



Electoral Services

Privacy Statement

How we use your information

The Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) is the Data Controller for the personal data that you provide for the purpose of registering your right to vote. We have a duty to maintain a complete and accurate register throughout the year. We only collect the personal data we need from you in order to do this.

The Returning Officer (RO) is responsible for ensuring the provision of elections/referendums.

The personal information that we collect about you:

The ERO and RO keep records about potential and actual electors; electors who register anonymously; voters; citizens; candidates and their agents; and individuals who assist with the booking and opening of polling stations.

These records may include the following:

- Names
- Addresses
- Dates of birth
- Nationality
- Telephone numbers and email addresses where supplied
- Unique identifiers (such as National Insurance numbers)
- Scanned application forms, correspondence and previous addresses
- Copies of evidence provided (e.g. passport, marriage certificates, driving licence)
- The reason an individual may require an absent vote, the individual's signature and date of birth. For postal voters, the address where the postal vote is to be sent e.g. holiday accommodation will be collected, and for proxy voters details of the electors' nominated proxies will be processed.
- If an individual is over 76 or rising 18.
- Whether an individual has chosen to opt out of the Open Register.
- Details relating to the booking of venues for polling stations and the count such as caretaker, keyholder and treasurer details etc
- In relation to certain categories (service voters, overseas electors, crown servants, etc) there may be additional information processed. For example, regarding service voters, information relating to type of service (Army/Navy/Air Force), Rank, Regiment and BFPO address.
- At an election we will process, in addition to the information relating to electors, information relating to candidates, candidate's agents and individuals subscribing candidate's nomination papers.
- Personal data relating to individuals making enquiries or making submissions to election-related statutory consultations.
- We also process the following special category personal information:
 - Race and ethnic origin, insofar as it may be possible for this to be inferred from nationality information.

- Political opinions – such as information contained within your subscription of a subscribed nomination paper.
- Health data – this may be contained within applications to vote by proxy.
- In limited circumstances we will also process personal data relating to “criminal convictions and offences” (which under the Data Protection Act 2018 includes the alleged commission of offences) – for example the ERO may receive a request to register to vote from a prisoner on remand or an application for anonymous registration may contain references to alleged offences by an identifiable third party.

How we collect this personal information:

Information is collected from you via online web forms, hard copy documents, e-mail, by telephone or through face-to-face discussion and house-to-house canvassing. This information will be collected:

- Directly from you as the data subject, or from the Government registration website (www.gov.uk/register tovote), or via registration and absent voting application forms and canvass returns
- From inspecting records held by other Council Services and other records which the ERO is permitted by law to inspect.

Why do we need your personal information?

We are legally required to collect information so that we can determine if you are eligible to register to vote and to record you as a legitimate voter.

We need the requested information to be able to facilitate any election or referendum.

If your information is not provided to the ERO, you would then not be allowed to vote at any elections or referendums. You may also be liable to a fine as set out in law.

How the law allows the ERO/RO to use your personal information

The law makes it compulsory for individuals to provide information, upon request to an ERO for inclusion in the full register.

Who do we share your information with?

We need to share some of the information, this will only happen if the law requires us to do so, or it is necessary for us to perform a task in public interest. Anyone who receives data from us has a legal duty to keep it confidential. Those that receive this data include:

- Print contractors who provide poll cards and postal votes
- Candidates, Agents and registered political parties and other registered participants for electoral purposes only
- Credit reference agencies, the electoral commission and other statutory bodies that are entitled to receive a copy of the register
- National fraud initiative for the prevention or detection of fraud
- The council which appointed the ERO for specific purposes.
- People employed to facilitate an election or canvass

The law requires us to report certain information to the appropriate authorities. For example:

- Where a formal court order has been issued
- To law enforcement agencies for the prevention or detection of a crime
- To the Jury Central Summoning Bureau indicating those persons who are aged 76 or over and are no longer eligible for jury service

To verify your identity, the data you provide will be processed by the Individual Electoral Registration Digital Service managed by the Cabinet Office. As part of this process your data will be shared with the Department of Work and Pensions and the Cabinet Office, which are data processors for the Individual Electoral Registration Digital Service. You can find more information about this at the Register to Vote website <https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>

During the canvass data matching will be via the Department for Work and Pensions. Your data may also be matched against any other local datasets available to the ERO such as Council Tax records.

