range of events taking place to promote voter registration. This included registration drives, such as the start of the Operation Black Vote bus tour which is being supported by the Commission and which is aiming to help get as

many BME voters registered as possible. There was also significant activity on social media to direct people to the online registration site, including the Commission's partnership with Facebook, which saw information about registration placed in the newsfeeds of millions of Facebook users.

4.15 To support NVRD, the Commission also created a number of resources – including posters, web buttons and banners – for EROs and other organisations to use in their promotional work on this day to highlight the need to register to vote. Our social media activity on 5 February highlighted the availability of online registration, which has helped to make the registration process more accessible for everyone.

4.16 Cabinet Office reported that 156,000 online applications³⁵ were received on 5 February - an increase of 131,000 on the same day the previous week. While this is clearly positive, it doesn't necessarily reflect an increase of that level on the number of entries on the electoral register: for example, some of these will be duplicate applications from those already included on the electoral register, and others will be from movers who are applying to be added at one address but will consequently be removed from the register at their previous address.

4.17 A significant percentage of the online registration applications made on NVRD came through the Commission's online activity, including our partnership with Facebook, which was the single highest referrer to the online registration site on the day.

4.18 In addition to NVRD, Overseas Voter Registration Day also took place on 5 February. This was coordinated by the Commission and had the objective of informing as many UK citizens living overseas as possible that they may be eligible to register to vote in the UK Parliamentary General Election on 7 May 2015 and encouraging them to apply to register online. In addition to sharing a suite of resources for our partners with overseas reach to use, OVRD activity included issuing targeted press releases, a dedicated social media campaign and local radio interviews. This activity was supported by our main overseas campaign online which was launched on 2 February and includes advertising in the top twenty most popular destination countries for British expats. OVRD was also supported by activity by the Cabinet Office and Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

4.19 Both NVRD and OVRD generated significant media coverage, both domestically and overseas. This coverage and the activity that took place on the day clearly helped to encourage online registration applications. They also provided increased visibility of the work that a range of organisations – including those working in partnership with the Commission - are doing to get people registered, encouraging others to get involved. We welcome the success that this initiative has had since its initial launch by Bite the Ballot in 2014.

³⁵ Cabinet Office figures show that approximately 10,000 applications were also made via paper application forms on 5 February 2014.

Action to target students

4.20 The December registers illustrate a specific challenge in registering students at their term-time address, adding to our previous research which had already identified students as a typically under-registered group.

4.21 All EROs have engagement strategies in place and those with a significant student population have specific activities planned to target students in their area. Our work to monitor and support ERO's to date has shown that significant work has already been undertaken to promote student registration. For example, some practical steps taken to encourage students to register to date include:

- In Sheffield, an agreement was reached with local universities for the voter registration process to be incorporated into the student enrolment process.
- In Lancaster, voter registration has also been incorporated into the student enrolment process, and registration information has also been included in a smartphone app used by students in Lancaster University.

4.22 Additionally, to help meet the challenges highlighted by the December registers, the NUS, the Association of Colleges (AoC), Universities UK, the Academic Registrars Council (ARC), the Association of Heads of University Administration (AHUA), GuildHE and the Commission have worked together to ask for the support of all Vice Chancellors and College Principals across England, Scotland and Wales in undertaking a few simple actions to let their students know about the importance of registering to vote, and reminding them that they can now register to vote online. These representatives have been asked to arrange for their institutions to email all their students with details of how to register, to hold registration drives in tutorials or lectures and to work with their local students' unions to share information about registering. These activities will complement the work of local EROs to target students and young people that will continue right up to the registration deadline.

4.23 To further support the work currently underway to encourage registration by students and young people, the Commission is working in partnership with Facebook. Following on from the activity that took place on NVRD, Facebook users are also now able to add a 'Registered to Vote' Life Event to their Facebook Timeline which can then be shared with their contacts on Facebook to further increase awareness levels in young people. This is particularly important in relation to reaching students as they are one of the key demographics who interact with Facebook on a daily basis.

4.24 Additionally, to address the challenges highlighted by our analysis of the December registers, we have increased our planned public awareness activity targeting students and young people as part of our May 2015 campaign.

