
Introduction

The Irish electoral register has long been known to have significant issues, both in relation to the numbers registered and in relation to the seemingly arbitrary removal of people from the list. Subsequent governments have known about these issues and have largely either ignored them or denied they exist, as for instance we saw in 2016 when the matter was investigated and there were found to be at least 488,000 too many people on the register. The response of the government was to simply deny the truth of the report and to continue to refuse to move on the issue.

Given the issues we have seen with the electoral register, and given the importance of the recent referendum, we have kept a count of public correspondents we received, on the days shortly before and after the vote, that suggested an issue had arisen with some aspect of the voting process; we received a significant number of unsolicited complaints and queries relating to issues surrounding the vote. Given that we made no formal request for people to send us reports of irregularities with the voting process, either through social media or to our mailing list, the responses we received likely only represent the smallest fraction of the actual number of issues surrounding the vote. Most likely there were thousands of people impacted, and, as there does not seem to have been a substantial movement by the Government to deal with the issues highlighted in 2016, we would not be surprised if the issue is at least as bad as it was then, which would indicate there are at least 500,000 too many people on the register.

In addition to the two expected issues, individuals receiving multiple polling cards and people being removed from the register seemingly randomly, we also saw instances of voters who were simply not eligible to vote being sent voting cards, including one UK citizen, named Sarah, who spoke publicly about receiving the card, and using it to vote, on the Niall Boylan Show on 4FM [<https://www.joe.ie/news/uk-citizen-admits-voted-eighth-amendment-referendum-627609>].

Multiple Polling Cards

In general the issues surrounding polling cards relate either to people receiving multiple cards, generally to old addresses, or to people receiving cards with variants of their name on them, such as one card with their married name and one card with their maiden name.

This is not a new problem, in the same sex marriage referendum there were 3,221,681 voting cards issues, however there were only 3,023,025 Irish or British citizens aged 18 or over, and thus eligible

to vote, resident in Ireland during the 2016 census. As British citizens cannot vote in referendums, and as Ireland does not have a voter registration level of 100%, there is clearly a massive level of over-supply of voting cards. At a voting registration level of 90% there are 488,000 too many voting cards, whilst at a voter registration level of 85% the overstatement is over 600,000 voting cards.

Home to Vote

The recent referendum saw a large number of Irish citizens, who were living abroad, return to Ireland to vote in the referendum, as is their right. However, we saw multiple instances of people saying they were coming home to vote when they had actually been abroad for so long that they no longer, legally, had the right to vote in the referendum. Now in most countries this would not be a major issue, as you would have been removed from the voter register once you were abroad for too long. The Irish voter registry, however, does not appear to do so and it appears in every one of these cases that the persons involved were still being sent voting cards, generally to their parent's home.

There were also situations in which foreign entities paid for the travel home of Irish students. There were at least 6 British universities in which the Student Union offered funding for students to travel home to vote, which we believe could be classed as a political donation, and at least one of these Student Unions, that of Cambridge, openly said they would only give the payment to students who said they would vote Yes.

Breakdown of Responses

Issues with Voter

- 1.** UK citizen for past 20 years received a polling card.
- 2.** Women who has lived outside the state for 3 years came home to vote.
- 3.** Polling card sent to Nigerian man who is not a citizen.

Multiple polling cards

- 1.** Two polling cards; one with the first and last name of the individual, one with the middle and last name.
- 2.** Information on 4 people who received multiple polling cards.
- 3.** Individual and their partner both received 2 polling cards, one with their current address and one with an incorrect address.
- 4.** Two polling cards, one in their married name, one in their maiden.

