

Elections and the Electoral Register

Why we collect information about you?

The Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer are data controllers and collect the personal data you provide for the purpose of registering your right to vote and participation in elections. You need to be registered to be able to vote in any election or referendum for which you are eligible. We have a duty to maintain a complete and accurate register throughout the year. We will only collect the personal data we need from you, in order to do this.

What information do we collect about you?

Name; address; Date of Birth; National Insurance Number; Nationality; Previous Address, signature for postal/proxy voting. We also collect an e-mail address and/or telephone number – this is optional.

If using a correspondence address for Postal Voting, we collect details of this address. We also collect information about an individual you have nominated to vote on your behalf – name, address, email address and/or telephone number.

If standing as a candidate in an election, we collect your name, address, email address, telephone number and any other relevant details which qualify you to be a candidate.

If you apply for a Voter Authority Certificate in order to fulfil Voter ID requirements, we also collect a photograph of you as well as the other details required for electoral registration. Where this is collected via the online application service, it is stored by the .Gov portal. Where we have taken the photograph, this is deleted as soon as it has been uploaded to the said .Gov portal.

Who do we share the information with?

We will share personal information where:-

- required/permitted by law, or
- where you have provided consent, or
- where necessary to allow a third party working for or on our behalf to carry out a particular function.

Examples include: The Electoral Commission, Boundary Commission, British Library, Office for National Statistics, Political Parties, Jury Service, third party contractors working on our behalf (such as Civica during the annual canvass) and Credit Reference agencies, Contracted Printers for Poll cards and postal packs. The open register can be shared with individuals and organisations for a fee.

As we collect and maintain the data, we remain the data controller while third parties are the data processors.

Is any information transferred to or stored on servers based outside the UK?

No

How long do we keep your information?

We will keep your information as long as you remain on the electoral register at your current address. If you have an Absent Vote (Postal, Proxy or Postal Proxy) we retain your signature for five years unless you cancel your Absent Vote in writing.

If you apply for a Voter Authority Certificate, we will delete your information from the .Gov portal 28 days after issuing your certificate.

Your name and address will remain indefinitely on historic registers.

We retain candidate nomination papers for candidates standing in elections for no longer than 12 months after the election, following which the documents are securely destroyed.

Who do we collect information from?

We collect the information directly from you. When conducting the annual canvass, we may also collect your name and nationality from anyone who resides in the same property.

What are the consequences if we do not collect the data?

We will not be able to fulfil our public duty to maintain an accurate register of electors and you will not be able to vote at elections where you are eligible to do so.

You will not be able to stand as a candidate in an election if we do not collect your personal data.

You may also find it difficult to obtain credit as the credit reference agencies use the electoral register to confirm a person's identity.

Are any decisions about you made by automatic means?

Yes. When you provide us with your Name, Date of Birth and National Insurance Number, the process by which your details are verified (or otherwise) by the Department for Work and Pensions is automated. If your details do not match, a Democratic and Electoral Services Officer will request further identification from you.

If you vote by post, the signature you submit is compared to the signature we hold on record for you. This is, in the main, done by election software. In the event that the signatures do not match, a final decision is made by our election staff.
