



Cabinet Office

Canvass Reform

Canvass Reform Data Test Guidance

Part I: Data Test Preparation

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1. Document Purpose

- 1.1. This document provides guidance on your participation in the Canvass Reform Data Test (CRDT), which all Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) in Great Britain are expected to participate in. Specifically, this guidance focuses on preparations for the CRDT. This document does not address actions required beyond the CRDT. Guidance for the implementation of Canvass Reform go live will be shared closer to July 2020.
- 1.2. Please note that this document provides guidance on the desired outcomes and preparations required for the CRDT, and does not contain any legal or compliance advice in relation to your obligations under any laws, including any data protection requirements.
- 1.3. The guidance is directed towards the ERO and the duties they carry out. As these duties may, in practice, be carried out by deputies and/or appointed staff, we use the term 'you' throughout this guidance to mean the ERO and whoever is carrying out the ERO's functions on their behalf.
- 1.4. You should read this guidance alongside the detailed instructions your Electoral Management Software (EMS) supplier will provide to you, as well as the interim Statement of Policy on Canvass Reform, which will be saved on the Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA) and Scottish Assessors Association (SAA)'s Reform of the Annual Canvass pages on their respective websites. Please share this document with your electoral services staff and IT team, and seek advice from your legal team and Data Protection Officer as required.

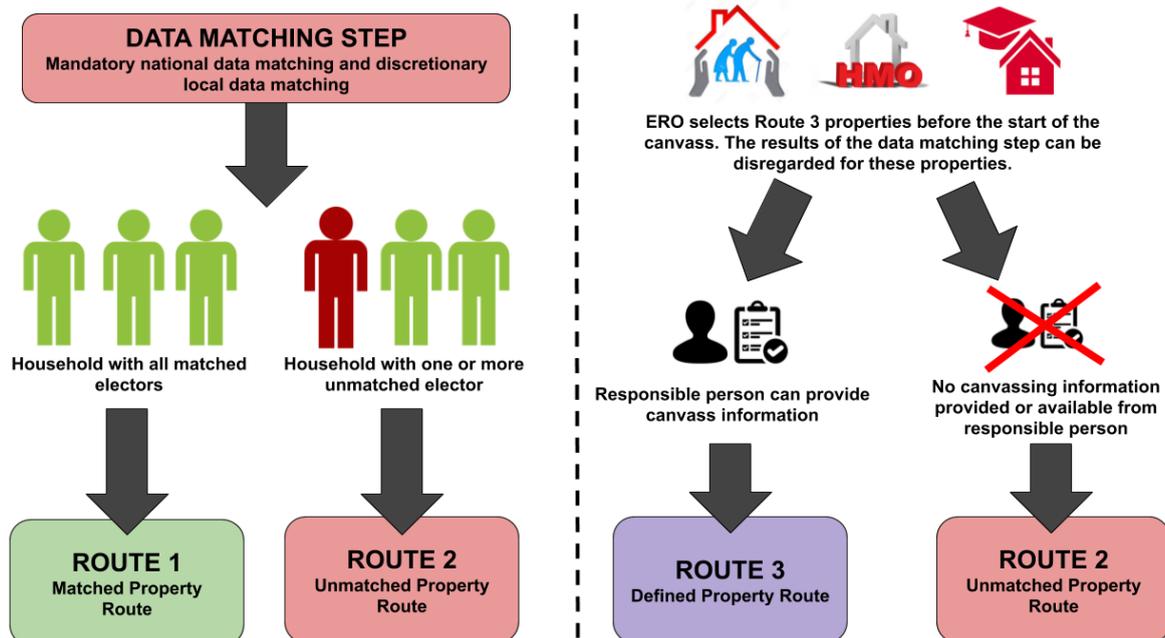
2. Canvass Reform

- 2.1. Canvass Reform will introduce an annual mandatory national data matching step, alongside a discretionary local data matching step, at the start of each canvass from July 2020. Electors will be matched against national data and any local datasets you may wish to use, and the results will determine the elector 'matched' or 'unmatched'.
- 2.2. These match results will then be collated at the household level to give an overall match result for each property. The results from the data matching step will determine whether the property can receive a lighter touch canvass (Route 1) or a full canvass (Route 2). If, having taken into account the results from both the national and (discretionary) local data matching, you have no reason to believe there are any additions or deletions at a property, then you may send that property down Route 1.
- 2.3. There will also be a category which will allow certain properties to be canvassed by special means (Route 3) where a responsible person is able to provide the canvass information e.g. a care home manager. Under the reformed canvass, Route 3

properties will go through national data matching, although you have the discretion to ignore the results for these properties. However, in the CRDT, Route 3 properties will not go through the national data test. More detail on Route 3 properties can be found in **section 9.2**. Please see **Figure 1** for a diagram of how the route splits will work under the reformed canvass.

