

POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTIONS ACT 2009

EXPLANATORY NOTES

COMMENTARY ON SECTIONS

Part 4: Electoral Registration

Section 30: Voluntary provision of identifying information

145. **Section 30** contains provisions requiring registration officers, after 1 July 2010, to take steps to collect identifying information from electors for the purpose of improving the accuracy of the electoral register. At this stage it will not be compulsory for electors to provide such information.
146. *Subsection (1)* specifies that the identifying information to be collected is the elector's signature, date of birth and National Insurance ("NI") number (or an indication that the person does not have a NI number). Under *subsection (2)*, where a person is prevented from providing a signature because of a disability or inability to read they can instead give an indication confirm that that is the case.
147. *Subsection (3)* determines the role of registration officers in obtaining this information as part of their responsibility to maintain the registers. A registration officer is required to take steps to obtain identifying information from eligible electors under their duty to take all necessary steps to register eligible electors and when conducting an annual household canvass, including determining applications for registration.
148. *Subsection (4)* states what compulsory steps should be taken by the registration officer as a result of *subsection (3)*. In taking those steps it must be explained that there is no compulsion on the elector to provide the requested information. Furthermore, the reasons for collecting the information should be explained: namely that identifying information can help to improve the accuracy of the registers.
149. *Subsection (5)* requires that a record be kept by the registration officer showing the information that has been collected during the process of maintaining registers, conducting canvasses and determining applications for registration.
150. *Subsection (6)* gives a timeframe for the application of these duties: registration officers will not be required to collect identifying information before 1 July 2010.