

# NORTHUMBERLAND

Northumberland County Council

## Individual Electoral Registration

### FAQs

Updated 10 June 2014



# FAQs and ‘lines to take’ with public in response to queries

## Individual Electoral Registration (IER) transition

### The purpose of this document and how to use it

This document provides template answers for use by EROs and their staff to respond to some of the main queries that we expect you may receive from interested residents from the start of transition to IER (from 10 June in England and Wales and from 19 September in Scotland).

**This information is designed to ensure a consistent response to questions from the public.** However, you may want to tailor these messages to reflect your local context and use them to help update any existing resources you have in place for frontline staff dealing with elections or electoral registration.

We do not recommend proactively communicating with the public about individual registration until the start of transition – but you may use this document before then as a basis for responding to any specific enquiries you receive. For more details on timing of messaging see [Part 1– Preparing for IER](#) (from paragraph 5.55).

This is a living document to be updated as queries emerge. We welcome feedback as the transition progresses on the types of queries that you are receiving. Please send your feedback and suggestions to [info@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:info@electoralcommission.org.uk).

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## About the change

### ***(C001) Has the registration system changed?***

The electoral registration system in Great Britain has recently changed. The new system is called 'Individual Electoral Registration'.

This started to happen in June 2014 in England and Wales.

### ***(C002) What is individual electoral registration?***

Previously, the 'head of household' was responsible for registering everyone who lived at the address, but now every individual is responsible for their own voter registration. This is called Individual Electoral Registration. The new system also means that people are now able to register online. Anyone newly registering under the new system will need to register themselves individually by completing a paper form which can be obtained from:

Elections Office,  
County Hall,  
Morpeth,  
Northumberland,  
NE61 2EF.

Or by telephoning 0845 600 6400, or,

By completing an online form at [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote)

### ***(C003a) Do I need to do anything / do I need to re-register (during write-out)?***

Most people who are currently registered to vote have been registered automatically under the new system. They do not need to do anything and will continue to be registered to vote as usual. We will send a letter from 11 August 2014 to let these people know that they are registered under the new system.

A minority of people on the electoral register have not been automatically registered under the new system. It is straightforward for these people to re-register. We are writing to the people who are not automatically registered to let them know that they need to register under the new system. We included a registration form with the letter or they can register online at:

[www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote).

If you are not registered to vote, you can register at [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote).

If you don't know whether you are registered to vote, it's possible to check under the new system, please contact the Elections Office on 01670 624811.

***(C003b) Do I need to do anything / do I need to re-register?***

If you are currently not registered to vote, you can register at [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote).

Most people who are currently registered to vote will have received a letter from 11 August 2014 to let them know that they are registered under the new system and don't need to do anything. Some people will have received a letter letting them know that they were not automatically registered under the new system and so need to re-register.

If you received a letter saying you've been automatically registered you do not need to do anything, but if you move home in the future you should register again. If you received a letter saying you need to re-register, it's straightforward to re-register. You can go to [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote) and fill in the online form.

If you did not receive a letter it's possible to check whether you're registered under the new system, please contact the Elections Office on 01670 624811.

***(C004) What is different about the new system?***

Previously, the 'head of household' was responsible for registering everyone who lived at the address. The new way of registering is called Individual Electoral Registration. Under the new system you will be able to register online to vote. Anyone newly registering under the new system will need to register themselves by completing a paper form which can be obtained from:

Elections Office,  
County Hall,  
Morpeth,  
Northumberland,  
NE61 2EF.

Or by telephoning 0845 600 6400, or,

By completing an online form at [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote)

The other difference is that people need to provide a few more details about themselves to register – these are date of birth and National Insurance number.

***(C005) Why has the system changed?***

Individual electoral registration gives you the right and responsibility to register yourself, instead of giving the responsibility to a 'head of household'. As such, it encourages people to take individual responsibility for their own vote. The change has also allowed more convenient methods of registration, for example, by internet (or by telephone or in person if offered by your local authority). Because the new system asks you for a few more details before you are added to the register – your National Insurance number and date of birth – the electoral register will be more secure and more resistant to threats of electoral fraud.