- 2.4. The success of Canvass Reform depends on properties going down the most appropriate canvassing route. Guidance on how to get the most out of the data matching step and new canvass processes will be published before Canvass Reform goes live in July 2020.

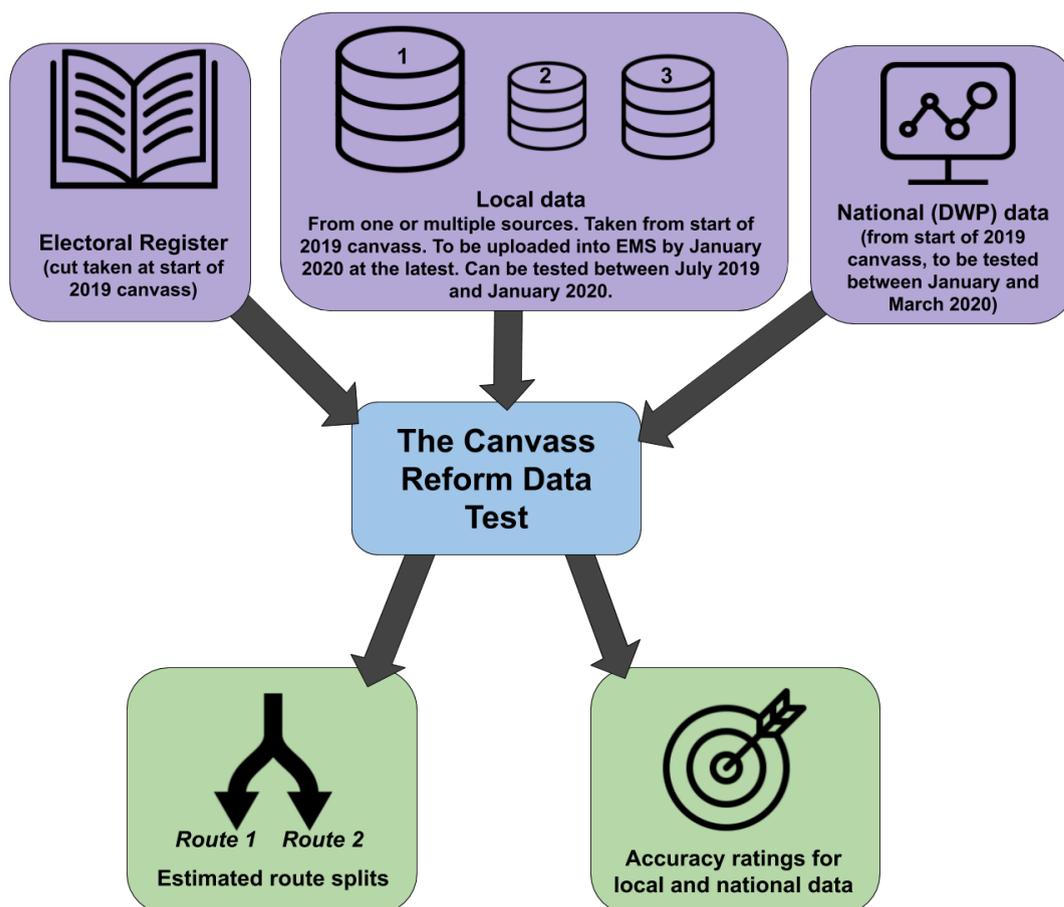
Figure 1



i For more detail on the canvassing routes which will come into effect under Canvass Reform in July 2020, please see the final Statement of Policy on Canvass Reform, which can be found on GOV.UK on the following link:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposals-for-the-reform-of-the-annual-canvass>

3. Overview of the CRDT

Figure 2



- 3.1. In order to support you in implementing the changes outlined above, it is intended that a test of the data matching step will be undertaken before Canvass Reform goes live. The benefits behind this test are set out within **Section 6** below.
- 3.2. The CRDT will involve matching your start of canvass register against a full cut of national data taken from the start of your 2019 canvass. This is to make sure the CRDT is comparing data from the same time that you will conduct the data matching step in the future. The national data matching test will occur in January 2020.
- 3.3. There will also be the option to test local data within the CRDT should you wish to use it in the future, although this will be a discretionary element of the test. Local data testing within the CRDT, can be run at any point from the start of your 2019 canvass, but must occur before the national data test. Further guidance on local

data testing will be issued within the Canvass Reform Data Test Guidance Part II: Testing Local Data.

