



Canvass Reform: Alternative Electoral Canvassing models



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- The **annual electoral canvass** gathers information on potential additions, changes, and deletions to the Electoral Register.
- In 2016/2017 electoral administrators from twenty-four local authorities and Valuation Joint Boards undertook pilots to test the efficiency and effectiveness of alternatives to the legislated annual canvass.
- Were alternative models more efficient and at least as effective?

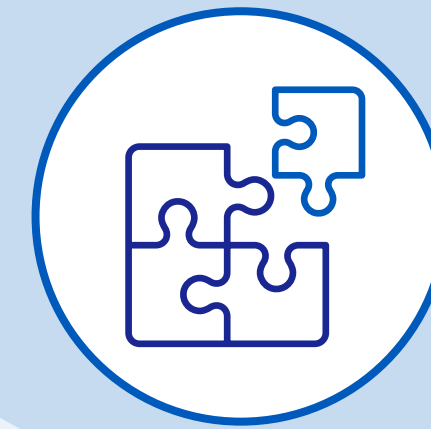


Methodology



Four alternative canvassing models were tested using Randomised Control Trials (RCTs):

- Household Notification Letter model;
- email model;
- telephone model; and
- discernment model.
- Each local authority or Valuation Joint Board completed the usual legislated canvass in a control group and their chosen alternative canvass model in the intervention group.



Findings

Findings showed clear support for modernisation of the annual canvass.



Telephone and email canvass models were as effective as the legislated canvass, but at a lower cost. Telephone model cost an average 30% less than the usual canvass. Email model cost an average 22% less.



Household Notification Letter and discernment models made larger savings (65% and 37%, respectively) but were not as effective as the legislated canvass. This can be largely attributed to the letter being less effective in capturing the same volume of information as the usual canvass, and the quality of the data that routed households to the HNL as part of the discernment model.



Electoral Registration Officers also emphasised reservations about returning to the legislated canvass approach. They shared a collective belief that the usual process is costly, repetitive and results in few positive outcomes.

There were benefits to the processes the discernment model introduced. Considering 57% to 83% of households across the pilot sites reported no change to their household composition, it is significant that the discernment model (a data driven approach targeting resources to where changes are more likely) was effective and cost effective.



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Impacts



Evidence from this evaluation paved the way for Canvass Reform, introduced in 2020.



Canvass Reform is delivering more accurate electoral information and it will deliver cost savings.



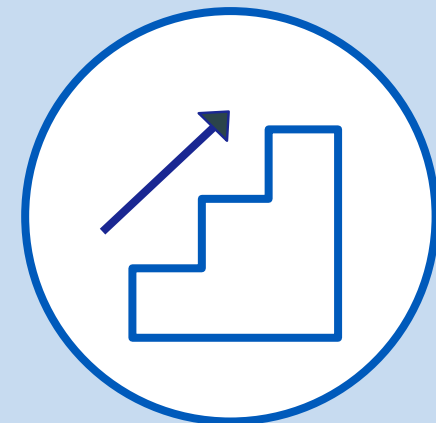
Links



[Read the Canvass Pilots Evaluation](#)



[Read the MERP Evaluation - 2021](#)



Next steps



Canvass Reform is being analysed as part of the Modern Electoral Registration Programme Evaluation. The first report was published in 2021 with positive findings. Subsequent publications are planned for 2022 and 2023.

