

Consultation on ONS Independence

The Proper Officer for Registration Matters and Principal Officers in the Cambridgeshire Registration district have reviewed the proposal to make the ONS a Non-Ministerial Department, and to separate the role of Registrar General from that of National Statistician.

We are supportive of these changes as they relate to the Registration service, as we consider that the role separation is likely to result in improved central management focus on the service.

Regarding where within government the service should be placed, we believe that the Home Office would appear to be the most appropriate location.

The Home Office's related existing responsibilities include identification, and the citizenship process. There would be added potential for a "life file" for each citizen by bringing all elements of identification together and linking the various records for individuals. Having all these processes in one place could also create further opportunities for prevention of identity theft.

One potential argument against this is one of "separation of duties". Bringing together all identification and related activities could be perceived as putting too much of the process into a single organisation. Taking this in conjunction with the view that a statutory process such as registration needs to be seen to be objective, the Department of Constitutional Affairs might be a valid alternative to the Home Office.

However, we do not subscribe to this view, and rather would support integration of Registration into the Home Office.

Regards,

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Registration Matters in Cambridgeshire)
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25 May 2006