- 3.4. It is important to note that **the CRDT will not affect the 2019 canvass** and you should carry the canvass out as normal.



Your 2019 canvass should be conducted as normal.

4. Legislation

- 4.1. The CRDT allows for both national and local data testing. Subject to approval by Parliament, it is intended that draft regulations will provide a lawful basis for the national data test. This legislation would come into force in December 2019, depending on Parliamentary time. Additional legislation will also need to be secured in the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly to enable these changes across Great Britain.
- 4.2. Given that local data matching within the CRDT involves comparing different sets of data gathered under your existing powers at Regulations 23 and 35,¹ and does not involve the mandatory disclosure of personal data (as with the national data match), no additional legal provision is required for you to participate. However, it remains your responsibility to comply with any applicable data protection laws when matching local data you hold. As such, local data matching (and testing) should be carried out in consultation with your EMS supplier and Data Protection Officer. Where you are unsure about compliance with any legal obligation, you should consult your legal advisers.

5. Further Guidance

- 5.1. In order to help with the completion of the CRDT, the Cabinet Office will issue further guidance:
- Canvass Reform Data Test Guidance Part II: Testing Local Data will focus on the use of local data for those who wish to do so within the CRDT.
 - Canvass Reform Data Test Guidance Part III: The National Data Test and Your CRDT Results. This will provide guidance on how to complete the national data test and on how to interpret and analyse the results of the tests.
- 5.2. You should also refer to supplementary guidance provided by your EMS supplier in the coming months.

¹ Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001 (S.I. 2001/341) and Representation of the People (Scotland) Regulations 2001.

Guidance	Released
Canvass Reform Data Test Guidance Part II: Testing Local Data	March 2019
Canvass Reform Data Test Guidance Part III: The National Data and Your CRDT Results	January 2020

6. Benefits of the CRDT

6.1. It is intended that all EROs will participate in the CRDT, although local data testing will be conducted at your discretion. This section outlines the benefits of participation.

6.2. Resourcing

- 6.2.1. Although Confirmation Live Run data may be used for this purpose to a limited extent, the CRDT will provide a more up to date estimation of the split of properties between Routes 1 and 2. This will allow you to:
- Engage with your print suppliers with estimated quantities for each type of communication to be produced under Route 1 and Route 2.
 - Create a resource plan for estimated workloads during the canvass period.
 - Create a resource plan for conducting the personal canvass on Route 2 properties.

6.3. Accuracy

- 6.3.1. The CRDT will provide you with insight into the accuracy of both national and local datasets for your area before Canvass Reform goes live. The accuracy scores will not be indicative of the datasets themselves, but rather whether they can accurately indicate that a property should be sent down Route 1. For more information on how accuracy will be calculated for the purpose of the CRDT, please see **section 7.4**.
- 6.3.2. The CRDT provides a unique test environment, as the 2019 canvass will be conducted as normal, meaning that data match testing will not impact electors and properties will not receive different chasing cycles. It is strongly recommended that you test any local datasets you wish to use in 2020 during the CRDT where possible, as it will provide you with the opportunity to ensure you are using the most beneficial local data during the data matching step. This will be crucial in ensuring that the register remains as complete and accurate as possible once Canvass Reform goes live. This is why testing local data will be valuable for those who wish to make use of local data in the new data matching step.
- 6.3.3. More guidance on the interpretation of the results of the CRDT for application in Canvass Reform go live will be included within Canvass Reform Data Test Guidance Part III: The National Data Test and Your CRDT Results.

6.4. Familiarity

- 6.4.1. The CRDT will provide you with an opportunity to practice the data matching process that will form part of the canvass from July 2020 and gain familiarity with this new requirement. You will be able to see how uploading and downloading the national data matches will be done. For those who plan to use local data, it will also provide you with an opportunity to practice using such data, ensuring that you can obtain it, present it in the correct format and successfully upload it into your EMS. This will allow you to enter into the new canvass process with confidence and iron out any issues ahead of time.

