
Factsheet for political parties: requesting information on electors who are not registered individually

From 1 January to 27 February 2015 in England and Wales (and 2 March to 10 April 2015 in Scotland) registered political parties¹ can request information as to whether an elector is registered individually or not. This information may be used for purposes relating to electoral registration, but only until 7 May 2015.

This factsheet is designed to help political parties - at both a national and constituency level - understand what information they are entitled to, how they can get this information and what it will show them, including how they will be able to identify whether existing postal voters have lost their entitlement to vote by post on publication of the revised register.

Individual Electoral Registration (IER)

In Great Britain, the household system of electoral registration has been

¹ Other than a minor party, within the meaning of Section 160(1) of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.

replaced by Individual Electoral Registration (IER). Each person is now responsible for registering to vote individually. People can now register to vote online for the first time. You can read more about IER at www.gov.uk/yourvotematters.

As part of the transition to IER, those individuals who were already registered have had their name and address checked against government records.

Approximately 87%² of existing electors were matched and automatically transferred to the new IER registers without having to do anything. You can view results by [parliamentary constituency](#), [local authority and ward](#) on our website.³

² Based on figures for England and Wales where approximately 36.9 million existing electors were matched. In Scotland, the match against government records took place following the independence referendum, and we will be publishing the results of the exercise on 26 November.

³ Results for Scotland will be added on 26 November.

Electors who could not be matched have been sent a letter by their local Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) inviting them to register individually. Where an elector doesn't respond, EROs are required by law to take specified steps to follow up. EROs must make at least one personal visit to encourage a person to make an application where three invitations to register have been sent.

No-one will be removed from the register because of the change to IER before the May 2015 UK Parliamentary general election.

Although electors who were not matched will not be removed from the register as a result of the change until the end of the transition, in December 2015 at the earliest, these individuals will need to re-register in order to be moved onto the new registers.⁴ Applications can be made online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote or by completing a paper form.

Postal and proxy voters

After the publication of the revised register (which must happen by 1 December 2014 in England and Wales⁵ and by 2 March 2015 in Scotland), only those who have registered individually will be entitled to vote by post or proxy. After this point, anyone who is not registered individually will have to make an application to register individually, as

⁴ While the legislation provides for the transition to IER to be complete in 2016, the UK Government may decide to bring forward the end date of the transition to December 2015.

⁵ If, however, a by-election took place in the ERO's area between 1 July and 1 December 2014, the ERO may have postponed the publication of the revised register. In this case, the ERO can choose to publish their revised register at any time up until 2 February 2015.

well as a new application to vote by post or proxy.

We recognise that political parties may want to encourage current absent voters to take steps so they can continue to vote by post or proxy. To ensure you have the information to enable you to do this, you will need to refer to the relevant absent voting list that is current before the revised register is published.

What information can you request?

Political parties or individuals nominated for this purpose by the Nominating Officer of the party can ask the ERO for information as to who is registered individually ([see below](#)). The request can be made:

- in England and Wales, between 1 January and 27 February 2015
- in Scotland, between 2 March and 10 April 2015

On making such a request, you will be provided with a data copy of the electoral register which will indicate, by means of a marker against the record, whether an elector is individually registered. The data will relate to ordinary electors and will not include information on overseas electors, electors who have registered anonymously or those who have registered by means of a declaration of local connection or service declaration.

A political party may also request a copy of the list of absent voters at any time. To be able to identify any existing electors who have lost their absent

vote, you will want to ensure that you have a copy of the list of absent voters that is current immediately before the revised register is published. If you don't already have a copy, you will need to make a written request to the ERO for the absent voting list **before** the revised register is published.

By cross-referencing the information on who is not individually registered with the list of absent voters from before publication of the revised register, you will be able to identify whether a person who previously had a postal or proxy vote lost it on publication of the revised register as a result of not being registered individually.

How can you request access to the information?

Making a request for information on who is individually registered

The request must:

- be made by the party (i.e. by a member of the political party authorised by the party to make the request) or by a person nominated by the registered Nominating Officer to request the information for a particular UK Parliamentary constituency. Where a constituency crosses local authority boundaries, the request will need to be made to the ERO for each of the local authority areas included in the constituency.
- be made in writing (which includes email) to the relevant ERO. You can find their contact

details at www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/.

- be made in the period beginning 1 January to 27 February 2015 in England and Wales, and from 2 March to 10 April 2015 in Scotland. The information cannot be supplied if requested outside of these periods.

As copies of the information will contain sensitive personal data, EROs may ask the requester to provide evidence that they have been authorised or nominated to make the request.

A request can only be made **once**. There is no provision for an ERO to provide the information again.

You will therefore need to consider the most appropriate time to make the request. In reaching your decision, you may find it helpful to discuss with the ERO the best time to do so in order to maximise the impact of any registration work you plan to do using the information – particularly as many EROs will be carrying out significant registration activity in early 2015 to ensure their registers are as accurate and complete as possible before the May 2015 polls.

The ERO must supply the information free of charge within 14 calendar days.

The information will be supplied in the same format as is currently used for the supply of data versions of the register to political parties.

Making a request for the absent voting list

Any request for a copy of the current absent voting list must:

- be made in writing
- specify whether you require the current postal, proxy and/or postal proxy list(s)
- state whether you want the information in data or paper format

How the data can be used

The information on whether a person is individually registered may only be used for purposes relating to electoral registration⁶ and only until the end of **7 May 2015**.

You may authorise another person to use this information, but only for electoral registration purposes.

We will be providing further guidance to support you in using the information by January 2015.

⁶ In certain circumstances it may be used for the purposes of civil and criminal proceedings.