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Individual Electoral Registration (IER)

10th July

Individual Electoral Registration (IER)

- What and why?

- Implementation:
  - what happens and when

- Issues
  - Funding
  - IT
  - Rollout

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IER: The Policy

- All electors **must register individually** from 2014 and have their **application verified** before adding to the register

- For verification, people must provide their **National Insurance number** and **date of birth**

- Existing electors have **until December 2015** to register under new system

- Requirement for **signature dropped** –opening the way for online registration

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Why IER?

"At present, there is no requirement for people to provide any evidence of their identity to register to vote, which leaves the system vulnerable to fraud. **Household registration harks back** *to a time when registration was the responsibility of the head of the household..."* **Mark Harper MP, Minister for Political Reform, House of Commons, 15 September 2010**

"The right to register to vote is of fundamental importance in our democracy - so important that its something for which individuals should take **personal responsibility***."* **Jenny Watson, Chair Electoral Commission, March 2009**

"A key benefit of the move to individual electoral registration will be the steps which can then be taken to further **eliminate electoral fraud***... Confidence and trust in an electoral system is a vital part of the democratic process..."* **Association of Electoral Administrators, 17 September 2010**

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IER: The Story so far....

2009: Political Parties and Elections Act :
Voluntary Individual Electoral Registration

2010: Coalition Agreement: "We will reduce electoral fraud by **speeding up the implementation** of individual voter registration." Ministers announce plans to speed up implementation to 2014

June 2011: Draft Bill, White Paper consultation and Data Matching pilots launched

Feb 2012: Government response to consultation: changes made to simplify transition

May 2012: Electoral Registration and Administration Bill introduced into Parliament. Proposed approach to funding announced

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Changes incorporated into ERA Bill after consultation

- "Opt-out" dropped

- Civil penalty for people who refuse to register ....but ERO must take steps before can be used

- Data Matching: to confirm existing electors us: 2011 pilots suggest 66% match rate

- Moving 2013 canvass to spring 2014

SUMMARY: Reduce risk of drop-off, more levers to drive registration, more accurate register over transition

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Data matching pilots 2011 and 2012/13

2011
* 22 pilots matching over 2 million records and involving 8 data holding organisations. Purpose to try and find 'missing electors' and invite them to register

* Key lessons around process – timing and data transfer

* Findings:
    * Some potential for identifying electors but need further testing
    * High match rate with DWP data and potential for IER transition

2012/13
* 22 pilots building on previous work. Two tranches of pilots:
    1. confirmation testing August-December; and
    2. data mining and two tier matching early 2013.

* First statutory instrument for confirmation pilots will be laid by end of July

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Implementation: 2011-2015

2011: Consultation on policy and draft legislation. Piloting data matching and develop blueprint for changes to business process

2012: Primary legislation, consult on draft secondary leg and funding, blueprint for business change signed off. IT prototype tested, further pilots.