6.5. Coverage of your local data

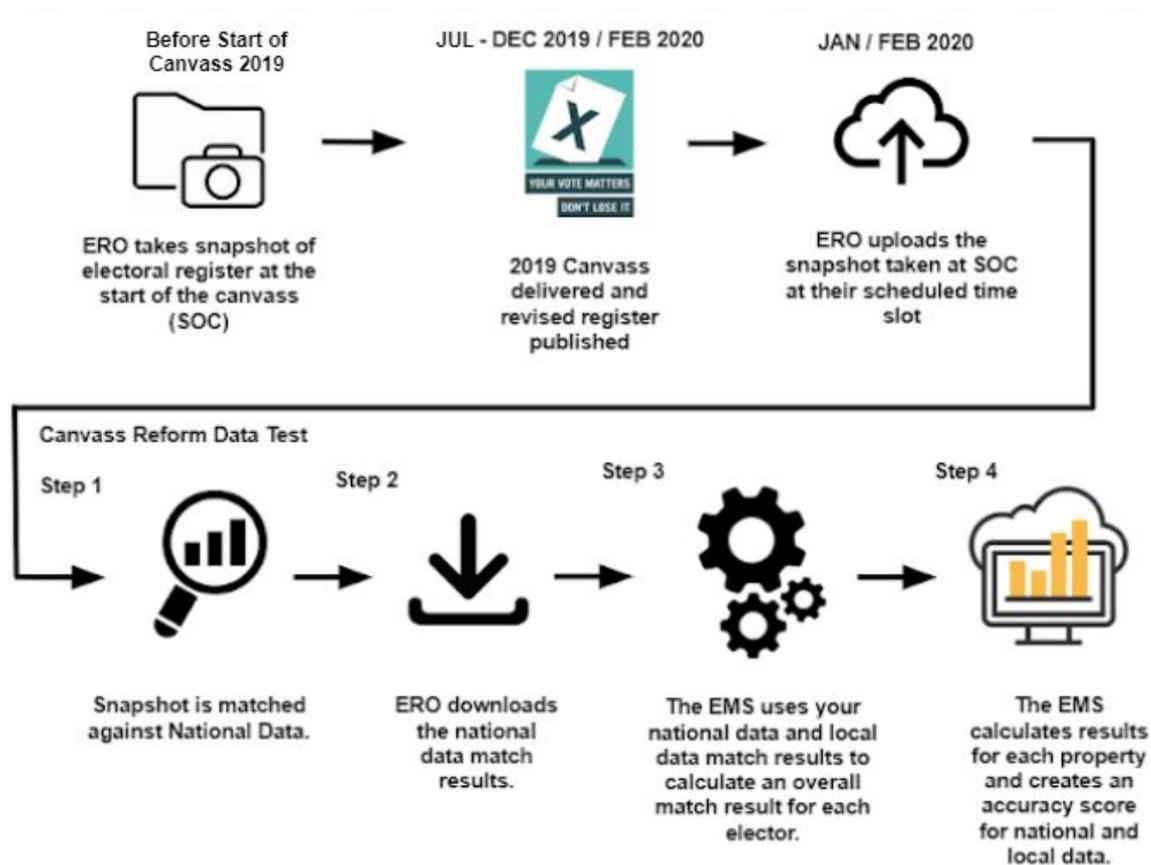
- 6.5.1. As it will be mandatory to match your register against national data once Canvass Reform goes live, the CRDT will provide an opportunity to test the level of added benefit that local data will provide. Your local data may match the same electors as the national data, in which case the benefit is limited, or could match against electors who were unmatched by national data, strengthening the benefit of using local data. Understanding the coverage provided by the national data matching step and which of your local datasets can supplement national data will be useful to ensure that you can make the most of the new routes within the reformed canvass from July 2020 onwards.



It is strongly recommended that you test your local datasets during the CRDT if you wish to use local data when Canvass Reform goes live.

7. How will the CRDT work?

Figure 3



Please note that actions required for the testing of local data will be set out in more detail in **Canvass Reform Data Test Guidance Part II: Testing Local Data**.

