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Welcome to new members
Message from the Production Team...

This is another milestone in the history of ARENA. In 2012 came the switch from printed to digital format, then, in the middle of last year, it was decided to change the frequency of issue from quarterly to monthly, combining it with the newsletter in the week of its publication.

This is the first edition that has been produced entirely “in-house” by the AEA with software widely employed in the printing industry and which has been used by Print UK who have produced ARENA for us over the last five years.

We would like to offer our grateful thanks to Daryl and Vanessa, at Print UK, for all their help and effort throughout that period and, as we have already told them, we will endeavour to maintain the high standards they have set!

The monthly format obviously enables us to provide you with more up-to-the-minute news and information. The March issue will contain reports and pictures from Conference in Brighton.

This is an exciting and rewarding new venture, so please be gentle with us! However, the magazine is only as good as its content and we rely on our members to provide interesting and informative articles for inclusion each month, so please don thinking caps, engage fingers on keyboard and create something. It doesn't necessarily have to be work-related.

Send all copy to Lesley at lesley.hales@aea-elections.co.uk.

Lesley Hales
Nigel Hurll
Almost there! We look forward to seeing you all and, however you are travelling, we hope you have a safe journey. If you haven’t yet got directions, follow this link to the Brighton Metropole’s website.

The Programme for 2017’s Annual Conference is arguably the most exciting for some years thanks to there being two MPs attending to give first-hand accounts of their vision for the future.

Some of the highlights include:

**Keynote speech**  
The new Minister, Chris Skidmore MP, Parliamentary Secretary (Minister for the Constitution) is confirmed to attend to give delegates an idea of his vision for the future.

**Electoral Fraud**  
The Rt Hon Sir Eric Pickles is scheduled to attend to discuss his report *Securing the Ballot*. There will also be a practitioner’s perspective as someone who has first-hand experience as well as the AEA’s opinion on the report.

**From analogue to digital...and beyond – 40 years of tracking election data in Britain**  
Professors Rallings and Thrasher have appeared at the Annual Conference on many occasions to enlighten us on information collected by the LGC Elections Centre at the University of Plymouth.

**Question Time**  
The opportunity to examine key issues facing the profession and to really make your vote count!

**Sharing Good Practice**  
Hear from the Electoral Commission, Cabinet Office and the AEA on how they intend to share good practice across electoral administration going forward.

**Electoral Commission Update – Including its Strategic Review**  
This session focuses on the concerns we share about putting the voter first; changes the Electoral Commission have made to their approach and the challenges remaining following its recent strategic review.

If you are a Twitter user, you should follow (or post) any Conference tweets using the hashtag below.

#AEABrighton2017
Click below to access the full Conference booklet

Association of Electoral Administrators
Annual Conference 2017

Celebrating 30 Years

Hilton Metropole Hotel, Brighton
5 - 8 February 2017
One of the key working groups the Cabinet Office oversees is the Accessibility of Elections Group, which aims to improve the accessibility of electoral processes by:

- Identifying barriers faced by disabled citizens in registering and participating in elections and referendums, and proposing potential solutions;
- Seeking the views of key delivery partners and stakeholders; and
- Recommending any necessary changes to electoral policy, guidance and electoral legislation that will support improved accessibility.

The AEA are represented on the group, as are the Electoral Commission, Mencap, the RNIB, Scope, MIND and Consultant Psychiatrists. The meetings to date have been extremely informative, with key information and challenges being shared.

At the last meeting, Doctors Maria Clarke and Masum Khwaja, who are Consultant Psychiatrists, shared with the group an extremely interesting and informative paper on the steps they have taken to promote voting rights for those living with mental illness, which can be accessed here.