***(C006) Who is responsible for changing the system?***

The system was introduced by the UK government through the [Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013](#) which became law on 31 January 2013. Electoral Registration Officers are implementing the change.

***(C008) I've heard people will fall off the register, how are you stopping this?***

Most people already registered to vote will be automatically registered under the new system so will not fall off the register. Some people will not be automatically re-registered, but we will write to them to let them know and include a registration form and envelope with the letter. Reminders and personal visits will also be undertaken as appropriate. Even if they don't respond, special arrangements have been put in place so they can still vote at all elections until December 2015. However, if they want to vote by post or proxy they will need to ensure that they are registered under the new system. Eventually, all those who were not automatically transferred will need to re-register.

As well as sending people registration forms, we are running lots of activities to let people know about the change and encourage them to register where they need to. The Electoral Commission is also running national mass media public awareness advertising.

***(C009) How much is it costing the taxpayer?***

Public money is spent on voter registration because we want to ensure that people get a chance to register so that they are able to have their say at elections.

In the 2010 spending review, £108 million was set aside to cover the cost of the transition to Individual Electoral Registration in Great Britain.

The government believes that by spending money now, costs will be reduced in future; for instance, people can now register online so will not need to use paper forms and so there will be savings on printing and postage.

Advertising the change is the responsibility of the Electoral Commission. It estimates that publicising the change and encouraging people to register will cost approximately £5 million between April 2013 and March 2015, so around £2.5 million a year. This covers creating advertisements, buying advertising space, including TV, and producing materials to help other organisations to encourage people to register. The Commission runs public awareness campaigns every year, and these estimates are in line with what it usually spends, for example the cost of the campaign ahead of the 2009 European and English local elections was around £4 million. If you need more information please contact the Electoral Commission on 020 7271 0500.

Local electoral registration staff may also be spending money to raise awareness of the change. The Commission's advertising budget also covers providing advertising templates, resources and translations to support their work and help save money locally.

### ***(C010) Does the change affect how I vote?***

Voting processes haven't changed. However, if you want to vote by post or proxy you will need to ensure that you are registered under the new system. If you haven't already applied to vote by post, you will need to do so by 5pm 11 working days before an election to vote by post at that election.

If you haven't already applied to vote by proxy, the deadline is normally six working days before an election, apart from in the case of a medical emergency or if you are called away unexpectedly for work reasons, when you may be able to apply up to 5pm on polling day.

## **Write-out queries**

[Note: people may refer to the Invitation to Register (*Invitation to Register*) and confirmation letter in different ways, but for ease they are referred to as *Invitation to Register* and confirmation letter below.]

### ***(W001a) [Pre- and during write-out] I haven't received the letter in the advert, what should I do?***

If you are already registered to vote, you will receive a letter telling you that there is a new voter registration system. It will also tell you if you need to do anything as a result. You may not have received your letter yet letters are going out from 11 August 2014. You need to look out for it and respond if it asks you to.

If you were not already on the electoral register you will not have received a letter. You can register to vote at [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote).

***(W001b) [Period following initial letter send out] I haven't received a letter, what should I do?***

Most people received a letter to tell them that there is a new way to register to vote and whether they need to re-register.

If you are currently not registered to vote, you can register at [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote).

If you don't know whether you're registered to vote, it's possible to check under the new system, please contact the Elections Office on 01670 624811.

***(W002) Why haven't I received a letter?***

If you were not already on the electoral register you will not have received a letter. You can register to vote at [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote).

It's possible to check whether you're registered to vote under the new system, please contact the Elections Office on 01670 624811.

***(W003) I received an Invitation to Register, why?***

The voter registration system recently changed. You have received a letter because you need to register under the new system. You can do this at [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote).

***(W004) I received a confirmation letter, why?***

The voter registration system recently changed. We wrote to you to let you know about the change and confirm that you are still registered to vote. You do not need to do anything – although if you move home in the future you will need to re-register at your new address.