7.1. The core elements of the CRDT

- The pre-data test work involves ensuring that all required functionality is ready for the CRDT, as well as preparing the register. The details of this work are explained within **sections 8 and 9**. Please endeavour to ensure this work is underway as soon as possible and complete before the start of the 2019 canvass.
- A cut of your register from the start of your 2019 canvass will be required for the CRDT. Please consult your EMS supplier's guidance to see what action you need to take. The register will need to be sent to the IER DS for national data match testing. More guidance on this will follow in **Canvass Reform Data Test Guidance Part III: The National Data Test and Your CRDT Results**.
- **You will conduct the 2019 canvass as normal**. The CRDT will not impact your canvass process. However, please note **sections 8, 9 and 10** which

detail the work you will need to undertake before and during the 2019 canvass to participate in the CRDT.

- Further guidance in Part III will provide detail on the national data matching test and the receipt and interpretation of the CRDT results.

7.2. Local data testing

- If you want to test local data, you may use suitable local data collected prior to the start of the canvass under your existing powers.²
- Canvass Reform Data Test Guidance Part II: Testing Local Data, which was published alongside the original version of this guidance document in March 2019, provides more detail on the required steps for those who wish to test local data.



Local data will need to be cut from the start of your canvass to ensure the data used in the CRDT is consistent, as national data will also be cut from the start of the 2019 canvass. This will ensure you receive you the most accurate results possible.

7.3. By-elections/UK Parliamentary General Election during the CRDT

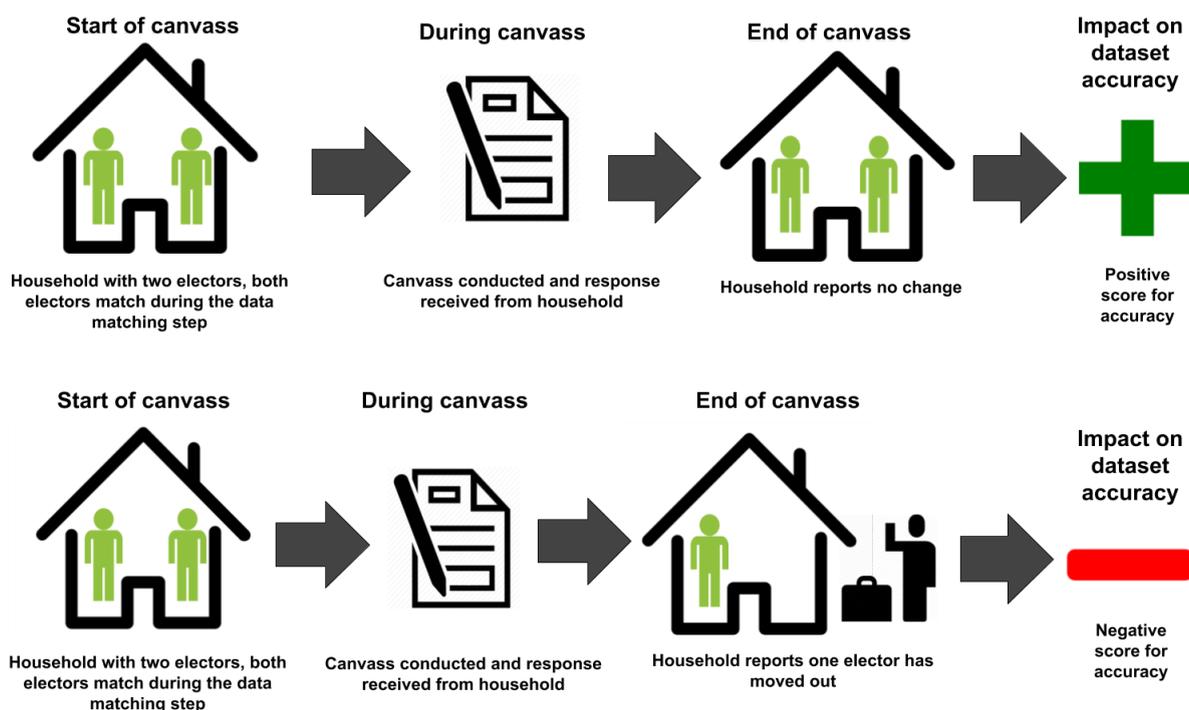
- 7.3.1. If you decide to delay the publication of your register because of an unscheduled electoral event, there will be no impact on the processes you must follow for the CRDT. However, please note that this will have an impact on the results which are produced for the CRDT as the canvass period would be longer. Delay of the register's publication will also delay the analysis of the outcomes from the CRDT, as this stage cannot be done without the post-canvass register.