4.25 This includes the production of two additional strands of advertising to increase understanding amongst students that they need to be registered to vote at their term-time address in order to be able to vote in their university constituency and also to boost understanding amongst those who have just turned 18 or will do so before the May 2015 polls that they need to take positive action to ensure that they

are registered. Further information on the Commission's public awareness campaign can be found below.

Partnership working

4.26 . As part of our public awareness activity to support the write-out process in 2014, we began forming partnerships with a wide range of corporate, public and voluntary organisations to use their established communication channels to help extend our reach into groups we have identified as being typically under-registered. [A full list of our partners is available on our website.](#)

4.27 Partnership working is important to help build on, promote and complement the work that is already going on to ensure that as many people as possible are registered to vote. We are working with organisations such as the National Union of Students (NUS), Citizens Advice Bureau, Operation Black Vote, the Learner Driving Centre and Mencap to draw on their experiences and target messages at various groups and encourage voter registration amongst their key target audiences, which include groups who are typically under-registered. Such organisations have far greater reach into under registered groups than any single national body could achieve by itself, while they also help to explain the message in a way that resonates with voters in different contexts.

4.28 Our partners are undertaking various pieces of work to help promote voter registration, which we have also supported and promoted. For example: Mencap have produced an Easy Read guide specifically designed to help those people with learning disabilities engage in the democratic process; Red Driving School have provided wallet cards with information about how to get registered to their learner drivers; and organisations such as Which? and Nationwide have included information about registration through online channels that home movers are likely to visit.

4.29 In December, we created a partnership pack filled with resources that our partners and other organisations could use to run their own registration drives. We have also produced infographics for use across social media platforms which target the home-mover and renter and young people audiences, as well as posters, web banners and web buttons with tailored messages for each group. Working with NUS and the Association of Colleges, we have also produced toolkits for use by student unions and colleges to help get students registered.

4.30 We will continue to support organisations working to promote registration and to look at what more both we and EROs at a local level can do with other organisations to extend our reach into key target groups, such as young people, BME communities, students, home-movers and those living in private rented accommodation. As part of this, we will continue to issue fortnightly e-bulletins to our partners to share ideas and update them on the progress of our campaign.

The Commission's public awareness campaign

4.31 The Commission will be running a national public awareness campaign with the objective of encouraging people to register to vote ahead of the 20 April deadline.

4.32 To support EROs' HNL activity, we commenced online search advertising - involving buying registration related phrases and words such as 'registration letter' on search engines such as Google - on 12 January. Our main targeted online campaign then began on 2 February to tie-in with work to promote NVRD and OVRD, and this will continue until the registration deadline.

4.33 The national public awareness campaign for the May 2015 elections will be launched on 16 March 2015 in Great Britain and will include television and catch-up TV advertising, as well as the online advertising mentioned above.

4.34 The campaign has been designed to reach all adults, but with a focus on groups that our research and our analysis of the December registers has identified as being less likely to be registered to vote, such as students and young people, those who have recently moved home, people who rent their home, and people from some black and minority ethnic communities. This involves ensuring that our advert is shown on certain TV stations at specific times to capture our target audiences and that our digital advertising appears on a range of websites that are known to be accessed by members of these target groups.

4.35 Our public awareness work also includes providing template resources and tools for EROs and ROs to use locally as part of their public engagement work, and using as many other media opportunities as we can to boost the message nationally.

4.36 To assess the performance of our campaign we will undertake independent tracking research before the start and towards the end of the campaign period. To measure the amount of additional entries on the electoral registers added during our campaign, we will compile data from completed applications and cross-reference this with data we will collect from EROs after the May polls.

5 After the May 2015 polls: what happens next?

5.1 The registration deadline for the May 2015 polls on 20 April is a key staging point in the transition to IER in Great Britain, and is vitally important for participation at the May polls. It is not, however, the end of the process. This chapter sets out the key decisions and activities that will follow over the summer and autumn of 2015, and also considers further improvements that could be made to the registration system beyond the transition to IER.