***(W005) I've been registered for ages, and received a letter saying I needed to re-register – why do I have to?***

The voter registration system recently changed. If you received a letter from your local electoral registration office inviting you to register, you will need to register under the new system. It's straightforward to do this – visit [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote).

Most people have been registered automatically under the new system. This happened because local electoral registration staff compared the names on their electoral registers to government records to confirm who people are. This has been done carefully through a secure system that has been tested thoroughly.

For all sorts of reasons, some people have not been matched against government records and therefore cannot be transferred automatically to the new register. For example, they may have moved home or changed their personal details since the record was last updated.

***(W006) Why haven't I been automatically registered?***

Most people who were registered to vote have been registered automatically under the new system. This happened because local electoral registration staff compared the names on their electoral registers to government records to confirm who people are. This has been done carefully through a secure system that has been tested thoroughly.

For all sorts of reasons, some people have not been matched against government records and therefore cannot be transferred automatically to the new register. For example, they may have moved home or changed their personal details since the record was last updated.

Your details have not been matched, but it's straightforward to re-register. Visit [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote).

***(W007) I received a confirmation letter, why have I been automatically registered?***

The letter was sent to let you know that the voter registration system has changed and that you have been transferred to the new electoral register. Like you, most people in Great Britain have been registered automatically under the new system, which is called Individual Electoral Registration. In order to register people automatically, local electoral registration staff compared the names on their electoral registers to government records to confirm who people are. This has been done carefully through a secure system that has been tested thoroughly. You don't need to take any action – you are still registered and you can continue to vote in the same way.

***(W008) I received an Invitation to Register, but my partner got a confirmation letter. Why the difference?***

The voter registration system recently changed. Most people who were registered to vote have been registered automatically under the new system – and we have written to them to let them know. This happened because local electoral registration staff compared the names on their electoral registers to government records to confirm who people are. This has been done carefully through a secure system that has been tested thoroughly.

While many people were automatically registered under the new system, for all sorts of reasons some people have not been matched against government records and therefore cannot be transferred automatically. For example, they may have moved

home or changed their personal details since the record was last updated. Or it may be that your partner's details have been recently processed for other reasons, for example, their employer may have updated them with government offices.

***(W009) I received an Invitation to Register, but I already registered online***

Online registration can take a few days to process, so it's possible that the letter was prepared before your online registration was processed. You do not need to return the paper form if you have received confirmation that your online application has been received. We will contact you to confirm your registration.

***(W010) I received an Invitation to Register, can I still vote if I don't register?***

If you have received a letter to say that you need to re-register to vote, it is important that you respond. You can register by visiting [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote) or by returning the form included with the letter.

If you have not been automatically transferred to the new register, a special process has been put in place so that you will still be able to vote in elections until December 2015, even if you don't re-register. The only exception to this is if you plan to vote via post or proxy. If you do, you will need to register under the new system or you will only be able to vote in person at a polling station. Eventually, all those who were not automatically transferred will need to re-register. It's really important that you re-register as soon as possible as you will eventually lose your vote.

We have written to everyone who needs to re-register to ask them to register and let them know what to do. The local council is also running activities to let people know about the change. The Electoral Commission is also running public awareness advertising.

***(W011) I received a confirmation letter but the details are wrong, how can I change them?***

If your name has changed you can complete a change of name form with your previous and new name and the date of the change. You will need to provide evidence to support the change of name, such as a marriage certificate or deed poll certificate (although there is a process if you can't provide this, please contact the Elections Office on 01670 624811).

***(W012) A letter from you arrived at my home, but the person doesn't live here. Can you update your information?***

Thank you for letting us know that the person no longer lives there. We have recorded that information. If you have recently moved to that address, you may not have received

a letter telling you about recent changes to the voter registration system. You can register at [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote).

