



**Rialtas na hÉireann**  
Government of Ireland

# **MODERNISATION OF THE ELECTORAL REGISTER IN IRELAND – SUMMARY of REPORT OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

Prepared by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government

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## SUMMARY

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The public consultation on a series of proposals to modernise the electoral registration process ran from 17 December 2018 to 15 March 2019. Views were sought on a series of proposals:

1. Simplification of forms and the process
2. A rolling electoral register (a continuous 'live' electoral register)
3. Optional online registration (with the option of registering with paper forms continuing) and secure self-service
4. A move to individual registration only
5. Enabling a single national electoral register database with unique identifiers
6. A move to verified identity using one's Personal Public Service Number (PPSN)
7. Data sharing between public bodies and electoral registration authorities (local authorities) to maintain accuracy and comprehensiveness.

A significant awareness programme accompanied the consultation period to maximise awareness and encourage a wide range of people to input. 187 submissions were received from a range of individuals, community and voluntary organisations, Local Authorities, public representatives, political parties and other stakeholders.

In general, respondents were positively disposed to the proposals with notable numbers in favour of simplification of forms and processes; rolling registration and a single database. Opinion was more divided, though still positive, on identity verification using PPSNs and online registration. Issues raised related to implementation of those particular reforms. Individual registration and data sharing had the most mixed responses with respondents identifying a number of risks/issues with implementation, which are being very carefully considered.

On the four additional proposals (provision of a system of anonymous registration; improved provision for registration for those with no-fixed address; early registration for 16-18 year olds and the removal of provision for the edited register) although a smaller number of people responded specifically to these proposals, those that did overwhelmingly supported these reforms, with many organisations contributing detailed suggestions on implementation.

Overall themes arising in the consultation included:

- Respondents welcome measures to improve the security and accuracy of the registration process but want flexibility built in to maximise participation by all.
- Identity verification, Data protection and Privacy are key issues for respondents.
- Online options were welcomed but respondents are concerned about technical security, stability and resilience.
- A shift to individual registration needs to be approached with care to ensure those who are at risk of not registering, particularly those who need assistance to do so, are provided with appropriate options.
- There is a strong desire for continued publicity and awareness-raising on this project and related matters.

Work is now underway to further advance the modernisation project:

- Drafting of a General Scheme of a Bill: this will set out legislative proposals that will be sent to Government seeking approval for drafting of an Electoral Amendment Bill.
- Voter.ie is an online platform, piloted by the four Dublin Local Authorities in the run-up to the May 2019 referendum and local and European Parliament elections, which provides voters with an option of registering or changing their details online. The Department is working with Dublin City Council to evaluate voter.ie with a view to a national roll-out of an optional online registration service.
- Work is underway to develop the streamlined application forms – this will include consultation with all relevant stakeholders.

Updates on the project will be available at [www.registerreform.gov.ie](http://www.registerreform.gov.ie). (which redirects to the Department's website [www.housing.gov.ie](http://www.housing.gov.ie)). Implementation of any changes to the electoral registration process will normally be accompanied by public information campaigns.

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