7.4. How is accuracy measured for the CRDT?

- 7.4.1. Accuracy for datasets will be calculated by comparing the match result for the property from that dataset against the 2019 end of canvass register. For example, if a dataset matches all electors at a property and then a canvass response highlights that one or more originally matched electors have moved out, this will be taken away from that dataset's accuracy score. Please note that the CRDT is not calculating the accuracy of that dataset itself, but its ability to accurately indicate which properties should have gone down Route 1 under the reformed canvass. Please see Figure 1 for a diagram of how accuracy will be calculated.
- 7.4.2. More guidance on the interpretation of results and calculation of accuracy scores will be provided in Canvass Reform Data Test Guidance Part III: The National Data Test and Your CRDT Results.

² At regulations 23 and 35 of the Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001 (S.I. 2001/341) and Representation of the People (Scotland) Regulations 2001.

Figure 4



8. Preparing the register

- 8.1. In order to get the most out of the CRDT, some preparations will be necessary in order to prepare the electoral register. Some processes are one-off tasks required by the CRDT, the **pre-data test work** outlined in **section 9**, and others are ongoing tasks to ensure that you get the most out of participation in the CRDT, outlined in **section 10**.
- 8.2. The pre-data test work is a requirement for the CRDT, the decisions within this section will impact on the Route 1, 2 and 3 totals as well as the accuracy of the CRDT results.

9. Pre-Data Test Work

9.1. Recent additions

- 9.1.1. Recent additions are electors who have submitted a recent, successful application to register and have already been added to the register through a monthly update. In such cases, it is likely that you have the up to date information for that elector, making matching them against external sources potentially futile. Because of this, recent additions to the register can be excluded from the CRDT and automatically classified as matched for the purposes of the results.

- 9.1.2. The timeframe for a recent addition will be set at your discretion based on your knowledge of your area. However, the upper limit will be set in law, and will be a maximum of 90 calendar days. For the purpose of the CRDT, this threshold should be set from 0-90 days **from the date you start your 2019 canvass**. You will need to decide where to set your limit, which could be at 0 days if you do not wish to exempt recent additions, or as high as 90 days to exclude as many electors as possible. Your EMS supplier will include more detail on how to select this within your EMS in their detailed instructions.
- 9.1.3. When setting your threshold for recent additions, you will want to consider the churn rate within your area. For example, if your area is high churn, you may wish to set the recent additions threshold to a shorter time-frame compared to an ERO whose area has a more static population.



Electors who are classified as recent additions to the register will not be put through the CRDT, and will instead be automatically classified as a 'matched' individual. You have discretion over the threshold for recent additions up to a maximum of 90 days.

9.2. Route 3 properties

- 9.2.1. There will be an alternative canvass process for certain properties, which will be called your Route 3 properties. The CRDT will require you to select the properties you feel qualify for this route to ensure your route split estimates are as accurate as possible.
- 9.2.2. Route 3 properties will be those where the canvass information can be obtained through an individual or organisation who legally holds, or has access to, the required canvass information.
- 9.2.3. Properties which you wish to categorise as Route 3 properties for the purpose of the CRDT should be classified as:
- Registered residential care homes;
 - HMO (Houses of Multiple Occupancy) registered with the Local Authority; or
 - Student residences.
- 9.2.4. Please be aware that future communications will provide more detail on any other properties which may qualify for Route 3, but for the purpose of the CRDT, Route 3 classification will be limited to the property types within **paragraph 9.2.3**.
- 9.2.5. You will need to indicate in your EMS which properties you intend to classify as Route 3 properties for the purposes of the CRDT. This will not impact the 2019 canvass and these properties should be canvassed as normal during the 2019 canvass.

- 9.2.6. From the list above, you will need to identify properties within your area where you can identify a contact who lawfully has access to data on the residents and record them as required in your EMS. Please limit your Route 3 properties to the three categories listed in **paragraph 9.2.3**, and ensure that the properties meet the other requirement for Route 3, i.e. that there is a responsible person linked to the property who is legally entitled to provide the canvass information for all electors. Your EMS supplier will include more detail on how to select this within their detailed instructions.



To ensure you have accurately identified the number of properties which will be likely to go down Route 3 in future, you should ensure that you have identified a person responsible for the property who has agreed that they will share the necessary data with you.

