

## Stalking victims given anonymity

**New voting legislation is set to come into effect which will allow victims of stalking and domestic violence to keep their names off the electoral roll.**

From 1 June, victims can be registered anonymously and still be able to vote.

But they must prove they have been stalked or have been a legally recognised victim of domestic violence.

Currently, people can be removed from an edited roll open to the public, but not an unedited one seen by police, councils and credit reference agencies.

The new Electoral Administration Act will allow councils to replace someone's name with the letter 'N' on all versions of the electoral roll.

The act was passed last year and the new regulations were produced with guidance from women's and victims' rights groups.

### **'Freed from threat'**

Director of Rights of Women, Ranjit Kaur, said: "We know many women who have experienced violence live in fear of being tracked down by the perpetrators through the electoral register.

"Anonymous registration will make this more difficult and hopefully will allow women to live their lives free from the further threat of violence."

One woman, known as Lynne, who suffered seven years of violence and abuse from her ex-husband, has welcomed the new legislation.

"My abusive ex-husband tracked me down to my new address and used to intimidate me by driving up and down the street," she said.

"It never crossed my mind he may have got my details from the electoral roll.

"Knowing I can now register anonymously and not lose out on the right to vote will make me, and other people in my situation, feel a lot safer."



Domestic violence victims can now register anonymously for voting