

Electoral Services Privacy Policy – Westmorland and Furness Council

Last Updated: 3 August 2023

How we use your information in relation to Electoral Services

This privacy notice tells you what to expect when Westmorland and Furness Council collects personal information in relation to electoral functions.

Why we are collecting your data

The Electoral Registration Officer and Returning 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 legal 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.

This is to ensure compliance with measures contained within the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 and the Representation of the People Regulations 2001.

What information do we collect?

Records we hold about individuals can include:

- Current and previous names, current and previous address, date of birth and nationality
- Correspondence addresses outside the local authority
- E-mail addresses and telephone numbers, provided by the elector
- National Insurance number
- Signatures for postal vote checking
- If you are over 76, or 16/17
- Scanned application forms, documentary evidence, dates of any letters of correspondence
- Your photograph for Voter Authority Certificate applications
- Personal details of staff members employed by the council for canvassing, or by the Returning Officer for elections
- Personal details of candidates standing for election, or of electors subscribing nomination forms

How we use your data

We use your records to ensure you are registered to vote, depending on your eligibility and that registration is maintained as long as you are still eligible.

We use contact details provided by you, to contact you while carrying out tasks in public interest, such as the annual canvass and elections. E-mail addresses and telephone numbers do not have to be provided and communications we send will explain how you can request for us to stop using them.

We use the electoral register to run elections of all types and ensure that you can cast your vote using the method you have chosen.

Who we share your information with

In the course of us carrying out our public task of maintaining a complete and accurate register for elections your data may be shared as follows:

- to verify your identity and maintain the register, the data you provide will be sent to be processed by the Individual Electoral Registration Digital Service managed by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). As part of this process your data will be shared with the Department for Work and Pensions and the DLUHC suppliers that are data processors for [the Individual Electoral Registration Digital Service](#)
- to maintain the register we may also match your data against records held by other council services, such as council tax and benefits
- specialist print contractors will process data in order to send bulk mailings, such as canvass forms, poll cards and postal votes
- specialist software providers will, on occasion, process data on our behalf in order to carry out tasks, such as the annual canvass
- specialist scanning company will process paper forms on our behalf off-site during the annual canvass, following a strict data retention and/or destruction policy

Register access and supply

The full register is published once a year and is updated every month. Specific legislation permits the supply of the full register and updates. It may only be supplied to the following people and organisations:

- The British Library
- UK Statistics Authority
- Electoral Commission
- Boundary Commission for England
- Jury Summoning Bureau
- Elected representatives (MP, local councillors, parish councillors)
- Police and Crime Commissioner
- Candidates standing for election
- Registered political parties and their local constituency offices
- Westmorland and Furness Council
- Parish and town councils
- Police forces, National Crime Agency
- Public libraries or archive services
- Government departments or bodies

- Credit Reference Agencies
- National Fraud Initiative

All registers are supplied using secure methods of data transfer.

It is a criminal offence for anyone who has a copy of the full register to supply, disclose or otherwise make use of information in this register for any purpose other than that set out in the relevant legislation.

The full register or open register can be inspected by anyone.

- Inspection of the register must be supervised, and those inspecting it may take extracts from the register, but only by hand-written notes.
- Information taken must not be used for direct marketing purposes unless it has been published in the open version
- Anyone who fails to observe these conditions is committing a criminal offence and may incur 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 may be sold to any person, organisation or company for a wide range of purposes.

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.

When we supply the open register, we always send using secure methods of data transfer.

Retention period or criteria used to determine the retention period

The Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer are required to process your personal data in relation to preparing for and conducting elections. We will keep and update your details in accordance with our legal obligations and in line with statutory retention periods.

Can I see my records?

The UK General Data Protection Regulations provide you with the right to access the personal and special category data we hold about you and this applies to records held by Electoral Services along with all other personal records.

If you want to make a request, please visit

<https://www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/your-council/data-protection-and-privacy/request-personal-data>

The data controller and their contact details

We process large amounts of personal, special category personal or criminal/law enforcement data, referred to in legislation as a data controller. We are [registered with the Information Commissioner's Office \(ICO\)](#).

If you have concerns about the way the council has processed your data, please contact us:

- dataprotection@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk
- Westmorland and Furness Council, South Lakeland House, Lowther Street, Kendal, Cumbria, LA9 4DQ

If you are not satisfied with our response or believe we are not processing your personal data in accordance with the law you can [complain to the Information Commissioner's Office \(ICO\)](#).

[View our privacy notification and privacy statement](#)

Your rights about your data

You have the right to request access to information about you that we hold. To make a request for your personal information, contact our Data Protection Officer, as detailed above. You also have the right to:

- object to processing of personal data that is likely to cause, or is causing, damage or distress
- prevent processing for the purpose of direct marketing
- object to decisions being taken by automated means
- in certain circumstances, have inaccurate personal data rectified, blocked, erased or destroyed; and
- claim compensation for damages caused by a breach of the Data Protection regulations

If you have a concern about the way we are collecting or using your personal data, we request that you raise your concern with us in the first instance. Alternatively, you can [contact the Information Commissioner's Office](#).