



An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage

Electoral Registration Modernisation

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AILG Webinar - 4 November 2022

Electoral Reform Act 2022



Significant programme of reform in line with the Programme for Government – Our Shared Future

- Establishment of a statutory, independent Electoral Commission – An Coimisúin Toghcháin
- Modernisation of our electoral registration process to deliver greater accessibility and greater integrity
- Regulation of online political advertising
- Provisions to protect the integrity of our electoral processes to guard against manipulative or inauthentic behaviour during electoral campaigns
- Provisions to enable advance polling in pandemic or Covid-19 situations
- Strengthening of our regulatory regime in respect of political donations and accounts
- Provision for voting on the islands will take place on the same day as for the rest of the country
- Clarifying that political parties can hold lotteries for fund raising purposes

Commencement – SI 512 of 2022



Commenced with effect from 13 October:

- Certain provisions of Part 1 which includes preliminary and general provisions.
- Part 2 - Electoral Commission - provisions to facilitate the appointment of ordinary members and the Chief Executive for An Coimisiún Toghcháin.
- Part 3 - Franchise and Registration of electors – All of this Part is now commenced with effect from 13 October 2022 with the exception of section 98 – this will be commenced with the other provisions establishing An Coimisiún.
- Part 6 – This Part amends the Electoral Acts to facilitate the provision of advance polling during a pandemic or Covid-19, allowing flexibility for polling to take place at electoral events over more than one day to facilitate social distancing at polling stations.
- Part 8 – Polling on Islands - This Part provides that voting at electoral events will take place on islands on the same day as the rest of the country.

Part 3 - Background and Context



Wider context

- Previous reports and recommendations including 2016 - Oireachtas Joint Committee on an Electoral Commission
- LA franchise teams consultation
- Public consultation
- Voter.ie development in Dublin

Part 3 of the Electoral Reform Act 2022 is amending legislation – mainly amends the Electoral Act 1992

Electoral Registration: Key proposals



Rolling registration

A single live and responsive register; process the same all year round

Register to close in advance of electoral event, reopen the day after and so on

Simplified process – all applications to LA in first instance

Majority of engagement can be via a single, simple form

Online registration/updating of details

Individual registration – no more household forms

Identity data cross-check via PPSN, data sharing provisions

Single database for all LAs ensuring shared standards and improved data quality

Greater accessibility, New cohorts:

Anonymous registration

Pre-registration for 16/17 year olds

Standardised reference to people with no fixed address

Reporting and oversight provided for the first time

Implications for LAs and the public



One process, all year round

- All applications made to LA in first instance (online an option)
- PPSNs must be provided for all entries/amendments (cross-check)
- Appeals to County Registrar

One register, continuously updated

- Extracts to be drawn as needed
- Process at backend will remain largely as now

Introduction of oversight and reporting arrangements

- Reporting to the Electoral Commission by Registration Authorities
- Electoral Commission to report on the register annually

Duties of Registration Authorities



Section 20 of the Act, sets out overall duties of registration authorities:

Maintaining the register:

- *Adding people entitled to be registered*
- *Removing people not entitled to be registered*
- *Updating*
- *Correcting*
 - “to ensure a complete and accurate register”*
- *Making the register available for inspection (excl AE)*

In general preparing and publishing has been replaced by maintaining and publishing

Reporting by Registration Authorities



Section 20A requires each registration authority annually to report to An Coimisiún Toghcháin on:

- Activities undertaken to ensure the maintenance of a complete and accurate register for its registration area;
- Activities undertaken to evaluate whether and how those activities have contributed to a complete and accurate register for its area; and
- Such other matters as may be directed by An Coimisiún

Section 20A also provides for joint reporting by registration authorities

Oversight by An Coimisiún



Section 69 – the Commission:

- May undertake or commission research in relation to:
 - *The accuracy and completeness of the register*
 - *The activities undertaken by a registration authority*
 - *The processes relating to the register*
 - *Any other matter considered relevant*
- Shall, on the basis of reports received, report annually on:
 - *Any such research;*
 - *Its overall assessment of the status and functioning of the register*
- Can make recommendations to registration authorities or to the Minister

What is the process from here on?