2013: Secondary legislation made, funding allocations made, rollout IT and verification /matching service, training and guidance on new system, end to end test
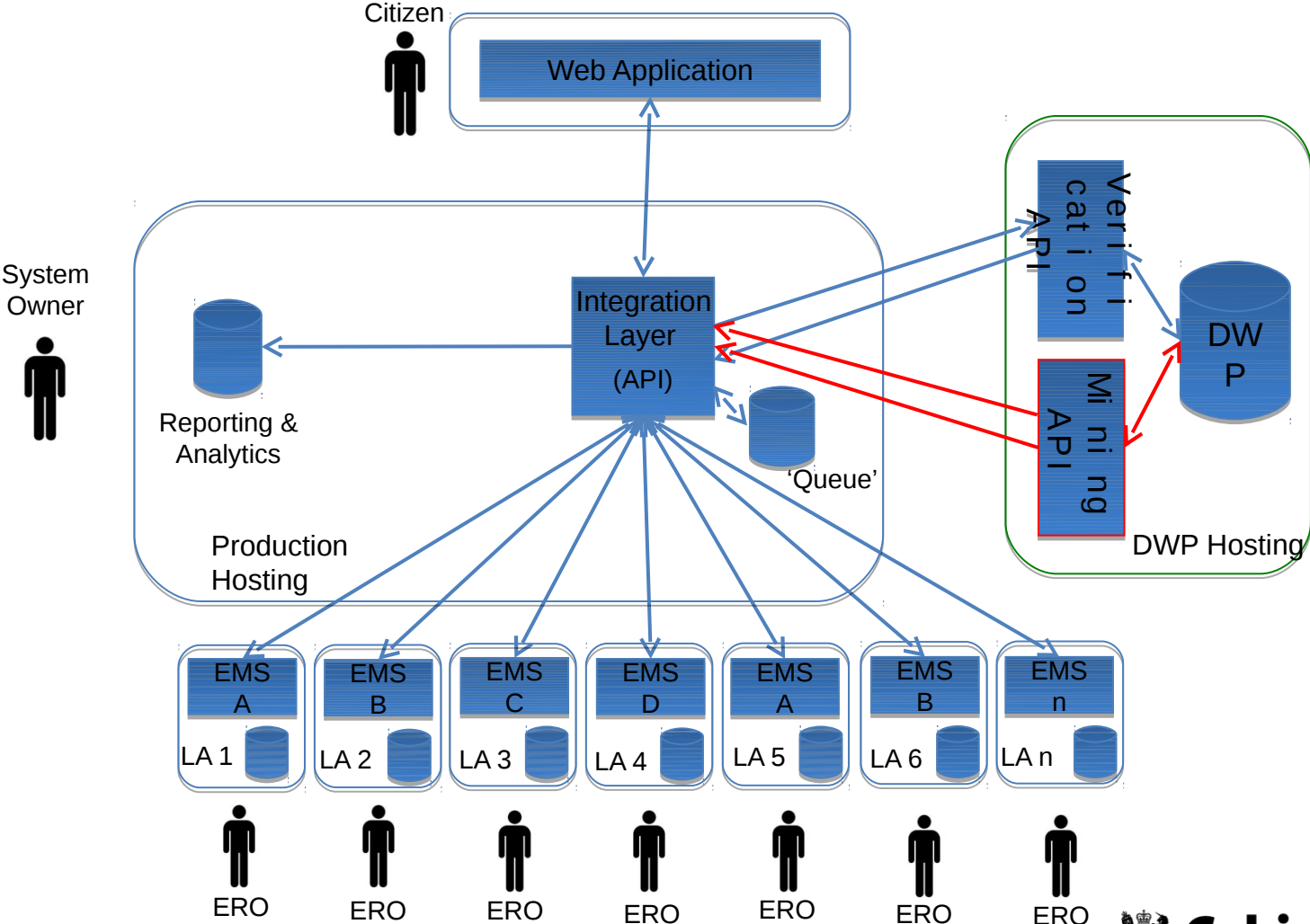
2014: Canvass Jan- March, European elections June. Transition begins with confirmation matching followed by write-out and first IER register

2015: Targeted activity pre-UK General Election. This election occurs in May followed by canvass and publication of full IER register in December

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Funding

- *"We have **allocated £108 million** over the spending review period. . . meeting local authorities' costs over and above the current cost of electoral registration. I can confirm today... that we will **fund local authorities in England and Wales directly through grants under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003**. Those will be allocated grants for the purpose of paying for the transition, not just money buried in the revenue support grant."*

- *"We will **consult over the summer** about precise details of the timing of and approach to allocations so that they get the money to pay for transition when they need it, and ensure that there is* clear accountability, showing that they are taking the steps required by law to prepare for the transition to the new system"

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IER Digital Service

IT

2012
2013

FEB   APR   APR   DEC

Alpha
(2 months)

Beta
(11 months)

Roll out
(9 months)

Create a prototype to test and prove the digital concepts

Develop and test (through data matching pilots) with selected Electoral Registration Officers ready for scaling up for roll out
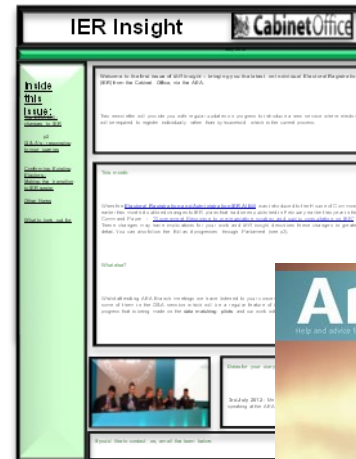
Incrementally roll out production solution to all local authorities

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Importance of AEA Communications Channels

AEA's communication channels have proved invaluable in sending out messages and keeping electoral administrators informed about IER

We are currently using:

- IER Insight Newsletter (on the AEA Intranet)

- Arena articles

- Members of the AEA also sit on our Implementation Panel

- John Turner sits on our Programme Board, giving the AEA direct contact with IER's senior management

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Implementing the Change

- We are working with the following partners:
- **Association of Electoral Administrators** (AEA)
- **Society of Local Authority Chief Executives** (SOLACE)
- **Local Government Association**: Local Government Delivery Council
- **Electoral Commission**
- **Electoral Management Services (EMS) Suppliers**
- **Data Holding Organisations** e.g. Department for Work and Pensions
- **Political parties**

- **But we want to talk to as many people as necessary - what forums, groups and networks do you know of that could help spread the word?**

  - More information: www.cabinet-office.gov.uk or e-mail electoralregistration@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk

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