Decision on ending the transition to IER

5.2 Under the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013, the transition to IER is due to end in December 2016. At this point, any entries for electors who have not either been confirmed or successfully made individual applications to register to vote will be removed from the registers. However, the legislation also allows Ministers to make an Order (during a specified three-month period between June and August 2015) which would end the transition 12 months earlier, in December 2015.³⁶ A statutory instrument containing such an Order would not need to be debated by Parliament, but could be annulled by a resolution of either House of Parliament.

5.3 The current government has indicated publicly on several occasions that its intention is to make an Order to bring forward the end of the transition to IER to December 2015. We will report in June 2015 on our assessment of the transition up to the May 2015 elections, in order to inform Ministers' and Parliament's consideration of whether to end the transition to IER in December 2015 or December 2016. In order to ensure our assessment is as up-to-date as possible we intend to collect local authority-level data from all EROs immediately after the last date for registering to vote ahead of the May 2015 elections.

5.4 Our assessment will seek to consider the potential impact of ending the transition to IER in December 2015. The Electoral Commission's goal is that the electoral registers support and enable effective participation in elections and referendums by all those who want to take part. A significant number and range of polls are scheduled to take place across Great Britain in May 2016: elections to the Scottish Parliament; the National Assembly for Wales; the Mayor of London and London Assembly; Police and Crime Commissioners across England (except in London) and Wales; and local government elections in many areas of England. The revised registers to be published in December 2015 will form the basis of the registers to be used for these polls in May 2016.

³⁶ Paragraph 28, Schedule 5 to the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013.

5.5 We also recognise, however, that electoral registers will continue to be used for other purposes, in particular determining the distribution and boundaries of parliamentary constituencies and other electoral areas. The registers published in December 2015 will be used as the basis for calculating the size of constituencies as part of the next scheduled UK Parliamentary boundary review. Our analysis of the registers in place for the May 2015 polls will therefore be of interest in that context - although this will not be its primary focus – and it is for governments and legislatures to consider how best to use electoral data in any future boundary revision exercises. We expect that the current inquiry by the Political and Constitutional Reform Select Committee on the redrawing of Parliamentary boundaries will consider these issues in more detail, and we look forward to its conclusions and recommendations.

5.6 Given the significance and potential impact of a decision to end the transition to IER a year earlier than currently provided for in legislation, our June 2015 report will consider not only changes to the overall number of entries on the April 20 electoral registers, but also any evidence about significant local geographic or demographic variations. Our aim will be to make a clear assessment of the effect on the registers of ending the transition in December 2015, and therefore removing entries for those electors not registered individually at that point.

5.7 We have highlighted earlier in this report the impact of current data quality limitations, and the resultant impact on our ability to analyse the December 2015 registers. We have also highlighted to the UK Government that any continuing data quality problems will present a significant risk to the ability of EROs, the Commission and the Government's Electoral Registration Transformation Programme to effectively monitor the transition to IER.

5.8 These data issues have created a significant risk that the Commission will not have sufficient information to be able to make a robust, evidence-based recommendation in June 2015 to inform the UK Government's decision on whether to recommend to Parliament that the end of the transition to IER should be brought forward.

5.9 It is therefore vital that Cabinet Office and EMS suppliers make urgent changes to the systems to ensure that the necessary data will be available to allow for a full and robust analysis of the state of the registers and progress with implementing IER. Without reliable data about electoral registration in June 2015, it is highly unlikely that the Commission would be able to recommend in any circumstances that the end of the transition to IER should be brought forward to December 2015.

Household canvass activity in 2015

5.10 In the summer of 2015, EROs across Great Britain will be carrying out the annual canvass which, unlike in 2014, will involve sending HEFs to all properties.

5.11 As part of the canvass, any new potential electors identified by each ERO will be sent an invitation to register and a registration application form. If no response is

received, EROs must take specified steps – including issuing two reminders and a personal visit - to follow up with any non-responders.

5.12 EROs' activity will also include a push to try to ensure that as many existing electors who are still not registered individually successfully complete an individual registration application.

5.13 Revised registers must be published by 1 December 2015 on conclusion of the canvass.

Measuring accuracy and completeness

5.14 In addition to the rolling programme of data collection, the Commission has also included two studies into the accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers as part of our monitoring work around the transition to IER.

