

Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland



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BEFORE 00.01 HOURS ON 4 MARCH 2011**

16 MPs FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

The 6th review of MPs' constituencies starts today. New rules, introduced by Parliament earlier this year, will reduce the number of parliamentary constituencies across the UK. In Northern Ireland, the decrease will be from **18** seats to **16** at the next Westminster elections, expected in 2015. This will mean redrawing the existing constituency boundaries.

Across the UK, the number of constituencies is being reduced from 650 to 600:

- in England 502 in place of the current 533;
- in Scotland 52 in place of the current 59
- in Wales 30 in place of the current 40; and
- in Northern Ireland 16 in place of the current 18.

The new rules mean that in most of the UK the electorate of each constituency will have to be within 5% of the electoral quota (76,641.2). The smallest permitted electorate in any constituency will be 72,810 and the largest 80,473.

In Northern Ireland, however, the new rules allow for a wider range, from 70,583 to 80,473.

The Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland, which is responsible for reviewing Northern Ireland's constituency boundaries, will put its final recommendations to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland by 1 October 2013.

Liz Benson, Secretary to the Commission, said: *"With the new rules placing great emphasis on broadly achieving equal numbers of electors in each constituency, the review will result in significant changes. The next step in the process will be the publication of the Commission's provisional proposals for the new boundaries for public consultation towards the end of the year. The proposals will be fully available for comment by everyone with an interest and the consultation process will include a number of public hearings."*

Further information on the review can be found on the Commission's website:
www.

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Notes for News Editors

The Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland is an independent advisory non-departmental public body sponsored and wholly funded by the Northern Ireland Office. The role of the Commission is to review the boundaries of constituencies for the United Kingdom Parliament.

By virtue of section 33 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the boundaries of the NI Assembly constituencies are the same as the Parliamentary constituencies with each constituency returning six Assembly members (MLAs),

More information about the Commission and its work is available on the Commission's website: www.boundarycommission.org.uk

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