***(WO13) I received an Invitation to Register, can I still vote by post / proxy?***

You will need to register under the new system to retain your postal / proxy vote. If you don't, you will not be able to vote by post / proxy in the next elections following the 2014 canvass. You can return the paper form included with your letter or you can register at [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote).

## **Registration process and eligibility**

***(R001) Can I register over the phone?***

Yes, please contact our customer services on 0845 600 6400. Please have your nessesary details to hand, if you wish they will forward your call to a member of the elections team. Alternatively, you can register online at [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote).

***(R002) Can a family member register me?***

Everybody needs to register themselves. It's straightforward and quick and you can register online at [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote).

If you are unable to register yourself, it's ok to get help filling in the details, but you must make the declaration yourself.

***(R003) Will I still get an annual canvass form?***

Instead of your old annual canvass form, you will receive a new type of form called a 'household enquiry form' (HEF). You should use this form to confirm who lives in your home. If new adults aged 16 or over have moved in you should add them to the form, and if they have not registered we will send them an invitation to register.

***(R004) Do I need to re-register each year?***

You don't need to register again unless you change address. You should however return the form that you will receive every year that confirms who is living in your household. You should also inform us if any of your details (such as your name) change.

***(R005) I moved house, am I still registered?***

When you move home you need to register at your new address. You can do this at [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote).

### ***(R006) Can I register at two addresses?***

Normally people are registered at one address – their permanent home address. Students may register at both their term-time address and their non-term-time address. If you are living somewhere temporarily but have a permanent address elsewhere, you should register at the permanent address.

Having a second home doesn't necessarily mean that you can register there as well as at your permanent address. A person's name may appear on the electoral register only if they reside at an address within the electoral area. Residence is not defined in law; however, in England and Wales it has been held by the courts to entail a 'considerable degree of permanence'.

However, it is unlikely that ownership of a second home that is used only for recreational purposes would meet the residency qualification. Ownership of a second home that a voter pays council tax on but is not resident in does not qualify them to be registered to vote in that area. It is for the local Electoral Registration Officer to decide in the light of an individual voter's circumstances whether they may be said to be resident at an address, and therefore eligible for registration. Electoral Registration Officers are required to consider each case on its own merits.

### ***(R007) Must I register and what happens if I don't?***

If we have invited you to register to vote it is important that you respond. If you don't, we will send you reminders through the post and someone will visit your home. At the end of this process we may send you a requirement to register; if you fail to do so without providing adequate reason why you have not, you may be fined £80. Not being registered can also impact on applications for mortgages or mobile phones, since credit reference agencies use the register to validate applications.

### ***(R008) How do I change my name on the register?***

If your name has changed you can complete a change of name form with your previous and new name and the date of the change. You will need to provide evidence to support the change of name, such as a marriage certificate or deed poll certificate (although there is a process if you can't provide this, please contact the Elections Office on 01670 624811).

### ***(R009) Can I still vote by post?***

If you received a letter from your local electoral registration staff from 11 August 2014 telling you that you had automatically been added to the new register and you previously had a postal vote, you will continue to be able to vote by post. If you received a letter saying that you needed to join the new register, or if you are not registered to

vote, you will need to register under the new system to be able to vote by post. If you don't, you will not be able to vote by post in the next elections after December 2014. You can return the paper form included with your letter or you can register at [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote).

***(R010) I have no fixed address, can I register?***

If you have no fixed address you can still register to vote. You need to make something called a 'declaration of local connection' to show that you are connected to and spend time at a particular place. You can normally do this only for one place.

If you want to register through a declaration of local connection you will need to do so under the new registration system. This means you will need to provide your date of birth and National Insurance number.

If you are already registered through a declaration of local connection, you can renew under the old system if you are due to do so until 9 September 2014 (England and Wales). After that you will need to register under the new system.

***(R011) I live overseas, can I register?***

British citizens living abroad can vote in UK Parliamentary and European Parliamentary elections, but not in local elections or elections to devolved bodies such as the Scottish Parliament, National Assembly for Wales or Greater London Authority. British citizens living abroad for more than 15 years are not eligible to register to vote in UK elections. You can register as an overseas elector at [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote) with the local authority for the address where you were last registered in the UK.