It includes links to a short film and also explains a little of how they are hoping to progress the work done to date. Drs Clarke and Khwaja hope this year to:

- Identify which Trusts nationally have a voting rights policy (the one for CNWL is here). Included in correspondence with Trusts will be an encouragement to adopt a voting rights policy if they don’t have one.
- Undertake a local carers survey to identify knowledge of voting rights amongst carers and their willingness to support their family/friends living with mental illness to register and to vote.
- Strengthen links with RETHINK and MIND.
- Work locally, particularly with long stay rehab wards (where research showed patients were particularly disenfranchised), to ensure each unit has a voting rights lead and monitors implementation of the Trust policy.
- Support a doctoral researcher researching nature and efficacy of NHS projects supporting patients on medium and long stay wards to register and to vote if they wish to do so.
- Complete a CPD module for the RCPsychs on voting rights.
- Possibly link with recovery colleges in other Trusts.

Ideally, they would like the Care Quality Commission to be encouraged to set as a standard (promoting social inclusion) that each organisation working with Intellectually impaired and those living with mental illness has a voting rights policy that includes a recommendation to ask service users/patients whether they would like help to register and to vote and that this measure is included in care plans and supported by professionals and/or where possible carers.

The AEA will continue to work with key stakeholders to provide expert assistance in delivering greater access to the electoral process, and will share with members information and guidance that helps both administrators and electors as and when it arises.
INTRODUCTION

This update is published every month in ARENA and provides updates, details of consultations that the AEA have been asked to comment on and information about national meetings attended by officers with details of the key issues discussed.

If there is any other information you would like covering in future editions, please let us know.

IN THIS MONTH’S UPDATE

A. Meetings and updates
B. Consultations
C. General information
D. Previous update

PART A - MEETINGS AND UPDATES

I. LIST OF MEETINGS ATTENDED BY AEA OFFICERS IN DECEMBER AND JANUARY

- Electoral Commission – ERRWG – 11 January 2017
- Electoral Commission, Cabinet Office and AEA Round Table on MERP priorities and progress – 11 January 2017
- Cabinet Office - Ministerial Roundtable – Movers and Renters – 12 January 2017
- Electoral Commission – Sharing good practice in Electoral Registration and Counts – 19 January 2017

2. SUMMARY OF ISSUES DISCUSSED AT MEETINGS ATTENDED BY JOHN TURNER, CHIEF EXECUTIVE

There is nothing to report in this update.

3. SUMMARY OF ISSUES DISCUSSED AT MEETINGS

ELECTIONS

Combined Authority Mayoral Elections Regulations – they have been debated in the House of Commons on 10 January and will be debated in the House of Lords towards the end of January. It should be noted that the wording in the final Order has significant implications for the checking of nomination paper subscribers in that it is the register in force on the day the nomination paper is submitted.

May 2017 Polls – the Electoral Commission will be conducting a public awareness campaign similar to 2016 with TV, radio, digital and video on demand advertising. The theme will be “On your doorstep”. The campaign will take place between 20 February and 20 March 2017. In Scotland there will be a booklet sent to each household and the digital advertising will run until polling day. As there are no scheduled polls taking place in London, there will be no campaign in London. The majority of the Electoral Commission guidance is now published with new guidance for County ROs shortly to be provided. They are still working on their resources, which will be published as they become available, with it all published by the end of February. Their polling station staff training slides are being reviewed.

Voter ID at polling stations – following on from its response to the Sir Eric Pickles fraud review,
the Government is keen to pilot voter ID options at polling stations in the May 2018 polls. 18 local authority areas are identified in the annex to the report and will be invited to apply to conduct a pilot, although participation is not compulsory. It is likely that other areas will be able to apply.

2019 European Parliamentary Election - there is at present an election scheduled for 2019 but it is not known if the UK will be participating as it will be subject to the Brexit negotiations. Concerns have been expressed regarding the possibility of a European Parliamentary by-election as MEP’s resign and those on the party list being no longer available to take up the role of MEP, especially as we get closer to 2019 and Brexit. A couple of regions already have limited numbers still available on the party list.

2020 elections – the Electoral Commission are currently looking at how best to provide the guidance for the scheduled elections in 2020, considering the complexity and number of polls scheduled to take place.

