

Individual Electoral Registration

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

YOUR VOTE MATTERS
MAKE SURE YOU'RE IN



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About the change

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 the 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.

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

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 filling out a paper or online form. If you don't have access to a computer, you can use one in the Reception area at the Town Hall.

How do I register to vote?

You can go to www.gov.uk/yourvotematters and complete a form online. It only takes a few minutes, you'll need to provide your National Insurance number and date of birth. If you would prefer to complete a form, phone our Help Line on 01737 276794.

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. If you don't have access

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

How will I know if my online registration was successful?

You'll be sent a letter from 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.

Can I register someone else online?

No, everybody needs to register themselves. If they are unable to register themselves, it's ok to help to fill in their details but they must make the declaration themselves.

I'm already registered to vote, do I need to do anything / do I need to re-register?

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 in August 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.

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.

Does the change affect how I vote?

No, 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 medicalemergency or if you are called away unexpectedly for work reasons, when you may be able to apply up to 5pm on polling day.

About the write-out letters

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 but you should receive it during August. 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/yourvotematters.

I've got to complete a new form, 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 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. It's straightforward to re-register. Visit www.gov.uk/yourvotematters.

I received a confirmation letter, why have I been automatically registered?

We've written to you 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.

I want to make sure I'm opted out of the Open (edited) register, how do I do that?

Your confirmation letter will tell you if your details are on the Open register or not in the third paragraph before the explanation of the two registers. If you would like to change your opt out choice, please email elreg@reigate-banstead.gov.uk giving your new opt out choice along with your name and address. Alternatively you can complete and return the Open Register Change Request form at: http://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/local_democracy/voting_and_elections/registerofelectors/index.asp

If you are completing an online registration or the form inviting you to register, please ensure you tick the box if you don't want your details included in the Open register.

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

Most people who were registered to vote have been registered automatically under the new system because local electoral registration staff compared the names on their

electoral registers to government records using a secure system to confirm who people are.

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 can't 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.

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.

You may have initially received a Household Enquiry Form. This is a form sent to the household to establish who is living at a property so we can then send individual registration forms to each person so they can register to vote under the new system by completing and returning the form, or going online to www.gov.uk/yourvotematters.

I've already registered online/returned a registration form, do I need to return the Household Enquiry Form 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.

Can I still vote if I don't register under the new system?

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/yourvotematters 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.

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. Alternatively you can make a new application online at www.gov.uk/yourvotematters.

Security and privacy

Where did you get my details / data to register me?

Because you were on the existing electoral register, we 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.

Electoral staff compared the names on their electoral registers to records held by the government to confirm who people were, using a secure system.

Will my details be shared with other organisations?

Electoral 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 have asked for them to be removed. Removing your details from the open register does not affect your right to vote.

How do I join or get my details removed from the open (edited) register?

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 open (edited) register. If you would like to change your opt out choice, please email elreg@reigate-banstead.gov.uk giving your new opt out choice along with your name and address. Alternatively you can complete and return the Open Register Change Request form at: http://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/local_democracy/voting_and_elections/registerofelectors/index.asp

If you are completing an online registration or the form inviting you to register, please ensure you tick the box if you don't want your details included in the Open register.

We will write to you to confirm any change.

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.

Why do you want my National Insurance number and 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.