Inflexible statutory deadlines  Ongoing learning, improving



Role of the individual



- Register and keep registration up to date
 - *Provide registration authority with any information it needs*
 - *In respect of own registration provide PPSN, Eircode and DOB*
- Contact registration authority if needed but updates to own records can be done via checktheregister.ie or by submitting a form
- Notify registration authority if there are reasonable grounds for change in respect of another entry

Checktheregister.ie Seiceáil an clár.ie



- Register to vote
- Confirm details - add PPSN, DOB and Eircode
- Update name and address
- Download forms
- More functionality over time

The screenshot shows the 'CheckTheRegister' website. The header is dark blue with the 'Rialtas Áitiúil Éireann' logo and text on the left, and navigation links 'Check the Register - the easy way to secure your say', 'Home', 'FAQ', and 'en | ga' on the right. Below the header, a breadcrumb trail reads 'CheckTheRegister > Request Options'. A welcome message states: 'Welcome to check the register- the easy way to secure your say. The electoral registration process has changed. Even if you are already registered, you now need to add your PPSN, date of birth and Eircode. This will allow your local authority to confirm your details and help to ensure the accuracy of the electoral register. You can now use this site to:'. A list of bullet points follows: 'Register to vote', 'Confirm or update your details', 'Download forms', and 'Find more information'. The main content area consists of four white boxes with green buttons. The first box, 'I'm already registered', has a 'Confirm or update online' button and lists conditions: 'Have your PPSN and Eircode', 'Need to confirm your details', and 'Update your name or address'. The second box, 'I want to register to vote', has a 'Register online' button and lists conditions: 'Want to register online', 'Have your PPSN and Eircode', 'Are aged 18 or over and living in Ireland', and 'Are aged 16 or 17 and want to pre-register'. The third box, 'Other ways to register or update your details', has a 'Download a form' button and lists conditions: 'Don't have a PPSN', 'Want to update your citizenship', 'Want to apply for a special or postal vote', and 'Want to make a third party request for a change to the register'. The fourth box, 'Further information', has a 'Check our FAQs' button and lists conditions: 'Voter eligibility', 'Requirement for a PPSN', and 'Your information and how it's used'. A final note at the bottom of the fourth box says: 'If you cannot find the information you're looking for, please contact your local authority'.

Data cross-check



Local authority has facility to cross-check data provided by an applicant:

- PPSN – DOB – Name
- Data is checked against data held by the Department of Social Protection via secure link
- If these are coherent and match an existing record, data is confirmed; date of death can be returned if applicable;
- If no match – nothing is returned – LA will need to contact the person for more information/paper form/ID check.

Forms



Key forms

- ERF1 – “the paper form”
- Third party requests
- 11(7) no address
- Anonymous electors
- Postal (illness or disability)
- Special Vote

Other PV forms

- PV work/study
- Prisoners
- Defence forces
- Diplomats
- An Garda Síochána
- Electoral staff (S.99)

ERF1

Most people will only ever need this form:



- Register to vote 16/17/18+
- Update name, address, nationality*
- With PPSN – one page
- Without – two pages – add certification

*nationality change requires supporting documentation

Register of Electors

Register to vote or update details.

It's easier online!
The easiest way for you to register to vote or update your details is online.
www.checktheregister.ie



To process your application, we need to gather some personal information about you. We tell you how and why we use your personal information on pages 3 and 4. Please read this information to help you fill out this form.

Please complete this form in **BLOCK CAPITALS**

1 Your details

First name

Surname

Previous name (if this applies)

PPSN

Date of birth

Phone number

Email address

Nationality

Previous nationality (if this applies)

Address

Eircode

Previous address (if this applies)

Eircode

If you were registered before but have since changed your name.

If no PPSN, complete page 2.

You can complete this form from the age of 16 but you must be 18 to vote.

If updating your nationality, please write in your previous nationality and include a photocopy of your new passport (photo page) or a copy of your certificate of naturalisation.

Where you live now.

If you were registered before but have since changed your address.

2 Sign here and post to your local authority

I believe that to the best of my knowledge the information I have provided:

- > is truthful, and
- > complete.

I understand that it is a legal offence under electoral law to knowingly give false or misleading information to a local authority.

Signature

Date

checktheregister.ie Page 1 of 4 Form ERF1


Third party claims/requests

Similar to previous process but some important changes:

- Introduction of “reasonable grounds”
- Submit to the registration authority
- RA may “make such inquiries as it considers necessary to satisfy itself as to the correctness of the information in the claim” and “determine what action, if any, it should take in respect of the claim”
- Requirement to inform the claimant and any person who may be affected by any proposed action
- Only affected person has right of appeal.

Register of Electors

It's easier online!
The easiest way for you to register to vote or update your details is online.
www.checktheregister.ie



Use this form if you have reasonable grounds to believe that an entry in the register about another person is inaccurate. The local authority will consider your request and decide what, if any, action to take.

Please complete this form in BLOCK CAPITALS

1 Your details

First name

Surname

Phone number

Address

Eircode

2 Details relevant to your request

Use this section to provide details in relation to your request. For example if you are notifying the local authority about a person who has died, you can include their name and address. If you know their date of birth or PPSN, providing it will allow the local authority to confirm the details with An t'Árd Chláraitheoir, the General Registrar.