Electoral Registration and Election Count good practice – the Electoral Commission have been looking at the count statistics and data from the June referendum. In addition, the Electoral Commission have been looking in detail at the practices of individual LA’s and working closely with the AEA with a view to producing good practice guidance for both the canvass and the election count in due course. Commission staff attended recent AEA branch meetings and received valuable feedback on electoral registration matters.

The AEA and the Commission would jointly like to thank branches and members for their contributions and to encourage all members to continue to share ideas and solutions to the challenges faced.

MERP priority areas – the AEA, Electoral Commission and Cabinet Office have been discussing the key areas for programme prioritisation, which will be considered by the Programme Board in January. Feedback on the agreed priorities will be reported on in the next update.

ELECTORAL REGISTRATION

Cabinet Office IER Funding Survey and Justification Led Bids – the deadline for justification led bid applications is 31 January 2017, with the deadline for the survey now being 28 February 2017.

Movers and Renters – the Minister held a roundtable meeting with various stakeholders including the AEA to discuss the issues and barriers relating to the registration of movers, renters and the homeless.

Duplicates – the Cabinet Office are currently carrying out a discovery phase to identify the scale of the problem and possible solutions for consideration. They have received the AEA branches’ definitions of a duplicate and the EMS suppliers are looking to produce statistics for the different types of duplicates. The discovery phase is likely to take a maximum of six months.

Register data survey – the Electoral Commission are currently analysing the data from the survey and will produce a report of the December registers in February.

Special category and absent voting forms review – the Electoral Commission are currently considering the feedback they received as part of the review. Concerns were raised by administrators regarding the single occupancy tick box especially for online applications and the impact it was having whereby electors were being deleted by mistake. As a result this is also being reviewed.
4. OTHER UPDATES

Electoral Fraud Review

The Government response to the Sir Eric Pickles electoral fraud review has been published and is available [here](#). The Cabinet Office are working closely with the Electoral Commission in relation to guidance following the Government’s response. However, due to limited Parliamentary time available as a result of Brexit, it is likely that any changes in legislation may have to be linked with other scheduled legislative changes.

5. LEGISLATION UPDATE

New Legislation

There is nothing to report in this update.

Draft Legislation

[The Combined Authorities (Mayoral Elections) Order 2017](#)

PART B – CONSULTATIONS

6. FORMAL CONSULTATIONS RECEIVED

- Department for Communities and Local Government - The Parish Meetings (Polls) Regulations 2016

7. INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS / DRAFT LEGISLATION REQUESTED TO COMMENT ON

- Cabinet Office MERP – IER information for civic society organisations
- Cabinet Office – AEA branches consulted on: Definitions of what a duplicate actually is? How do EMS’s use functionality for duplicates? Thank you to all AEA branches and individuals – a copy of the collective response is available [here](#)

PART C – GENERAL INFORMATION

8. THE ASSOCIATION’S ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN 2017

The AEA Annual Conference will be held at Hotel Metropole, Brighton from **Sunday 5 February to Wednesday 8 February 2017**. The provisional programme and booking forms are available [here](#).

9. AEA NATIONAL SEMINAR 2017

The AEA National Seminar will be held at the Gateshead Newcastle Hilton on Monday 3 July 2017. Further details to follow.

10. REGISTRATION DATES AND ELECTION TIMETABLES 2017

The AEA has produced a table of registration application deadline dates, interim election notice of alteration dates for local government elections 2016/17 and election timetables for 2017. The registration dates table is available [here](#), England and Wales flow chart [here](#), Scottish flow chart [here](#), interim election notice of alteration dates [here](#), and the election timetables [here](#).

11. MONTHLY REMINDER LIST

The monthly reminder list of key dates and activities can be viewed [here](#).

PART D – PREVIOUS UPDATE

The update for December can be viewed [here](#).
This is my first monthly training update to you which I hope you will find useful. Other members of the training team: Laura Lock, Tasha Davis and John Owen will also provide regular updates as we go through the year. Many of you who know me, and have worked alongside me over the years will know how high a priority I have always placed on training and development of electoral staff at all levels. Since November, I have enjoyed being more involved in the process as a part-time Training Facilitator, helping to develop both new and existing training courses to meet your ever-growing training needs. I look forward over the coming year to meeting and hearing from you in my new role.