9.3. Empty/void properties

- 9.3.1. Your empty/void properties will be counted as Route 2 properties in the CRDT, unless you have local data that supports that the property is empty. If you have the local data to support that the property is empty then the property will be counted as a Route 1 property. For more information on what can be regarded as local data, please consult CRDT Guidance Part II: Testing Local Data.
- 9.3.2. You should conduct your empty property data matching as normal after your first contact with the household during your 2019 canvass. For those properties where you have local data that supports that it is empty, the CRDT results will be amended accordingly. Your EMS suppliers will provide more guidance on this process.



You should process empty/void properties as normal during the 2019 canvass.

10. Maximising the benefit of the CRDT

- 10.1. Alongside the pre-data test work, other tasks will require attention all year round. Addressing these issues now and incorporating them into your business as usual tasks will make the transition to Canvass Reform much easier, and will ensure that you get the most out of the CRDT.
- 10.2. UPRN updates**
- 10.2.1. If possible, you should ensure that your EMS is up to date and populated with UPRNs from the most recent update by the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) for England and Wales, and the Corporate Address Gazetteer (CAG) for Scotland.
- 10.2.2. Matches made with UPRN identifiers will be more unique than string address due to the individual nature of the UPRN. If you do not currently update your UPRNs on a

regular basis then it will be useful to consider working this into your business as usual processes to benefit as much as possible from the CRDT.



Please update UPRNs frequently to get the most out of the CRDT. Datasets which contain UPRNs are more unique identifiers for the individual and property.

10.3. Data mining

- 10.3.1. Data mining is the process of using data sources to identify individuals who need to be added to your register.
- 10.3.2. Data mining to ensure your register is as complete and accurate as possible can have a positive effect on your match rate. The more eligible electors who are on the register and the more accurate your register is, the better your CRDT results will be for the purposes of estimated route splits. If you are not already doing this year-round, it is recommended that you take the CRDT as an opportunity to work this into your year-round business as usual tasks.

10.4. Deletions

- 10.4.1. Actively deleting registered electors who should no longer be on the register will also help ensure your register is as accurate as possible. This should be done throughout the year. Electors who should no longer be registered should be deleted prior to the start of the canvass to ensure they do not go through the data match. If they are data matched this may impact your match results, sending more properties down Route 2.
- 10.4.2. If you do not currently actively delete electors throughout the year, you will want to incorporate this into your business as usual process.



Data mining and deletions should be done year-round as a part of maintaining a complete and accurate register.

11. Which electors will be included in the CRDT?

11.1. Excluded electors

- 11.1.1. All electors will be put through the CRDT, with the exclusion of:
- Unregistered electors (please see a definition below);
 - Electors who have the required evidence for removal from the register but who have not yet been deleted because removal is pending the next register update;
 - Special category electors (for example anonymous electors);

- 14-15 year old attainers (Scotland only) (for national data matching);³ and
- Electors in properties which have been selected for Route 3.

11.1.2. Please see **section 11.2** for information on the inclusion of determined electors not yet on the register (please see the definition below) within the CRDT.



An UNREGISTERED elector is someone who has:

- **Been identified as being at a property but has not submitted an application and are currently going through the ITR chasing cycle; or**
- **Submitted an unsuccessful application to register and are currently requested to provide documentary evidence/attestation.**



DETERMINED electors not yet on the register are individuals who have already made a successful application to register and are due to appear on the electoral register at the next update.

11.2. Determined electors not yet on the register

11.2.1. Determined electors not yet on the register will be excluded from the national data matching aspect of the test, but included in the results for the CRDT. You will have the discretion over whether to classify all determined electors as matched individuals or unmatched individuals.



Determined electors will be excluded from the data matching, and it will be your choice whether to automatically classify them as matched or unmatched for the purposes of the CRDT.

11.3. Single Occupancy

11.3.1. If you currently use the single occupancy tick box functionality to exclude certain applicable properties from the usual canvass procedures, then please continue to do so during the 2019 canvass. The EMS will take into account the single occupancy tick box functionality to ensure that you can continue to use this in 2019 whilst not adversely affecting the CRDT results.

