



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

# Electoral Registration Modernisation

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AILG – 23/25 February 2023

# AILG engagement



- December 2020 – Minister Noonan
- January 2021 – Meeting with Dept. officials
- September 2022 – Ministers wrote to all Cllrs
- November 2022 – Webinar on Part III
- February 2023 – AILG training seminar
- ...

# 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

# Oireachtas Joint Committee – 2016

## *Report on an Electoral Commission*



*“There was some agreement over the course of the Committee’s consultation about the broad parameters of a solution to problems. The central elements of the solution identified are:*

- A rolling register to replace the annual canvas and supplementary register;*
- Individual rather than household registration;*
- A central electronic register to replace the 31 separate registers - although there was no agreement as to whether an entirely new register should be compiled or existing registers combined and ‘cleaned up’;*
- The use of PPSN (PPS Numbers) to address the problems of inaccuracy and incompleteness in a manner compliant with the Data Protection Acts 1998-2003;*
- That online registration be investigated as part of the reform package and aspired to when there is satisfaction that it is secure.”*



# 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

Provision for those with no address

## **Reporting and oversight provided for the first time**

# 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 – with the exception of section 98 – this was commenced with the other provisions establishing An Coimisiún – SI No. 32 of 2023.**
- 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.

# Overview/key changes to 1992 Act



- Rolling register, single process – only change where electoral event has been called/polling day appointed
- All applications to RA, appeal to CR in cases of refusal
- Data sharing/database;
- Reporting to Electoral Commission
- Two new provisions with review clause (no address and anonymous)
- Physical illness or disability – now just illness or disability (applies to PV under Section 14 and SV under Section 17).
- Provisions in SV made to facilitate voting where a place is temporarily inaccessible



# 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
- Updates can be made at any time

## **Introduction of oversight and reporting arrangements**

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

# 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](https://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



**Check the Register** - the easy way to secure your say

[Home](#)[FAQ](#)[en | ga](#)

CheckTheRegister > Request Options

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:

- Register to vote
- Confirm or update your details
- Download forms
- [Find more information](#)

I'm already registered

Confirm or update online

Choose this if you

- Have your PPSN and Eircode
- Need to confirm your details
- Update your name or address

I want to register to vote

Register online

Choose this if you

- Want to register online
- Have your PPSN and Eircode
- Are aged 18 or over and living in Ireland
- Are aged 16 or 17 and want to pre-register

Other ways to register or update your details

Download a form

Choose this if you

- Don't have a PPSN
- Want to update your citizenship
- Want to apply for a special or postal vote
- Want to make a third party request for a change to the register

Further information


Check our FAQs

If you need more information on

- Voter eligibility
- Requirement for a PPSN
- Your information and how it's used

If you cannot find the information you're looking for, please contact your local authority

And in Dublin (MyGovID) –



Home

Gaeilge

Register of Electors

First Name\*Last Name\*

House NumberAddressEircode

(if applicable)(i.e. D05P020 D05 P020)

OR

Please enter either your First Name, Last Name & Address or First Name, Last Name & Eircode.

Search

Do you want to Register?

If you are not already registered to vote in Dublin please select this option

Register

Edit Your Details

Change your address, edit your details & remove yourself from the Register.

You need to search for yourself in order to edit your details

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# 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

# Elected Representatives



- Key users of the electoral register
- Understanding of electoral law
- Community focus, local knowledge
- Canvassing and information sharing
- Third party claims



# Awareness raising



- Process has changed
- First time voter?
  - *Online registration at [checktheregister.ie](https://checktheregister.ie)*
  - *Need PPSN and Eircode*
  - *If no PPSN, in person ID check option*
- Long time voter?
  - *Update details online with PPSN, DOB, Eircode*
  - *Paper option also available with ID check*
- Postal voter/Special voter
  - *Paper forms still needed for certifications*

Online update is  
easy and should  
only take a few  
minutes

# 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/availability of register



- 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 14<sup>th</sup> 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*

# Data cross-check



Local authorities now have 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.