Name of person (if this applies)

Address (if this applies)

Eircode

Reason for request and any other relevant information the local authority might need.

3 Sign here:

I believe that to the best of my knowledge the information I have provided:

- > is truthful, and
- > complete.

I understand that it is a legal offence under electoral law to knowingly give false or misleading information to a local authority.

Signature

Date

checktheregister.ie Page 1 of 2 Form TPCI



Third party requests – how will it work?



- Claims can be submitted by any person with reasonable grounds to believe an amendment is required.
- Local authority will consider the request and take such action, if any, it considers appropriate

Removals

- If deceased – action
- If not – 3 attempts

Additions

- Contact individuals
- Provide forms, information

Amendment

- Substantive
- Non-substantive

Removing people from register



- Rule 10 – Corrections by the registration authority– as before can be non-substantive or substantive;
- In the case of removal of a name other than a person who has died, requires three documented attempts at contact
- Attempts at contact should include information on how to engage
 - Third attempt will include the date on which the deletion will take effect
 - This is the same date as expiry of appeal option (4 weeks)

Transparency



- Register still to be available for inspection for purposes to do with the registration of electors
- Register still available to elected representatives and agents for electoral purposes
- Any provision of the register to be accompanied by information on its appropriate use and offences for misuse
- Changes will be needed given point in time version
- Local authorities have flexibility to agree practice – a common sense and pragmatic approach is needed

Deadlines to register



Overall deadlines have not changed

- Applications received on or after the 14th day before polling day (DED) will have no effect for that election or referendum
- Postal/Special voting deadlines also haven't changed

Pre-election



- Greater flexibility for registration authorities to work with their returning officers
- Key point is the register published after the closing date is the register in force for that electoral event
- County Registrar to publish latest date for appeal in respect of that specific election or referendum
- The register will reopen the day after polling day

How will the new process improve integrity?



- Over time. Not a big bang approach but a systematic one
- The legislation seeks to balance easier access and personal responsibility with registration authority activity.
- Every year registration authorities:
 - *can undertake any activities they consider appropriate to update and maintain the register – includes door-to-door canvas but also schools programmes; supermarket drives; local post office engagement etc*
 - *Annually Report to Electoral Commission on those activities and the steps taken to determine the effectiveness of those activities*
- The Electoral Commission will report annually on the status of the register
 - *can make recommendations to registration authorities in relation to their functions and to the Minister in respect of legislative change*


Further improvements - systems



Checktheregister.ie; iReg and Voter.ie



Data quality improvement work



Migration of all data to national electoral registration system (ERS)

ERS – A national system



There are two broad phases to this project:

1. Process change and data quality focus
2. Development of new national ERS
 - *A single high level of security and data protection*
 - *Culmination and completion of data quality improvements*
 - *A greater level of self-service available to the public*
 - *Improved features*

ERS current state of play:

- Project is in development;
- LG led project board in place;
- DCC is the lead authority building on Voter.ie

Communications campaign



- Large scale national campaign will start on 7 November
 - TV, Radio, including local radio, Social media and digital advertising; limited national newspaper
- Your voice matters and your vote is important.
 - Long time voter?
 - First time voter?
 - Checktheregister.ie
 - The easy way to secure your say

TV campaign




- Check the register – the easy way to secure your say
- The way we register to vote has changed and we're asking everyone to visit checktheregister.ie.
- Long time voter? First time voter?

Check the register.ie
The easy way to secure your say

Awareness campaign






THE EASY WAY TO SECURE YOUR SAY

Your voice matters and your vote is important

checktheregister.ie



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Government of Ireland

THE EASY WAY TO SECURE YOUR SAY

checktheregister.ie

Your voice matters and your vote is important

In order to secure your say in shaping Ireland's future, you must be on the electoral register. The way we register to vote has changed and we're asking everyone to visit checktheregister.ie to confirm their details. It'll only take you a few minutes. Checking, updating or registering has never been easier.

Whether you're a long time voter, or a first time voter, visit checktheregister.ie





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the easy way



to secure your say



checktheregister.ie



checktheregister.ie
your vote matters



The easy way
to secure your say

checktheregister.ie
check now



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What does the future look like?



- Local Government providing a service that works better for everyone – easier to access, easier to administer and delivering integrity
- National ERS will further support that change
- New opportunities will arise for efficiencies and improvements over time

Next steps



2022

- Gaining familiarity with the new process
- Media campaign November/December

2023

- Further awareness campaign in H1 2023
- Ongoing data quality work by registration authorities
- Beginning reporting cycle with An Coimisiún Toghcháin

2024

- European and Local Elections
- Ongoing data quality work by registration authorities
- Second reporting cycle



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Thank you

For more information please contact your local authority franchise team; or contact us at registerreform@housing.gov.ie