5.15 The result of the first of these studies was published in July 2014 and provides a baseline against which we can assess the impact of IER. This study found that the last registers to be compiled under household registration – those published in February and March 2014 – were 87% accurate and 85% complete. This represented a stabilisation in levels of completeness from the last point at which comparable registers were assessed (those published in December 2010).

5.16 The second study will take place once the transition to IER is complete using either the December 2015 or December 2016 registers, depending on when the transition ends. This will provide estimates on the accuracy and completeness of the first full IER registers, and will be published in either July 2016 or July 2017.

Beyond the transition to IER

5.17 The transition to an individual electoral registration system in Great Britain will mark a significant step in the transformation of electoral registration for the UK. It will mean that all entries on electoral registers in the UK will have been individually verified against another trusted data source. It will also mean that people in Great Britain can apply to register to vote or update their registration details online, bringing a more customer-focused service and approach to the electoral registration process.

5.18 The transformation of electoral registration should not stop at that point, however, and we will continue to explore options for further improving the electoral registration process across the UK. Others with an interest in ensuring accurate and complete electoral registers, including EROs, political parties and elected representatives, will also expect and seek further improvements to current processes. The UK Government will continue to be responsible for developing policy and legislation for electoral registration, and it will need to ensure that it retains the capacity to focus on and manage further change in the medium and long term.

5.19 Our research on the accuracy and completeness of electoral registers in the UK has shown that there is still significant scope for further improvements to the electoral registration process. We found that 14-15% of potentially eligible electors in

Great Britain were not registered to vote at their current address in April 2014, and 27-29% of potentially eligible electors in Northern Ireland were not registered to vote at their current address in April 2012.

5.20 The confirmation matching process resulted in 87% of entries for electors on the June 2014 registers in England and Wales (36.9 million register entries) being successfully matched and directly transferred to the new IER register without having to provide additional personal identifiers. While the primary function of confirmation has been to support the transition to IER, we believe that there may be scope to use similar confirmation matching processes to simplify the registration process beyond this initial stage. For example, matching information about potentially eligible electors collected during the canvass against data held by DWP could significantly reduce the number of people who need to provide their date of birth and National Insurance number in order for EROs to be able to verify their identity.

5.21 There is also potential to build on the many interactions citizens already have with a wide range of public services to help increase both the accuracy and completeness of electoral registers. We will encourage and work with the Government and EROs to develop workable proposals for prompting people to register to vote or update their registration details at key points when they use other public services, such as applying for or receiving benefits or tax credits, changing their GP, applying for a driving license or renewing their passport. This will, however, depend heavily on securing a strong cross-government commitment to make the necessary changes to agency-wide processes, forms and websites.

5.22 The experience of using data to verify the identity of potential electors without requiring them to provide additional information also highlights the potential for direct registration to significantly improve the accuracy and completeness of electoral registers. For example, federal and state-level Electoral Commissions in Australia are already moving towards direct registration, using trusted information supplied by other government and public agencies to directly enrol electors or update their details on the electoral register. Electors are not required to complete a registration application form, but an information notice is sent to their registered address setting out how to correct any errors.³⁷

5.23 While the data matching and data mining pilot schemes carried out by EROs in 2012 and 2013 have not yet successfully identified a workable model for using data from central government departments and agencies to identify potentially eligible electors, we will continue to support and encourage the UK Government to develop and test proposals for new tools, including using trusted local data, to help EROs meet their statutory duties.

5.24 UK Government Ministers also have powers to make an Order (subject to approval by Parliament) to abolish the requirement for EROs to carry out an annual canvass of households. This would be a significant change to the model for electoral registration in Great Britain, and we would expect to see robust evidence of

³⁷ See <http://www.aec.gov.au/About/AEC/research/direct.htm> for more information about direct registration in Australia.

workable, effective alternative methods for capturing population movement before we would be comfortable endorsing any such change, particularly in light of the evidence contained in this report.