***(R012) Can I register anonymously?***

Anonymous registration is available if your safety or that of any other person in the same household would be at risk if your name or address were made public. You must provide court documents or an attestation (e.g. from a senior police officer or director of social services) in support of the application. A separate application form must be completed in writing – you are not able to register anonymously online. If you want more information on this, or have concerns about the attestation, please contact the Elections Office on 01670 624811.

***(R013) I am a service voter, how do I register?***

A member of HM Forces and their spouse or civil partner can register as an ordinary elector or they have the option to register as a service voter. You can register as a service voter by visiting [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote). A service declaration must be completed, which is valid for five years. Each unit of the services has designated one

member of staff to be a Unit Registration Officer who will be able to provide further advice.

***(R014) I am a special category elector, do I need to re-register under IER? (Special category electors are voters registered under a declaration of local connection, overseas voters, service voters, anonymous electors, remand prisoners or patients resident at mental hospitals)***

If you are already registered as a special category elector, you can renew under the old system if you are due to do so until 9 September 2014 (England and Wales). If you renew after that date or make a new application, you will need to do so under the new registration system. This means that you will need to provide your date of birth and National Insurance number.

***(R015) Who is eligible to register to vote?***

You can register to vote if you are: 16 years old or over and a British citizen or an Irish, qualifying Commonwealth or European Union citizen who is resident in the UK (except for service voters or overseas voters).

Seventeen-year-olds and some 16-year olds are entitled to be included on the register as 'attainers'. They can vote once they are 18.

To qualify, Commonwealth citizens must be resident in the UK and either have leave to enter or remain in the UK or not require such leave. The definition of a 'Commonwealth citizen' includes citizens of British Crown Dependencies and British Overseas Territories.

Citizens of the European Union (who are not Commonwealth citizens or citizens of the Republic of Ireland) can vote in local elections in the UK, elections to the Scottish Parliament and Welsh and Northern Ireland Assemblies (if they live in those areas) and some referendums (based on the rules for the particular referendum), but are not able to vote in UK Parliamentary general elections. They can also vote in European Elections by completing a separate application and making a declaration stating that they will vote only in the UK at any European election during the 12 months of the declaration. You can access this form at:

[www.electoralcommission.org.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/162813/UC1-English.pdf](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/162813/UC1-English.pdf)

## Difficulties registering and accessibility

### *(D001) How do I find my National Insurance number?*

A National Insurance number is a reference number used by government. The easiest place to find your National Insurance number is on official paperwork, such as your National Insurance card, payslips or letters from the Department for Work and Pensions or HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC). If you still can't find it, you can use the HMRC enquiry service at [www.gov.uk/lost-national-insurance-number](http://www.gov.uk/lost-national-insurance-number).

If you don't have access to the Internet you can call the National Insurance Registrations Helpline on 0300 200 3502.

For Welsh language enquiries, the National Insurance Registrations Helpline phone number is: 0300 200 1900

Please be aware HMRC won't tell you your National Insurance number over the phone, they'll post it to you.

Alternatively, you can write to:

HM Revenue & Customs  
National Insurance Contributions & Employer Office National Insurance Registrations  
Benton Park View  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE98 1ZZ

Most people in the UK have a National Insurance number. If you do not have one, you will be asked to explain why you are unable to provide it. Local electoral registration staff may contact you to ask you for proof of identity.

### *(D002) I don't know my date of birth*

If you do not know your actual date of birth, you may have been given an official one in the past and this can be used to register to vote. This can be found on paperwork, including a passport, adoption certificate, driving licence or naturalisation certificate.

If you do not have one, you will need to explain why you are unable to provide it in your registration application. Local electoral registration staff may contact you to ask you for proof of identity.

***(D003) I don't have internet access***

You can use computers in local libraries and internet cafes. We can also send you a paper registration form which can be obtained from:

Elections Office,  
County Hall,  
Morpeth,  
Northumberland,  
NE61 2EF.