As we start the new year we appreciate that many of our members’ attention will likely turn to the preparations for May’s polls, just over three months away.

The Association’s training team have been working hard to prepare and update courses and materials to support you as you face the new year either for forthcoming elections or other key electoral tasks. Take a browse through our recently updated training calendar to see what is on offer over the next 12 months. We are certain there is something for everyone this year.

Courses take place across the country and are held at a number of accessible venues, for example Blaby, Cambourne, Camden, Coventry, Preston, Tiverton, Wycombe and York. Or you can take advantage of our on-site training where basically we come to you to deliver any of our courses.

All of the courses provide delegates with knowledge, guidance on relevant legislation, proceedings and general good practice. They also provide opportunities for the exchange of experiences and ideas during group discussions. Appropriate course notes and documentation will be provided for all courses which will remain a helpful future reference.

Don’t forget that we are there immediately before the polls with Polling Station Staff Training where we come along to deliver the training to your staff, releasing you to focus on other priorities.

Also, we are currently developing a one day course for Count Supervisors which would be delivered at your Council Offices. This course focuses on the checks and balances that need to be in place at both the verification and count as well as multi-seat count procedures.

Whilst we have our regular offering, the training team are happy to discuss with you any particular individual needs or support you may require and can design training specifically to meet your requirements.

For all training enquiries please email the training team for a prompt response: training@aea-elections.co.uk

Why not take a look now and secure all of your team’s training – it’s quick and easy to book. All training sessions are open to members and non-members, and offer good value for money with discounts for multiple bookings.
Our interactive online training solution, Election Trainer, provides high quality, convenient and cost-effective training to your polling station staff. Furthermore, the use of Election Trainer will remove the demands of planning, organising and delivering face-to-face training in the weeks leading up to the May elections – providing you with additional time at one of the busiest periods of the electoral timetable.

As the market-leading online training module, Election Trainer was used to train over 23,000 polling staff at the recent May and June electoral events alone. It has been used in a variety of ways – most have used it for all polling station staff either as stand-alone training or as a refresher shortly before polling day.

What’s more – 99% of trainees appreciated the quality as well as convenience of the training and 97% of electoral administrators said it saved them time.

We have training modules available for single and combined elections, including mayoral elections. So get in touch with us for a free demonstration licence to see for yourself how Election Trainer can save you both time and money.

To find out more about Election Trainer, please just contact us at info@halarose.co.uk

We look forward to speaking to you soon.

Election Trainer is developed by the global leader in secure election management and electronic voting solutions, Scytl, and is exclusively available through an established, forward-thinking supplier of electoral software solutions, Halarose Ltd, only.
Congratulations to Andy Tiffin, Southern Branch, who has been elected unopposed in the election for AEA Deputy Chairman. He will formally take up office after the Annual General Meeting in Brighton on the 8th February 2017.

Andy is the Elections and Information Manager at Hart District Council in Hampshire. He joined them in November 2003 after a career in management and process redesign within the banking sector. He left after being made redundant twice and thought he would explore the quieter world of local government. Little did he know what lay ahead.

At first he knew nothing of elections, the staff in the department had all left and not surprisingly his first count could be best described as total chaos and lasted until well after breakfast. After that initial baptism of fire he found the support of colleagues invaluable and still considers the encouragement and training offered by branch members and the AEA to be some of the most important strengths of our organisation.

He has been Vice Chair and Chair of the Hampshire and IOW County group, branch training officer, Deputy Chair and Chair of Southern Branch. He has been a member of board since 2012 and is on the Electoral Commission’s Elections Referendums and Registration Working Group.

He was born in the North East, is a graduate of Liverpool University and has lived and worked in Scotland and Devon before becoming exiled in the South East. He still supports Newcastle United and remains hopeful of seeing some trophies before too long. He remains foolishly optimistic in that regard. He is also pleased to say that Hart’s counts no longer last until breakfast.

Andy Tiffin
AEA Deputy Chairman Elect
A democracy that works for everyone?