Appendix A – Electoral register entries by local authorities

| Local authority | Total number of entries |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Adur | 47,300 |
| Allerdale | 70,811 |
| Amber Valley | 98,676 |
| Arun | 115,296 |
| Ashfield | 90,601 |
| Ashford | 90,309 |
| Aylesbury Vale | 135,903 |
| Babergh | 69,855 |
| Barking and Dagenham | 122,889 |
| Barnet | 238,552 |
| Barnsley | 178,948 |
| Barrow in Furness | 51,739 |
| Basildon | 128,210 |
| Basingstoke and Deane | 131,323 |
| Bassetlaw | 83,997 |
| Bath and North East Somerset | 128,366 |
| Bedford | 122,616 |
| Bexley | 176,168 |
| Birmingham | 728,957 |
| Blaby | 73,231 |
| Blackburn with Darwen | 104,058 |
| Blackpool | 102,115 |
| Blaenau Gwent | 51,362 |
| Bolsover | 57,677 |
| Bolton | 199,134 |
| Boston | 46,024 |
| Bournemouth | 136,914 |
| Bracknell Forest | 85,379 |
| Bradford | 331,494 |
| Braintree | 111,346 |
| Breckland | 99,627 |
| Brent | 210,849 |
| Brentwood | 59,164 |
| Bridgend | 102,598 |
| Brighton and Hove | 192,325 |
| Bristol | 319,138 |
| Broadland | 94,202 |

| | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Bromley | 238,318 |
| Bromsgrove | 72,647 |
| Broxbourne | 71,227 |
| Broxtowe | 82,065 |
| Burnley | 64,527 |
| Bury | 142,689 |
| Caerphilly | 129,367 |
| Calderdale | 144,845 |
| Cambridge | 91,230 |
| Camden | 146,122 |
| Cannock Chase | 74,373 |
| Canterbury | 113,875 |
| Cardiff | 234,476 |
| Carlisle | 83,350 |
| Carmarthenshire | 139,070 |
| Castle Point | 67,748 |
| Central Bedfordshire | 204,391 |
| Ceredigion | 50,568 |
| Charnwood | 123,786 |
| Chelmsford | 130,324 |
| Cheltenham | 86,449 |
| Cherwell | 107,336 |
| Cheshire East | 272,909 |
| Cheshire West and Chester | 260,845 |
| Chesterfield | 78,385 |
| Chichester | 90,014 |
| Chiltern | 73,893 |
| Chorley | 81,453 |
| Christchurch | 38,597 |
| City of London | 6,604 |
| Colchester | 119,911 |
| Conwy | 92,087 |
| Copeland | 53,967 |
| Corby | 46,714 |
| Cornwall | 416,264 |
| Cotswold | 67,536 |
| Coventry | 223,654 |
| Craven | 43,679 |
| Crawley | 77,729 |
| Croydon | 255,035 |
| Dacorum | 109,265 |
| Darlington | 77,935 |
| Dartford | 72,803 |
| Daventry | 60,539 |

| | |
|--------------------------|---------|
| Denbighshire | 75,084 |
| Derby | 172,447 |
| Derbyshire Dales | 56,710 |
| Doncaster | 210,826 |
| Dover | 85,094 |
| Dudley | 239,284 |
| Durham | 376,934 |
| Ealing | 236,420 |
| East Cambridgeshire | 63,016 |
| East Devon | 102,345 |
| East Dorset | 70,486 |
| East Hampshire | 88,893 |
| East Hertfordshire | 103,012 |
| East Lindsey | 100,480 |
| East Northamptonshire | 66,814 |
| East Riding of Yorkshire | 261,259 |
| East Staffordshire | 87,092 |
| Eastbourne | 73,132 |
| Eastleigh | 96,981 |
| Eden | 41,541 |
| Elmbridge | 98,104 |
| Enfield | 213,385 |
| Epping Forest | 99,553 |
| Epsom and Ewell | 56,504 |
| Erewash | 85,925 |
| Exeter | 85,581 |
| Fareham | 89,239 |
| Fenland | 73,683 |
| Flintshire | 116,151 |
| Forest Heath | 39,362 |
| Forest of Dean | 65,930 |
| Fylde | 59,980 |
| Gateshead | 142,389 |
| Gedling | 86,798 |
| Gloucester | 92,706 |
| Gosport | 62,442 |
| Gravesham | 72,888 |
| Great Yarmouth | 70,882 |
| Greenwich | 176,429 |
| Guildford | 100,523 |
| Gwynedd | 81,675 |
| Hackney | 174,355 |
| Halton | 95,262 |
| Hambleton | 69,348 |

