

FAQs

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.

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 in July/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.

If you are not registered to vote, you can register at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote.

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.

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?

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 want to vote by post and haven't already applied, 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.

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 01792 636123. We will also write to you to confirm any change.

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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.

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). *Students may be able to find it in their university registration details or application for student loan.* 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.

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.