You can visit a customer service centre throughout Northumberland, or, alternatively you can telephone 0845 600 6400.

***(D004) I am unable to read the letter I was sent from you***

We recently wrote to you about the new electoral registration system. If you can't read the letter, please call your local electoral registration office for assistance. Their details can be found at [www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk)

***(D005) Can you provide information in another format (Braille, Large Print etc)?***

Some information is available in alternative formats; contact your local electoral registration office for assistance, telephone election office on 01670 624811. If you want to register to vote, you can do so at [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote), which works with assistive technologies such as screen readers, or we can send you a application to register form in your preferred format where available. You can visit a customer service centre throughout Northumberland, or, alternatively you can telephone 0845 600 6400.

***(D006) I don't want to register online, what other ways can I register?***

It's easy to register online, but if you can't or don't want to we can send you a paper registration form which can be obtained from:

Elections Office,  
County Hall,  
Morpeth,  
Northumberland,  
NE61 2EF.

You can visit a customer service centre throughout Northumberland, or, alternatively you can telephone 0845 600 6400.

## Online registration

### ***(O001) Can I register online?***

You can make an 'application' to register online, but ultimately local electoral registration staff will decide if that is a successful application. So your registration is not complete until the application has been accepted.

Online registration is available for 'ordinary' electors, overseas electors, armed forces voters (and their spouses or civil partners) and crown servants (and their spouses or civil partners).

### ***(O002) My online form won't submit***

If you have problems completing the online form, local electoral registration staff will be able to help you with the problem. The online service is designed with one question per screen and provides clear error messages when something has gone wrong, so it should be straightforward to find out what the problem is. If you do encounter any problems please contact the Elections Office on 01670 624811.

### ***(O003) How will I know if my online registration was successful?***

You'll be sent a letter from local electoral registration staff confirming that your registration was successful, or asking for more information if that is required. If you have provided your email address or phone numbers, you may be contacted that way instead.

### ***(O004) Will my email address or phone number be used for anything else?***

If you provide an email address or phone number as part of your application, this will only be used to contact you about your application to register to vote. We won't give it to anyone else, or use it for any other purpose unless we are required to do so by law.

### ***(O005) Can I register someone else online?***

Everybody needs to register themselves. It's straightforward and quick and you can register online at [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote).

If they are unable to register themselves, it's ok to help to fill in their details but they must make the declaration themselves.

## Paper registration form

### ***(P001) Can I include someone else on the form?***

This is an individual registration form. If you know someone who wants to register to vote, they can do so by visiting [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote) or they can obtain a form from:

Elections Office,  
County Hall,  
Morpeth,  
Northumberland,  
NE61 2EF.

### ***(P002) If I have applied online, do I need to return the paper form you sent me?***

You don't need to return the paper form if you have completed an application online.

## Household Enquiry Form (HEF) queries

### ***(H001) There are people listed on the HEF that don't live here, what do I do?***

If anyone listed on the HEF is not living at your address, their name/s should be clearly crossed through.

### ***(H002) Do I put down everyone who lives here?***

You need to include the name and nationality of everyone aged 16 or over who is resident and eligible to register to vote. If there are no eligible residents, you should state why this is the case.

### ***(H003) Do I have to fill in the HEF?***

By law, you need to provide the information requested on the HEF.

There is a criminal penalty for failing to provide the information required by the HEF to the Electoral Registration Officer of a maximum of £1,000. The penalty for providing false information to an Electoral Registration Officer is imprisonment of up to six months or a fine (on summary conviction) of a maximum of £5,000.

### ***(H004) I received a HEF, but the information needs changing. How can I update it?***

If anyone listed on the HEF is not living at your address, their name can be crossed out.

The name and nationality of everyone aged over 16 who is resident and eligible to register to vote should be added if they are missing.

