

I support all of the proposals contained in the consultation document. In particular, I think that the proposals for individual registration and for the use of PPS numbers as verifiers are important. I feel that every individual should be responsible for ensuring that he/she is included on the register, and I think it makes perfect sense that a PPSN, being a unique identifier, should be used as a verifier.

I think it important that non-electronic means of joining and checking the register should continue to be available to those who so wish. Also, I would suggest that consideration be given to streamlining the postal voting process, and making it more widely available to voters who can predict in advance that they will be absent from home on a voting occasion.

I submit that there is an important factor which has not been considered in these proposals. There is substantial anecdotal evidence to suggest that current electoral registers are significantly inaccurate. I have worked as a Presiding Officer at Polling Stations for many years, and on every voting occasion I have encountered one or more of the following situations:

- Voters whose names have disappeared from the register, having been on the previous one;
- Voters whose vote has been moved to a different Polling Station;
- Voters who are registered more than once;
- Voters who have moved or died, but who remain on the register despite efforts by family members to have them removed.

This suggests a need for radical reform of the existing registers. There was a time when Local Authority officials called to houses to check details on the register, but I have not encountered such a caller in decades. I suggest that there is only one way to rectify this: abandon all existing registers and create new ones from scratch, using the proposals and outlined in the consultation proposal, and making every individual responsible for ensuring that he/she is included. This would require a major educational and publicity campaign, but it would ensure that registers are accurate, and contain the names of all those who wish to vote.

Le dea-ghuí

Pat Lonergan