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 127,212 |
| Harborough | 66,178 |
| Haringey | 159,360 |
| Harlow | 61,705 |
| Harrogate | 120,384 |
| Harrow | 175,004 |
| Hart | 70,429 |
| Hartlepool | 69,201 |
| Hastings | 59,735 |
| Havant | 94,034 |
| Havering | 184,019 |
| Herefordshire | 137,758 |
| Hertsmere | 76,131 |
| High Peak | 71,790 |
| Hillingdon | 207,635 |
| Hinckley and Bosworth | 84,897 |
| Horsham | 101,668 |
| Hounslow | 183,818 |
| Huntingdonshire | 128,465 |
| Hyndburn | 59,704 |
| Ipswich | 95,911 |
| Isle of Anglesey | 48,233 |
| Isle of Wight | 108,828 |
| Isles of Scilly | 1,649 |
| Islington | 150,359 |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 100,899 |
| Kettering | 72,041 |
| Kings Lynn and West Norfolk | 114,664 |
| Kingston upon Hull | 180,740 |
| Kingston upon Thames | 113,026 |
| Kirklees | 300,627 |
| Knowsley | 111,084 |
| Lambeth | 221,441 |
| Lancaster | 101,367 |
| Leeds | 533,653 |
| Leicester | 224,750 |
| Lewes | 73,899 |
| Lewisham | 189,719 |
| Lichfield | 80,500 |
| Lincoln | 62,836 |
| Liverpool | 304,907 |
| Luton | 134,836 |
| Maidstone | 112,988 |
| Maldon | 47,268 |

| | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Malvern Hills | 59,204 |
| Manchester | 368,265 |
| Mansfield | 79,957 |
| Medway | 191,562 |
| Melton | 38,206 |
| Mendip | 85,833 |
| Merthyr Tydfil | 43,873 |
| Merton | 146,567 |
| Mid Devon | 59,744 |
| Mid Suffolk | 76,636 |
| Mid Sussex | 106,828 |
| Middlesbrough | 96,528 |
| Milton Keynes | 182,065 |
| Mole Valley | 67,530 |
| Monmouthshire | 70,961 |
| Neath Port Talbot | 105,640 |
| New Forest | 142,016 |
| Newark and Sherwood | 85,196 |
| Newcastle upon Tyne | 184,401 |
| Newcastle-under-Lyme | 94,494 |
| Newham | 191,518 |
| Newport | 102,655 |
| North Devon | 73,926 |
| North Dorset | 52,176 |
| North East Derbyshire | 77,990 |
| North East Lincolnshire | 110,990 |
| North Hertfordshire | 98,869 |
| North Kesteven | 82,378 |
| North Lincolnshire | 124,679 |
| North Norfolk | 82,218 |
| North Somerset | 159,494 |
| North Tyneside | 156,056 |
| North Warwickshire | 48,869 |
| North West Leicestershire | 71,571 |
| Northampton | 150,420 |
| Northumberland | 245,840 |
| Norwich | 98,872 |
| Nottingham | 191,363 |
| Nuneaton and Bedworth | 94,152 |
| Oadby and Wigston | 42,822 |
| Oldham | 158,180 |
| Oxford | 99,730 |
| Pembrokeshire | 89,000 |
| Pendle | 65,828 |

| | |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Peterborough | 135,307 |
| Plymouth | 177,442 |
| Poole | 114,407 |
| Portsmouth | 147,184 |
| Powys | 101,864 |
| Preston | 95,626 |
| Purbeck | 35,962 |
| Reading | 108,697 |
| Redbridge | 208,574 |
| Redcar and Cleveland | 100,553 |
| Redditch | 62,864 |
| Reigate and Banstead | 104,305 |
| Rhondda Cynon Taf | 173,275 |
| Ribble Valley | 46,480 |
| Richmond upon Thames | 134,943 |
| Richmondshire | 34,775 |
| Rochdale | 160,445 |
| Rochford | 65,904 |
| Rossendale | 52,362 |
| Rother | 70,647 |
| Rotherham | 197,922 |
| Rugby | 77,336 |
| Runnymede | 59,363 |
| Rushcliffe | 85,243 |
| Rushmoor | 65,342 |
| Rutland | 29,347 |
| Ryedale | 41,059 |
| Salford | 166,988 |
| Sandwell | 227,765 |
| Scarborough | 83,166 |
| Sedgemoor | 88,718 |
| Sefton | 201,960 |
| Selby | 66,968 |
| Sevenoaks | 87,617 |
| Sheffield | 392,257 |
| Shepway | 79,529 |
| Shropshire | 230,752 |
| Slough | 98,541 |
| Solihull | 158,092 |
| South Bucks | 53,089 |
| South Cambridgeshire | 114,298 |
| South Derbyshire | 73,550 |
| South Gloucestershire | 205,270 |
| South Hams | 67,975 |