If your nationality has changed, or you are now over 70 correct and return the form and we will make the change. The form will have instructions on how to change your open register choice

***(H005) Do I need to include my email address and phone number on the HEF?***

You are invited to include your email address and phone number on the HEF, but you do not have to. We will use this information only in connection with your registration, and it helps us to contact you if there is a problem.

***(H006) I have already returned a HEF, do I need to return the registration form I've received too?***

You should complete and return the registration form or register online at [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote). The HEF is not a registration form, but instead provides us with information on who lives in your household. This means we can invite other residents to register to vote if we need to.

***(H007) I've returned a registration form, do I need to return the HEF I've just received too?***

You should complete and return the HEF even if you registered to vote online or by returning a completed paper form. The HEF provides us with information on who else lives in your household. We can then invite other residents to register to vote if we need to.

## **Security and privacy**

***(S001) Where did you get my details / data to register me?***

The voter registration system changed recently and because you were on the existing electoral register, local electoral staff were able to transfer you to the new register. If you did not know that you were on the existing electoral register, it may be because someone else in your household registered you. Under the new system this can no longer happen.

To transfer people to the new system securely, local electoral staff compared the names on their electoral registers to records held by the government to confirm who people were. This has been done carefully through a secure system that has been tested thoroughly.

***(S002) Will my details be shared with other organisations?***

Using information received from the public, registration officers keep two registers – the electoral register and the open register (also known as the edited register).

The electoral register lists the names and addresses of everyone who is registered to vote in public elections. The register is used for electoral purposes, such as making sure only eligible people can vote. It is also used for other limited purposes specified in law, such as detecting crime (e.g. fraud), calling people for jury service and checking credit applications.

The open register is an extract of the electoral register, but is not used for elections. It can be bought by any person, company or organisation. For example, it is used by businesses and charities to confirm name and address details.

Your name and address will be included in the open register unless you ask for them to be removed. Removing your details from the open register does not affect your right to vote. [\[See S006 for how to get removed\]](#)

### ***(S003) Is the data I enter online secure?***

The online registration service and the data you provide is secure. It has been independently accredited tested for security and developed to meet best practice guidelines for data security.

### ***(S004) Why do you want my National Insurance number?***

Under the new system people need to provide a few more details about themselves to register – these are date of birth and National Insurance number. These details are checked against government records to verify the person's identity. This is intended to make the system more secure.

### ***(S005) Why do you want my date of birth?***

Under the new system people need to provide a few more details about themselves to register – these are date of birth and National Insurance number. These details are checked against government records to verify the person's identity. This is intended to make the system more secure.

### ***(S006) How do I join or get removed from the open (edited) register?***

Using information received from the public, registration officers keep two registers – the electoral register and the open register (also known as the edited register).

The electoral register lists the names and addresses of everyone who is registered to vote in public elections. The register is used for electoral purposes, such as making sure only eligible people can vote. It is also used for other limited purposes specified in law, such as detecting crime (e.g. fraud), calling people for jury service and checking credit applications.

The open register is an extract of the electoral register, but is not used for elections. It can be bought by any person, company or organisation. For example, it is used by businesses and charities to confirm name and address details.

Your name and address will be included in the open register unless you ask for them to be removed. Removing your details from the open register does not affect your right to vote. You can change your opt-out preference at any time by making a request with your full name, address and an indication of whether you wish to be included in or omitted from the edited register. You can do this in writing or over the phone by calling the elections office on 01670 624811 We will also write to you to confirm any change.

***(S007) What is the open (edited) register?***

Using information received from the public, registration officers keep two registers – the electoral register and the open register (also known as the edited register).

The electoral register lists the names and addresses of everyone who is registered to vote in public elections. The register is used for electoral purposes, such as making sure only eligible people can vote. It is also used for other limited purposes specified in law, such as detecting crime (e.g. fraud), calling people for jury service and checking credit applications.

The open register is an extract of the electoral register, but is not used for elections. It can be bought by any person, company or organisation. For example, it is used by businesses and charities to confirm name and address details.

Your name and address will be included in the open register unless you ask for them to be removed. Removing your details from the open register does not affect your right to vote.