

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Order)

This Order makes amendments to the Northern Ireland Assembly (Elections) Order 2001 (the “2001 Order”) to implement a scheme of anonymous registration for Northern Ireland Assembly elections in Northern Ireland.

Anonymous registration is available to those persons for whom the publication of their name and address in the electoral register would pose a threat to safety. This may include victims of domestic violence, witnesses in certain criminal cases and other vulnerable people who may wish to vote but are afraid that certain individuals may use the electoral register to establish their whereabouts. Provision for anonymous registration in Great Britain was made by section 10 of, and Schedule 1 to, the Electoral Administration Act 2006 (c. 22). Those provisions were extended to Northern Ireland in respect of parliamentary, local and Assembly elections, with some modifications, by the Anonymous Registration (Northern Ireland) Order 2014 (S.I. 2014/1116) and the Representation of the People (Northern Ireland) (Amendment) Regulations 2014. Under that scheme, an elector is entitled to have an anonymous entry in the electoral register for up to five years if the safety of the applicant, or that of any other person of the same household, would be at risk on publication of the applicant’s details in the register. The registration officer will determine the date on which a person’s entitlement to an anonymous entry will expire and, unless the person makes a fresh application for such an entry or for a regular entry in the register, the person’s entry will be removed from the register on that date. This Order makes further provision in relation to elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Schedules 1 and 2 to the 2001 Order apply certain provisions of the Representation of the People Act 1983 and the Representation of the People (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2008 to elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly. Some of those provisions were amended in order to implement the system of anonymous registration. Regulations 2 and 3 of this Order amend Schedules 1 and 2 to apply those amended provisions to Assembly elections.

An impact assessment has not been produced for this instrument as no impact on the private or voluntary sectors is foreseen.