Versions of the Electoral Register

The information you provide is held in Electoral Registers which are managed by the ERO. There are two registers; the Open Register and the Revised Register. Both Registers are published once a year and updated every month.

If you have chosen to be included in the Open Register, by law your name and address can be sold to third parties who request it. The Open Register does not contain telephone numbers, email addresses, your date of birth or National Insurance number (which you may have provided to prove your entitlement to be included on the Register).

If your details are in the open version of the electoral register, you can opt out of the open version of the register at any time by contacting the elections office. You can also opt out as part of the annual canvass of all households.

How do we protect your information?

The ERO/RO will do what they can to make sure the records held both on paper and electronically are kept in a secure way and will only make them available to those who have a right to see them.

Examples of our security include:

- Encryption, meaning that information is hidden so that it cannot be read without authorisation (passwords) to unencrypt the data.
- Controlling access to systems and networks allows us to stop people who are not allowed to view your personal information from getting access to it.
- Training of staff makes them aware of how to handle information and how and when to report when something goes wrong.
- Regular testing of technology and ways of working including keeping up to date on the latest security update (commonly called "patches").
- Certain documents are open to public inspection for specified periods.

In accordance with the law, the Electoral Register, list of overseas electors and any notices of alteration can be made available for public inspection at our offices. Inspection is done under supervision; people can make handwritten notes but cannot take copies or photographs of the register or use such information for marketing purposes.

What you can do with your personal information

The law gives you rights to control what personal information is and how it is used.

You can ask for access to the information the ERO/RO holds about you. When we receive a request from you in writing, we must give you access to everything we have recorded about you however we cannot let you see any parts of your records which contain:

- Confidential information about other people; or

- Data a professional thinks will cause serious harm to you or someone else's physical or mental wellbeing; or
- If we think that giving you the information may stop us from preventing or detecting a crime.

This applies to personal information that is in both paper and electronic records. If you ask us, we will also let others see your records (except if one of the points above applies).

You can ask the ERO/RO to change information you think they hold that is inaccurate. They may not always be able to change or remove that information but will correct factual inaccuracies and may include your comments in the record to show that you disagree with it.

You can ask for information to be deleted (right to be forgotten) in some circumstances for example:

- Where your personal information is no longer needed for the reason why the ERO/RO collected it in the first place;
- Where there is no legal reason for the ERO/RO to use your information;
- Where deleting the information is a legal requirement.

Where your personal information has been shared with others, we will do what we can to make sure those using your personal information comply with your request for erasure.

Please note that we cannot delete your information where:

- We are required to have it by law;
- It is for health purposes;
- It is for scientific or historical research or statistical purposes where it would make information unusable;
- It is necessary for legal claims

How long do we keep your personal information?

There is often a legal reason for keeping your personal information for a set period of time, as contained within our Document Retention Policy, which you will find on the Council's website.

Reviews

This Privacy Notice will be regularly reviewed to ensure we meet the necessary standards for obtaining, processing, storing and managing personal data. The ERO/RO reserves the right to update this Privacy Notice.

How to contact us

If you have any questions or comments about this Privacy Notice please email: elections@north-herts.gov.uk

Information Commissioners Office

If you want to any further information about your privacy rights or to make a complaint you can contact the Information Commissioner's Office at the address below:

Information Commissioner's Office
 Wycliffe House
 Water Lane
 Wilmslow
 Cheshire Sk9 5AF

Tel: 0303 123 1113 (local rate) or 01625 545 745 if you prefer to use a national rate number

Email: <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/>

Website: www.ico.org.uk