Dave Jones asks if enough is being done to facilitate the registration of homeless people

The Minister for the Constitution Chris Skidmore in a speech “A democracy that works for everyone” (24th October 2016) declared “I want to ensure that we have a democracy that works for everyone. A democracy that treats every part of the United Kingdom as an equal and every British citizen as an equal partner. A democracy that works for those under registered groups, for vulnerable groups whose voice struggles to be heard……”.

He also said “we seek to remove the barriers that prevent any under registered group from participating in elections; that we create a democracy that works for everyone.”

He goes on to outline some of the changes being planned to this end, including “votes for life”.

I would like to use the example of the time, thought and money that has been put into overseas electors and now the “votes for life” plans as a pointer to what needs to be done about registering what is perhaps the most marginal and unrepresented group in the UK today – those with “No Fixed Address”.

The UK’s 300,000 sofa surfers, along with tens of thousands of people in temporary accommodation, hostels, street homeless, travellers and boat dwellers are generally not registered to vote.

If my local authority were an average one, we’d expect to find over 1,000 potential electors in this category. (In reality, high-rent, low-wage areas, particularly London, are disproportionately affected). Yet such an average authority will in reality have a handful, a few dozen at most, registered as homeless electors via the “local connection” registration form. Many homeless are in temporary accommodation. These people can be included on our register as their accommodation is on the gov.uk property index. However it is difficult to achieve a high registration rate despite our extra work here. We can only presume that temporary residents feel less inclined to register at a temporary address. There are also many issues over the precise address in many such places with the result that just before an election we can end up with large numbers of applications in our “unknown address queue”.

The contrast with the number of overseas voters we have is staggering. With over 130,000 British citizens living overseas registered to vote, that’s over 500 on average for each local authority. And enough to swing the vote in some of the more marginal constituencies.

So what is the reason for the difference?

And what can we in electoral services do to ensure that homeless/NFA residents are registered to vote in similar numbers to the registration of overseas voters (a constituency that I will argue is of a similar size)?

The contrast between registering the homeless and registering overseas voters

In the speech referred to above, the Minister says “overseas voters are just one of the many under registered groups”. In the sense that “only” 130,000
people are registered as overseas voters.

At first sight this appears to be the case as there are over 5 million British people living abroad. It has been said that the “15-year rule” prevents many from registering. However, millions have moved abroad in the last 15 years and have chosen not to register. The government has put significant money, and electoral registration staff significant time into registering overseas voters since IER, with the result that the numbers registered leapt from around 30,000 to over 130,000. This is of course only a small proportion of the potential overseas electorate, so in that sense they are as the Minister says “under registered”. However, this group has a choice regarding registration, whereas other groups’ registration is a legal obligation.

It is debatable how many overseas citizens are actually interested in voting in a country they no longer live in. I am not aware of any data on this issue, but a quick survey of ten people in and around my office shows that none of us would register to vote if we lived overseas. We can presume that most of the overseas voters who were eligible within the 15-year rule that wanted to did actually register by 23rd June 2016 – overseas voters were more likely to take part in this referendum than any other election. Perhaps half that number again wanted to register but were unable to. Which could have meant around 200,000 registered overseas electors. If the 15 year rule is scrapped, and the interest in elections from the half of overseas citizens who have been abroad more than 15 years is the same as those currently eligible (unlikely, but I’m being generous here), there may be as many as 400,000 overseas citizens wanting to be on the electoral register.

With as many as 300,000 sofa surfers and 100,000 officially homeless (74,630 households in temporary accommodation), it is clear that the numbers of homeless and overseas is broadly similar. Which begs the question are electoral services officers, under the direction of the government and Cabinet Office, putting in an equal amount of time and effort into registering these “under registered groups”?

Are overseas electors being prioritised?

Questions such as “should overseas electors have the power to swing an election result due to the number of overseas voters in some key marginals”, and “shouldn’t UK resident taxpayers including the homeless (all pay VAT; of the 400,000, 47% in London pay income tax too) be prioritised over those who choose not to live in and pay tax in the UK”) have been raised at the last two AEA meetings I was at. However, they are questions for politicians and journalists and are not within my remit.