11.3.2. Electors who fall into the category of single occupancy will be data matched as part of the CRDT. This means you will receive more accurate Route 1 and Route 2 estimates, as the tick box will be removed under Canvass Reform and these electors will go through the data match step. However, those who have been captured by the single occupancy tick box in 2019 will not be included in the

³ 14-15 year old attainers will go through local data matching but not national data matching. 'Scotland only' as of December 2019.

calculation of national or local data accuracy, as there will be no post-canvass data to compare them against.



Treat single occupancy electors as you normally would during the 2019 canvass. Your EMS will take the necessary action for the CRDT.

12. Useful contacts

12.1. Technical Issues

For any difficulties with the technical aspects of the CRDT, please contact your EMS supplier for advice if this involves your EMS or your local IT team for in house issues. Please note that guidance on the technical aspects of the national test will be issued in Canvass Reform Data Test Guidance Part III: The National Data Test and Your CRDT Results in January 2020.

12.2. Legal Issues

For legal concerns or data protection concerns, please speak with your legal team and/or your Data Protection Officer. There are also many resources online on the Electoral Commission and Information Commissioner's Office websites.

12.3. Practical Concerns

If you have any other concerns about how to conduct the CRDT, please email the Cabinet Office Canvass Reform team at canvass-reform@cabinetoffice.gov.uk.

13. Terminology

Terminology	Description
CRDT	Canvass Reform Data Test
Data matching step	Canvass Reform will introduce a mandatory data match at the start of the canvass. This will involve at a minimum matching the electors on your register against national data on name, address and date of birth (if held). As a discretionary addition, an ERO may also choose to match electors against local data (requiring name and address in either UPRN or string address format) within the data matching step. The match results from this data matching will inform the ERO of the most suitable route for the property to be canvassed by. For more information on the reformed canvass routes, please refer to the interim Statement of Policy on Canvass Reform, held on the AEA and SAA's Reform of the Annual Canvass web pages.
Data mining	Using local data sources to identify individuals who may need to be added to your register.

Determined elector	Electors who have already made a successful application to register and are due to appear on the electoral register at the next update but are not yet on the register.
IER DS	Individual Electoral Registration Digital Service
Local data matching step	EROs will be able to choose whether to use local data in the data matching step which will be a part of the reformed canvass. This will involve matching electors against local datasets on name and address as a minimum. The match scores will then be collated at household level and the overall match score for that property will inform which route the property is canvassed by under Canvass Reform. The use of local data will be discretionary.
National data matching step	Electors will be matched against national data at the start of the canvass at an individual level on name, data of birth (where held) and address. The match scores will then be collated at household level and the overall match score for that property will inform which route the property is canvassed by under the reformed canvass. The national data matching step will be a mandatory aspect of the canvass after July 2020.
Pre-data test work	This is the work you will need to do before the CRDT in order to gain the most accurate results possible, for example setting your threshold for recent additions and selecting Route 3 properties. The details of this work are set out in Section 9 within this guidance.
Recent additions	Electors who have submitted a recent, successful application to register and have been added to the electoral register. The threshold can be set at your discretion between 0-90 days from the start of your 2019 canvass for the CRDT.
Route 1	This route is for properties where the ERO is satisfied that no additions or deletions are required within that property as a result of the outcomes of the data matching step.
Route 2	A more traditional canvass process for those properties where it is believed that there will be additions or deletions when taking account of the results of the data matching step. The methods of communication you may use to chase these

	properties will vary from paper canvass forms to e-communications and more. More detail is available in the interim Statement of Policy.
Route 3	Properties where it is difficult to obtain canvass information by the usual means. The canvass information must be able to be gained through an individual who legally holds the canvass information, for example the manager of a care home. The types of property which can be classed as Route 3 properties will be specified in the Canvass Reform regulations.
SOC	Start of Canvass
Start of canvass register	This will be your register from the time you start the canvass in 2019 for the CRDT.
String address	Freeform text fields used to capture addresses.
Unregistered elector	Individuals who have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • been identified as being at a property but have not submitted an application and are currently going through the ITR chasing cycle; or • submitted an unsuccessful application to register and are currently requested to provide documentary evidence/attestation.
UPRN	Unique Property Reference Number. This is a unique alphanumeric identifier for every spatial address in Great Britain. It provides a consistent identifier throughout a property's life cycle.

14. Annexes

Annex A: FAQs

Annex B: Project Plan

These can be found on the AEA and SAA canvass reform sites and can be requested from cavass-reform@cabinetoffice.gov.uk.