# Where are we now?

## What have we learned?



- Systems upgraded, process is rolling
- People will engage online – over 50,000 applications – from all counties
  - *Learning every time, some refinements needed*
- We need to build on this good start
- Awareness raising works
  - *How can we reach more people, different groups?*
  - *A further national campaign or a regional approach?*
- Establishment of An Coimisiún, Section 98

# 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

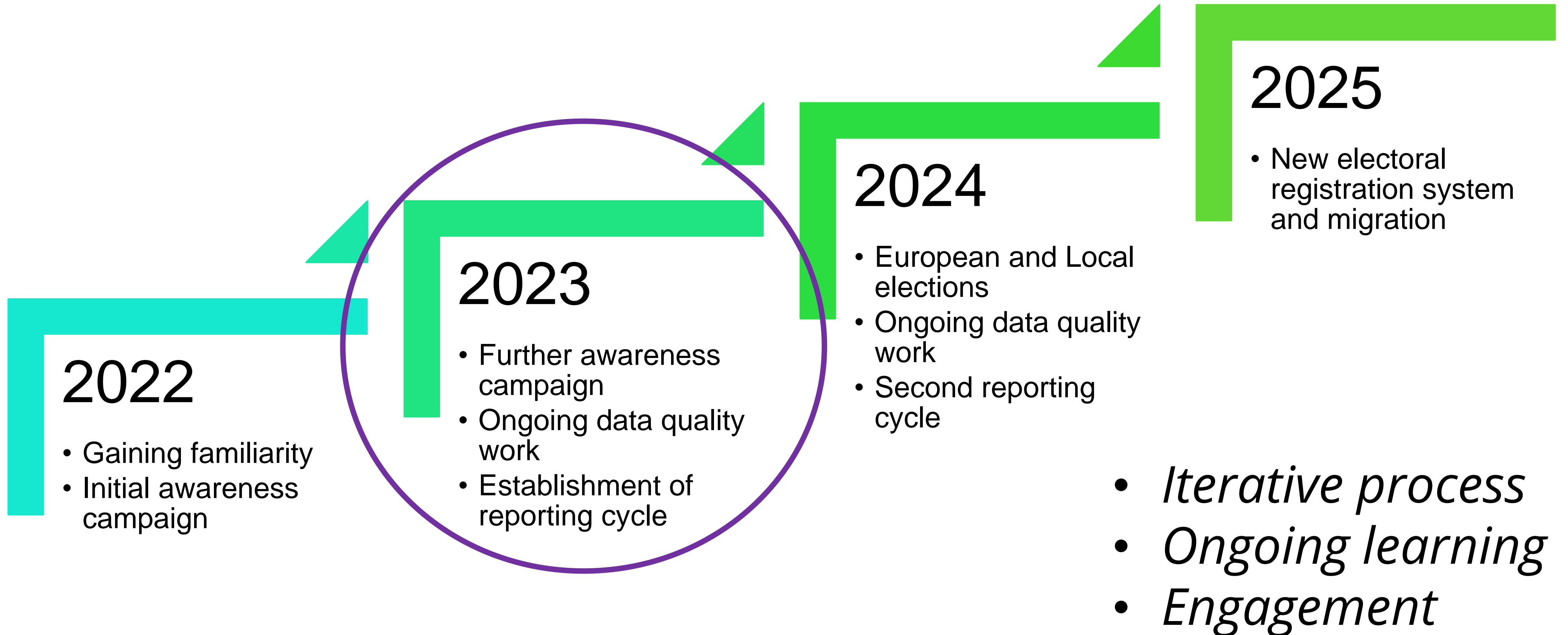
# What does the future look like?



- Local Government providing a service that works better for everyone – easier to access, easier to administer and delivering integrity
- A more complete, accurate electoral register supporting our democratic processes
- ERS will further support that change and provide new opportunities for efficiencies



# Next steps





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# Thank you

For more information please contact your local authority franchise team; or contact us at [registerreform@housing.gov.ie](mailto:registerreform@housing.gov.ie)