My questions are more specifically related to the registration process, and the advice, money and guidance offered by the Cabinet Office.

1. Homeless people must be permitted to register online like everyone else

Since IER, all our publicity emphasises how easy it is to register. It only takes a few minutes. Whether you’re on a beach in Bali, serving with the armed forces in Afghanistan or homeless in the USA, so long as you fulfil the nationality qualifications and have internet access or a smartphone, you can indeed register online in a few minutes.

But not if you have no fixed address within the UK.

In fact homeless people are the only people expected to have a printer and print their “local connection” form from the “about my vote” website. The people in our society least
likely to be able to afford to have a printer, never mind the room to house it, are the only ones expected to print their own form! Alternatively, they have to contact their local electoral services office. Patients in a mental hospital and many street homeless already have difficulties with officialdom. But even “average” electors could have trouble with this with many offices only accessible after being passed from call-centre pillar to call centre post. Our registration rates would be catastrophically low if all electors were expected to do this!

I can see only two reasons for not putting the form online.

Firstly – street homeless, mental hospital patients, property guardians (live-in security guards), or travellers, their address will not match the records our software use from the database of residential addresses.

However, the IT software already has (Xpress) the possibility of dealing with non-residential addresses not on our database. The system wouldn’t need much tweaking to build that into a system for online registration of citizens without a permanent residential address. An “NFA online form” would need to be specifically designed to comply with the relevant information required, just as it has been done for overseas electors.

Secondly – it could be open to fraud with people registering at multiple non-residential addresses.

This is of course a danger we all strive to avoid. However, the same applies to overseas voters – what is to prevent an overseas elector registering with more than one local authority where they had been on a register? Of course, there is nothing to stop this. With the scrapping of the 15-year rule, and the proposal to loosen the requirement to have at least been on the electoral role somewhere in the UK, the potential for fraud is even greater. (Interestingly, the passport check of citizenship is also open to fraud as the “required field” of passport number that overseas electors must give is actually a placebo and can be got round by entering any 9 digit number!).

Furthermore, since people who own and live in more than one home can register more than once, we have no way of knowing if people are registered multiple times when they shouldn’t be. The “CORE” address system was abandoned before the introduction of IER, so the “second home” question of registration forms is also a placebo and serves no purpose except perhaps making potential fraudsters think twice before registering twice. (Many people who own two homes also seem to think they are entitled to register and vote in LA elections where they have holiday homes simply because they pay council tax there).

So while registering the homeless creates another potential fraud route, these already exist. The philosophy I was taught as a new electoral administrator regarding registration is to err on the side of inclusiveness. I am not aware that registration fraud is a serious problem for the UK in any case.

2 Homeless people must have the same resources made available to help with registration as overseas electors

The 130,000 overseas electors have received an enormous amount of resources from electoral registration officers over the last year. In our office, we had our two most experienced administrators working pretty much full time on overseas electors from April until the referendum. With the help of the guidance available, the online form, and extra money (though the £19,500 we received specifically for overseas electors’ registration wasn’t until May – too late to recruit or retrain) we were able to register or reregister getting on for 2,500 voters before the referendum. This was of course aided by the perseverance of the electors themselves – as many as 15 emails could be exchanged to resolve all the issues arising.
This is in complete contrast to the resources put into registering the up to 400,000 without a fixed address, even though registration is compulsory for them.

The guidance was minimal – contrast the 737 (at the last count) search results on the Electoral Commission website with a mere 70 results for homeless voters. Most of those 70 are duplicates for the 4 regions of the UK, too.

Finally, we have the huge amount of effort by the government to extend the right to vote for British citizens overseas, and the Electoral Commission’s necessarily lengthy response. A complete contrast to the time and thought that has gone in to the problems of how to register the up to 400,000 British citizens actually living in the UK.