5. Two polling cards, reason unknown.
6. Two polling cards, one in their married name, one in their maiden.
7. Student received two polling cards, reason unknown.
8. Student received two polling cards, reason unknown.
9. Student received two polling cards, one to her home address, one to her rental address, states never registered.
10. Priest received two polling cards, reason unknown.
11. Son of a pro-life canvasser received two polling cards.
12. Two polling cards received, one at a rental property and one at the family home.
13. Two individuals received two polling cards, one sent to an incorrect address, one sent to the correct address.
14. Two polling cards received, one to an incorrect address, one to the correct address.
15. Two polling cards received, one to an incorrect address, one to the correct address.
16. Two polling cards received, one to an incorrect address, one to the correct address.
17. Two polling cards received, one to an incorrect address, one to the correct address.
18. 6 different polling cards sent to a single address, all for ex-residents.
19. 3 polling cards to a single address, all for ex-residents.
20. Two polling cards each for a husband and wife.
21. Senator Neale Richmond saying he used to receive a card for himself and two more for each of his middle names.
22. Two polling cards received, one in the married name, one in the maiden name.
23. Two polling cards received, one to an incorrect address, one to the correct address.
24. Daughter of a supporter received two polling cards, he believes she voted Yes twice.
25. Man working over 10 years in England had voting card sent to his parents house.

Issues with Registration

1. UK resident called Sarah voted despite not being eligible, informed polling station staff of this and was let vote as she was on the list.
2. Dead individuals, having been deregistered, now back on the live register.
 - a. Registration not being completed.

3. Individual deregistered, reason unknown.
4. Pro-life UCD students, who registered at an SU event in UCD, not added to registry [<http://www.universityobserver.ie/uncategorized/ucd-student-ineligible-to-vote-in-referendum-despite-applying-at-su-registration-drive/>].
5. Student received polling card at her rental address, says she never registered that address, does not know how her details were found.
6. Two family members, living at the same address for 24 years, deregistered, reasons unknown.
7. Individual removed from register, reasons unknown.
8. Individual removed from register, reasons unknown.
9. Individual removed from register, reasons unknown.
10. Individual did not receive voting card, reasons unknown.
11. Individual removed from register, reasons unknown.
12. Individual removed from register, reasons unknown.
13. Individual unable to register as her voter registration form was lost after she submitted it.
14. Individual removed from register, reasons unknown.
15. Individual removed from register, reasons unknown.
16. Individual removed from register, reasons unknown.
17. Received voting card but was not eligible.
18. Nun removed from register, reasons unknown.
19. Nun removed from register, reasons unknown.
20. Priest removed from register, reasons unknown.
21. Postmaster removed from register, reasons unknown.
22. Individual removed from register, reasons unknown.

Security Concerns

1. Polling station with no Gardai.
2. Yes campaign campaigning outside polling station.
3. Polling station did not ask for ID.

4. Staff were not marking people off against the register.

Protocol Concerns

1. Polling officer let a pro-choice TD announce the result.
 2. Hospital patient was unable to vote as no accommodation for voting was available.
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Conclusion

It is abundantly clear that the Irish voter register is woefully inadequate and open to abuse. The difficulty lies in showing that that abuse has been actualised, rather than merely being a possibility. We know that a small number of people will admit they voted illegally, but given the nature of the ballot it is effectively impossible to show, conclusively, that enough people voted illegally, either through voting when not actually eligible or through voting multiple times, to change the result of the referendum.

In most Western countries the mere highlighting of the possibility would be enough to have the courts strike down the result and order that the system be rebuilt without the current issues, but we are not in another country. What we can say, with certainty, is that 2,159,655 voted in the recent referendum, and that 1,429,981 of those voted Yes, with 733,632 of those voting No.

We know the voter registry is likely to have at least 500,000 too many people, but that assumes a voter registration level of 90%. However, voter turnout rarely goes beyond the 75-80% level, and has been trending down for the last 30 years. If voter registration now reflects turnout levels we would be looking at well over 600,000 additional people on the register, potentially more. Given that the register is meant to be the metric by which we measure the percentage of voter registration, and given that it is clearly totally unreliable, we do not have a means to actually determine what the level of voter registration is, and, as such, have no capability to accurately determine how significant any potential for voter fraud actually is.

Given the disparity between the results of the Yes and No sides of the recent referendum it is unlikely to be solely a result of illegal voting, but it is certainly possible that the voter register contains over 700,000 too many voters.