

Electoral Registration Update from Claire Hawken, Electoral Services Manager

Data on spreadsheet is from 1 September 2015 through to 1 April 2016, but no data is held for the months of October and November 2015 as there were no updates to the actual electoral register as we were in the canvass process.

Column C shows the % return rate from the canvass, based on the number of responses we received back from households.

All properties should be sent at least one initial form, a reminder and also have a personal visit made. I am aware that personal visits were not made to all non-responding households, due to the lack of time available to undertake this. The canvassers employed to take on this role were not managed fully and not used to the full potential.

I intend to start the 2016 canvass in July instead of August and have forms issued on very tight deadlines. And use 'super canvassers' to solely to undertake personal visit from a much earlier date, as personal visits can be made at any time and not at the end of the process.

Columns E to J show the changes in electors on each register. These figures fluctuate due to the continuous rolling registration process. I have also undertaken a review of all people who we were aware had moved away. Under IER we have to have 2 sources of information to say someone has moved before we can delete them from the register. If we only have one source we have to review the electors entry and send a letter to the last address advising if there is no reply or they do not appeal within 2 weeks we will delete their entry. This process had not been followed prior to this. Now it is happening it is at least ensuring we don't have people still on the register who are no longer entitled to be on it, so the register is a far truer version.

Column K shows the number of deletions since 1 December, including those reviewed, but also those that have notified us through the online process they have moved, and deceased.

Column L shows the number of electors whose information does not match that held by DWP, and they have yet to provide further identity evidence to enable us to include them properly on the register. We have sent letters and reminder asking for the information. If there is no reply we ultimately can reject their application. If we do this we advise them of this and that they can try re-registering again, hopefully with the correct information this time round.

Column M shows the numbers of electors we believe are resident, but we are waiting for them to provide the relevant information to enable us to check their identity against DWP records. This involves sending forms, and using encouragement slips/post it notes and emailing them to go online to register.

Column N is the number of properties we have on our record that has no-one registered. I intend to issue letters to the highest areas first encouraging registration or confirmation that the property is empty or that no-one is eligible to register.

We now receive council tax mover information to enable us to make the changes in a timely manner and keep our information up to date.

Annual canvassing make eventually become a thing of the past. This year there are various pilots being undertaken across the country, by some authorities, looking at other ways to ensure registration continues without undertaking an annual canvass. This is pertinent considering we do now have rolling registration, which means people can register at any time and we make changes as we are notified and the register is updated every month, not once a year. Once these pilots have been evaluated a decision on annual canvass will be made.

I also have access to data with regard to nationalities that are registering within each area, and may look to see if we need to send forms and letter is simple English or other languages that may assist with registration, but I have not progressed with this yet.

With regard to polling districts, we are not currently undergoing a polling places review, and as such I would not be looking to make any changes to these, with the exception of stations having to change as necessary for the polls that arise, and those changes are outlined in a separate report.