Electoral administrators work to ensure that every elector is treated equally as our job is about ensuring that everybody is entitled to one equal vote. To find ourselves working within a system that makes it harder to register for the most disadvantaged while resources are thrown at citizens who are not even required to register does not sit easily with our professional conscience.

I don’t know a great deal about law making – an explanation recently given to me about the difference between primary and secondary legislation was news to me! Having briefly researched it, it seems unlikely to me that the changes needed to treat homeless electors equally would need primary legislation. I therefore see no reason why these changes can’t be implemented before the 2020 election, thus ensuring that our democracy really does work for everyone.

This article started life as a discussion at an AEA regional meeting, and was originally written as an e-mail. Following further discussions that have arisen from the article, I would like to make the following additional three points.

Firstly, some have said that there aren’t enough homeless applicants to warrant a specialised online form. I would say that we don’t know what the demand would be until we make it available. Up to 400,000 people could be eligible to register using this route and we have a specific online registration form for Crown Servants and their partners, of which there are only 10-20,000.

Secondly, it has been said that a lot of money had to be put into overseas registration because it was a specific manifesto commitment. My feeling is that the requirement on the ERO to produce a complete and accurate electoral register means that the already existing legal requirement for everybody to be on the electoral register should mean that equal resources are put in to all difficult-to-register groups. (Incidentally, MPs voted not to make manifesto commitments legally binding).

Thirdly, there has been some discussion about whether moving the paper Local Connection Form to an online version would require primary legislation, or whether a Statutory Instrument would be enough. I, some other AEA members, and some academics in this field, take the view that the latter would be sufficient, allowing such a change to be made in time for the 2020 General Election.

Dave Jones is an electoral administrator working in the south-east of England

Dave says: “Any views expressed in this article are my own and not the policy of my employing authority or its Electoral Registration Officer.”
A number of concerns were raised on the members’ forum last year as regards the wording of the standard entry for EROs on the ICO register of data controllers, and whether the current wording was sufficient to cover EROs following the changes introduced to processes introduced over the last few years.

The Association has been in correspondence with the ICO about the issue and we are pleased to report that some extremely sensible amendments have been made to the standard entry that most EROs use. It is probably worthwhile reassuring everyone that the previous standard entry was considered to cover the ERO’s responsibilities but the amended wording makes the issues more explicit and will also cover RO functions.

The ICO has advised that “[although] the template on our website will take a little longer to amend … we can take amendments over the phone via our helpline as long as the security number is quoted or alternatively amendments can be requested by sending an email to registration@ico.org.uk. The registration helpline number is 01625 545740.”

The ICO cannot automatically update all ERO registrations as it is for each data controller to make the relevant entry, so if you do wish to switch to the new standard entry, please contact them now or at the time you renew your entry to request the change.

The wording of the revised standard entry can be viewed and/or downloaded by clicking the appropriate file icon below, depending on which version you want:-
How to deal quickly and efficiently with the increases in rolling registration activity

A combination of increased media, especially around the EU Referendum and increased advertising to check your credit score have already increased rolling registration activity and we expect this to continue as voters are taking more and more interest in politics.

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www.print.uk.com @ electoral.services@print.uk.com 01753 567100
I have worked at Stockport Council for nearly two years. I left school at 16 wanting to be a Chef but I soon realised it wasn’t for me.

I heard about the Apprenticeship Scheme and decided that it would be a great opportunity to learn whilst on the job. In February 2015 I got a level 3 apprenticeship with Stockport Council, working in the Elections Department. My role was assisting others, filing and admin.

I started my NVQ Level 3 Apprenticeship at the same time as the General Election in May 2015, so it was a really busy time but I got to learn a lot!

In October 2015, an opportunity came up for a Scale 3 CSS Officer within the Elections Department so I applied and got the job! The Council was really supportive as I was allowed to complete my NVQ Apprenticeship alongside my new role.

The post has given me a lot more responsibility as I am now tasked with the booking and staffing of the Polling Stations as well as organising the equipment needed.

Next year I am also starting a Foundation Course with the Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA) which is the first step towards a full Certificate in Electoral Registration and Electoral Administration. This is my future goal!