| | |
|-------------------------|---------|
| South Holland | 69,566 |
| South Kesteven | 105,552 |
| South Lakeland | 81,411 |
| South Norfolk | 98,828 |
| South Northamptonshire | 66,495 |
| South Oxfordshire | 107,435 |
| South Ribble | 84,723 |
| South Somerset | 128,611 |
| South Staffordshire | 83,833 |
| South Tyneside | 115,060 |
| Southampton | 160,076 |
| Southend-on-Sea | 126,977 |
| Southwark | 201,531 |
| Spelthorne | 73,466 |
| St Albans | 105,685 |
| St Edmundsbury | 81,783 |
| St Helens | 135,243 |
| Stafford | 95,893 |
| Staffordshire Moorlands | 78,703 |
| Stevenage | 63,415 |
| Stockport | 223,059 |
| Stockton-on-Tees | 139,066 |
| Stoke-on-Trent | 185,994 |
| Stratford on Avon | 97,359 |
| Stroud | 89,817 |
| Suffolk Coastal | 95,375 |
| Sunderland | 209,725 |
| Surrey Heath | 64,431 |
| Sutton | 146,942 |
| Swale | 93,769 |
| Swansea | 174,907 |
| Swindon | 161,083 |
| Tameside | 166,554 |
| Tamworth | 57,455 |
| Tandridge | 61,299 |
| Taunton Deane | 79,811 |
| Teignbridge | 102,212 |
| Telford and Wrekin | 122,875 |
| Tendring | 108,725 |
| Test Valley | 93,042 |
| Tewkesbury | 66,226 |
| Thanet | 96,907 |
| Three Rivers | 67,226 |
| Thurrock | 111,980 |

| | |
|------------------------|---------|
| Tonbridge and Malling | 89,873 |
| Torbay | 104,861 |
| Torfaen | 69,391 |
| Torrige | 51,495 |
| Tower Hamlets | 172,515 |
| Trafford | 161,766 |
| Tunbridge Wells | 80,292 |
| Uttlesford | 63,474 |
| Vale of Glamorgan | 92,395 |
| Vale of White Horse | 97,684 |
| Wakefield | 253,659 |
| Walsall | 196,220 |
| Waltham Forest | 178,955 |
| Wandsworth | 223,562 |
| Warrington | 159,347 |
| Warwick | 101,019 |
| Watford | 69,260 |
| Waveney | 90,316 |
| Waverley | 92,129 |
| Wealden | 118,994 |
| Wellingborough | 55,661 |
| Welwyn Hatfield | 78,850 |
| West Berkshire | 114,704 |
| West Devon | 43,146 |
| West Dorset | 81,489 |
| West Lancashire | 83,125 |
| West Lindsey | 71,939 |
| West Oxfordshire | 78,640 |
| West Somerset | 27,458 |
| Westminster | 127,541 |
| Weymouth and Portland | 50,063 |
| Wigan | 234,261 |
| Wiltshire | 347,057 |
| Winchester | 91,165 |
| Windsor and Maidenhead | 104,093 |
| Wirral | 235,238 |
| Woking | 72,278 |
| Wokingham | 119,974 |
| Wolverhampton | 178,673 |
| Worcester | 73,858 |
| Worthing | 78,808 |
| Wrexham | 101,824 |
| Wychavon | 92,079 |
| Wycombe | 126,653 |

| | |
|-------------|---------|
| Wyre | 82,284 |
| Wyre Forest | 77,903 |
| York | 146,322 |