

Fact Sheet for RVJB ELECTORAL REGISTER – THE ANNUAL CANVASS

The Electoral Registration Officer is legally obliged to undertake a review of the Electoral Register on an annual basis (commonly known as the Annual Canvass). The Electoral Commission provides the Electoral Registration Officer with guidance on how to conduct the canvass and the required steps to take.

The HOUSEHOLD ENQUIRY FORM (HEF):

- A Household Enquiry Form (HEF) must be issued to all properties in the RVJB area during the period of 1 July to 30 November. This must be a paper HEF in the format prescribed by the Minister for the Cabinet Office. The Electoral Commission specifies that the HEF cannot be sent by email or by any other electronic means.

NO RESPONSE TO THE ORIGINAL HEF:

- The ERO is required by law to take certain steps to obtain a response from those properties who do not respond to the initial HEF.
- A reminder HEF must be sent within a 'reasonable period of time' following the issue of the first form. The 1st reminder HEF is normally sent by post (ie delivered by Royal Mail)

NO RESPONSE TO THE 1ST REMINDER HEF:

- A 'Final Reminder' must be sent within a 'reasonable period of time' where there has been no response to the initial HEF or the 1st Reminder HEF.
- The ERO is required to visit a property at some point during the canvass where no HEF has been received.
- RVJB employ temporary electoral canvassers to deliver the Final Reminder HEFs, this is also required by law, a door visit is essential.
- The canvasser is required to make one visit to the property in an attempt to get the HEF completed at the 'doorstep'.
- If the canvasser calls and there is no answer at the property, they will post the Final Reminder HEF through the letterbox.

The term 'reasonable period of time' is not defined in legislation, however, the Electoral Commission advises that this should be no longer than 28 days and in some circumstances be shorter.

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EXCEPTIONS: NO REQUIREMENT TO SEND A HEF

ERO's are not required to send a HEF to a particular address in specific prescribed circumstances.

- During the Canvass – an ERO is no longer legally required to send a HEF to an address (or carry out the follow up processes if a HEF has already been sent) if they have successfully determined a registration application for that address and the applicant has indicated that they are the only person resident aged 14 years of age or over.
- Outside the Canvass – where an ERO has successfully determined an application for an address and the applicant has indicated that they are the only person resident aged 14 years of age or over, there is no requirement to in law to send a HEF as part of the next annual canvass.

RESPONSE TO A HEF:

A HEF cannot be used directly to add new names to the electoral register or delete names.

- **New name added to a HEF** – the ERO must send an 'Invitation to Register' (ITR) within 28 days of receipt of the information. An ITR can be sent by electronic means (e.g via email, where an email address has been provided for that individual on the HEF).
- **No response to an ITR** – 2 Reminders are required. The 1st reminder should be sent within 28 calendar days of the original invitation, followed by a 'Final Reminder' where no response to the 1st reminder has been made within 28 calendar days. A canvasser will again be employed to hand deliver the Final Reminder to the named individual in the hope of getting the application form completed.
- **Name crossed off a HEF** – no automatic deletion from the register. 2 different sources of information are required. The returned HEF will be one source and this will prompt the ERO to conduct a 'Review' of that entry on the register. No response to a Review letter within 14 days from the date of issue will result in the elector being flagged for deletion from the next available register publication date.

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RESPONSE TO AN 'INVITATION TO REGISTER' (ITR):

A successful application made by a person responding to an invitation to register will result in their name being added to the next publication of the electoral register. The ERO must write to the elector to confirm the successful application and provide the date their name will be added to the electoral register. This is known as a **'Confirmation Letter'**.

Once the HEF canvass is complete, any changes made during the period of the annual review will be reflected in the publication of the new register on 1 December.