I love how varied my job is and no day is the same. Two months ago I was doing Electoral Registration and now I’m helping to organise the forthcoming election. My role at Stockport Council has been a really exciting opportunity so far!

We would have liked to show a complete picture of James but what you see is what we got from the piece that appeared on the Greater Manchester Jobs website in the middle of January!
This was drawn to our attention recently and, whilst it does not relate to the UK, election fraud in the US has been international news during the last few months – and much of it comes down to how voter registration works. This report was produced by a research organisation, the PEW Center On The States, into the problems of voter registration in the US - admittedly back in 2012 - but we wonder how relevant it still might be and if improvements have been made.

Some of the content seems very familiar! Notable extracts follow.

“The inability of this paper-based process to keep up with voters as they move or die can lead to problems with the rolls, including the perception that they lack integrity or could be susceptible to fraud.”

“Election officials administer a system that is fundamentally inefficient in a number of ways: they generally do not have access to modern data-matching techniques used by private industry and other government agencies to compare records to readily available databases and minimize inaccuracies caused by Americans’ mobility. They are relegated to reacting to incoming information from voters and third-party organisations, if it comes to them at all. Additionally, much of it is presented with inaccuracies and in a concentrated period right before an election, when they are responsible for all other aspects of election administration. They typically receive information on paper that must be entered manually into the voter systems, greatly increasing the potential to introduce errors.”

“Far too often, the submitted registration forms are incomplete, or present duplicate or conflicting information. In response, local election officials must redirect limited resources to hiring large numbers of temporary data-entry staff to manually process and verify applications. This comes at a particularly busy time when other tasks, such as recruiting and training poll workers and preparing for Election Day, must be done.”

The report may be viewed and/or downloaded by clicking the image of the front page below.
Welcome to the following new members....

We haven’t included this feature for a while so they may not be “brand new”!

**East Midlands**
Jerry Barnes and Kim Cross, Rutland County Council, Julie Prestidge, Consultant, Judith Sweeney and Steve Tucker, Oadby & Wigston Borough Council, Beth Pinkney, Bassetlaw District Council, Shaun Grey, North Lincolnshire Council, Ranjit Banwai and Lou Stone, Daventry District Council, Caroline Percival, Northampton Borough Council, James Hartshorn, Derby City Council, Emily Cieslak, South Derbyshire District Council, Graham Watts, City of Lincoln Council

Rayhan Chowdhury, Westminster City Council, Fiona Alderman, Redbridge Council, Conor Griffiths, Royal Borough of Greenwich

**North East & Yorkshire**
Dawn Allott, Barnsley Borough Council, Sharon Webster, Craven District Council, Bryn Roberts, Middlesbrough Council, Sue Place, Darlington Borough Council, Lauren McCluskey, Northumberland County Council, Sean Hiles, Sunderland City Council, Simon Clark, East Riding of Yorkshire County Council, Dave Brown, North Tyneside Council

**Eastern**
Adam Atkinson, Three Rivers District Council, Christine Krstic, Stevenage Borough Council, Lauren Beamish, Huntingdonshire District Council, Tim Willis, Waveney District Council, Heather Cameron, Maldon District Council, Jessica Harrison, East Hertfordshire District Council, Nick Khan, Rochford District Council, Philip Kirk, Forest Heath District Council, Margaret Martinus and Nick Long, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, Jonathon Partridge and Charles Warboys, Central Bedfordshire

More next issue.....
Job vacancies currently advertised on the website

**Democratic and Electoral Services Manager**
Employer: East Northamptonshire Council  
Salary: Up to £45,547 per annum  
Closing Date: Tuesday 14th February 2017 at midday

**Principal Electoral Services & Elections Officer**
Employer: London Borough of Richmond upon Thames and London Borough of Wandsworth  
Salary: £33,540 - £39,459 per annum inclusive plus PrP  
Closing Date: 19th February 2017

**Electoral Services & Logistics Manager**
Employer: Swindon Borough Council  
Salary: £33,724 to £45,049 per annum  
Closing Date: 15th February 2017