
How we use your data

The electoral registration officer is a data controller and collects the personal data you provide for the purpose of registering your right to vote. 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.

We do this as a legal obligation to comply with the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 and Representation of the People Regulations 2001. This ensures you are registered to vote in any election or referendum for which you are eligible. The law makes it compulsory to provide information to an electoral registration officer for inclusion in the full register.

We keep records about potential and actual electors, voters, citizens, candidates and their agents, staff employed at an elections. These records may be written, held as an electronic record on a computer system or as a printed record from a computer system. All physical records are stored securely in an office accessible to certain people. Digital records can only be accessed by certain people as required by legislation. Certain staff members may be given 'read only' access in order to view specific information. All computer systems are protected by passwords and information is backed up on to secure Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council servers.

These records can include:

- your name, address nationality and date of birth
- contact information such as email address and telephone number (if you have chosen to provide this for us)
- unique identifiers (such as National Insurance Number). Signatures for absent vote checking
- scanned application forms, dates of any letters of correspondence
- Documentary evidence – e.g. including but not limited to copies of a passport, driving license, marriage certificate, deed poll, utility bill or any such document we have requested you to provide as evidence of identity to support your registration application where applicable
- notes about any relevant circumstances that you have told us
- your previous or any redirected address
- the other occupants in your home
- if you are over 76 or under 16/17
- whether you have chosen to opt out of the open version of the register

This information must be supplied to maintain the electoral register and for the purpose of administering an election.

The information you provide is held in electoral registers which are managed by electoral registration officers who, using information received, keep two registers – the full electoral register and the open (edited) register.

The full register is published once a year and is updated every month and can only be supplied to the following people and organisations:

- British Library
- UK Statistics Authority
- Electoral Commission
- Boundary Commission for England
- Jury Summoning Bureau
- elected representatives (MP, MEPs, local councillors)
- Police and Crime Commissioner
- candidates standing for elections
- the council
- parish and community councils
- police forces, National Crime Agency
- public library or local authority archive services
- government departments or bodies
- credit reference agencies
- National Fraud Initiative
- electoral registration and returning officers

We also have to share your information with our software providers and contracted printers. Both software providers and contracted printers will only use your information on our instruction and not for any other purposes. They are also required to protect your information in the same way that we would.

It is a crime for anyone who has a copy of the full register to pass information from this register on to others, if they do not have a lawful reason to see it.

Anyone can inspect the full electoral register.

- inspection of the register will be under supervision
- they can take extracts from the register, but only by hand written notes
- information taken must not be used for direct marketing purposes, in accordance with data protection legislation, unless it has been published in the open version
- anyone who fails to observe these conditions is committing a criminal offence and will be charged a penalty of up to £5,000

The open register contains the same information as the full register, but is not used for elections or referendums. It is updated and published every month and can be sold to any person, organisation or company for a wide range of purposes. It is used by businesses and charities for checking names and address details; users of the register include direct marketing firms and also online directory firms.

You can choose whether or not to have your personal details included in the open version of the register; however, they will be included unless you ask for them to be removed. Removing your details from the open register will not affect your right to vote.

The Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer are obliged to process your personal data in relation to preparing for and conducting elections. Your details will be kept and updated in accordance with our legal obligations and in line with statutory retention periods.

The information is stored on the electoral management system, supplied by eXpress. It will not be used to make automated decisions about you and this data will not be transferred abroad.

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 suppliers that are data processors for the individual electoral registration digital service.

Click here to find out more about the individual electoral registration digital service.

Any documents provided containing personal information will only be kept for the time period in which it takes for your registration application to be determined following which copies will be securely destroyed. We do not recommend that original documents are provided but we will post back the original document to the named individual once the determination period has passed. Electronic information is retained on Electoral Management Software for as long as an elector is registered. Following this, such information is deleted. All other personal information is stored in line with our legal obligations and statutory retention periods.

Canvass Reform Amendments

A Canvass Reform Data Test (CRDT) took place in January 2020 as part of the Cabinet Office's requirement of the Canvass Reform. The CRDT involved both national and local data matching.

National data matching will occur from January 2020 when Canvass Reform regulations take effect. Local data matching may occur at any stage from the canvass commencement date on an annual basis.

Canvass Reform follows the same processes of data use outlined above in 'How we use your data' but also includes a number of new amendments. These new amendments are in order to successfully implement the following:

- successful confirmation of names and addresses of persons entitled to be registered on the electoral register who are not already registered
- successful confirmation of those who appear on the electoral register who are no longer entitled to be registered at a particular address, typically due to moving properties.

This will involve processing personal information relating to data matching of information held on registered electors or attainers (individuals of 16-17 years of age) against:

- a national database – the Department of Work and Pensions' Customer Information System (DWP CIS); and
- local datasets – e.g. council tax and housing benefit records or other datasets held by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council.

Data matching will occur at an individual elector level and will involve matching of the following:

- the name (including previous names), date of birth (where held) and address (in the form of string address and unique property reference number (where available) (including previous address)) against the DWP CIS database;
- the name and string address at a minimum for local data;
- scores which deem the elector either matched or unmatched (aggregated at household level).

Canvass communications will also be issued to you and, depending on the level of data matching achieved, and the information we hold this communication could be via methods including written and/or email, SMS or any other form of digital communication.

Canvass communications will require the following information:

- full name and nationality of each registered elector aged 16 or over
- 'the aged 76 or over' age indicator
- 'the aged under 16/17' age indicator
- Previous names
- Email address
- Mobile telephone number

Personal information will then be processed under the following lawful bases in compliance with legal obligation(s) under:

- The Juries Act 1974
- The Representation of the People Act 1983
- The Representation of the People Regulations 2001
- The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013

For the performance of a public interest task which has a clear basis in law (as above) or in the exercise of official authority vested in the Data Controller (e.g. maintaining the register of electors, in the public interest, as provided for in electoral law).

Data provided will be processed by the Individual Electoral Registration Digital Service managed by the Cabinet Office. As part of this, your data will be shared

with the Department for Work and Pensions for the Individual Electoral Registration Digital Service.

The processing of personal information for public interest tasks, such as those outlined in the legislation provided above, allow the right for an individual to object on 'grounds relating to your particular situation'. It is then up to the Electoral Registration Officer to demonstrate why the continued use of your personal data is appropriate.

Who to contact if you have questions

You are entitled to request a copy of any information about you that we hold. Any such requests can be made in writing (preferred method), verbally, in person or via social media.

If the information we hold about you is inaccurate you have a right to have this corrected and you have the right to request completion of incomplete data.

You have the right to request that we stop, or restrict, the processing of your personal data, in certain circumstances. Where possible we will seek to comply with your request, but we may be required to hold or process information to comply with a legal requirement.

If you are dissatisfied with how the councils have used your personal information you have a right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office at casework@ico.org.uk

If you wish to contact us in relation to any of your information rights, contact the Data Protection Officer at dataprotection@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk or Data Protection Officer, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, Castle House, Barracks Road, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire. ST5 1BL.

You can also download the **Subject Access Application** Form or phone the Data Protection Officer via 01782 717717.

If you wish to complain about how your personal information has been handled by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, contact the Data Protection Officer.

If you are not satisfied you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF, or call 0303 123 1113.

Information Commissioner's Office.