

Electoral Registration Annual Canvass 2023

By law the Council has to carry out an annual 'canvass' of electors every year to ensure the electoral register is as complete and accurate as possible. The canvass runs from August to November and the revised electoral register, incorporating the changes made during the canvass, will be published on 1 December 2023. You need to be on the electoral register to vote in elections. Being registered can also improve your credit rating.

Responding to the Annual Canvass

As part of the annual canvass, we will contact every property in Cumberland from early August onwards. This will be by email or by post depending on what information we hold. The email or letter will explain what action, if any, you must take. If you are required to respond, you will have three weeks to do so before a reminder is issued. Households who do not respond to a reminder may be visited by one of our canvassers.

Please respond online wherever possible. The website you will be asked to visit is www.elecreg.co.uk/cumberland. You will need your security codes to respond and these will be included in the email or letter that we send to you. Further information on the different contacts methods can be seen below:

Have you received an email from us?

If you receive an email from us it will come from the following email address: cumberland.council.electoral.registration.department@notifications.service.gov.uk. Please follow the link in the email to check the information that we currently hold for your address on the electoral register and amend this as necessary; for example, by deleting anyone who is no longer resident or adding the name of anyone who is resident but is not currently registered.

If you receive an email regarding an address where you no longer live, you can use www.elecreg.co.uk/cumberland to inform us who has moved out.

We will send an email in one of two instances:

1. We believe there has been no change to residents and we have an email address for at least one currently registered elector.
2. We could not confirm all of the registered electors during our data matching process, and we hold an email address for at least one currently registered elector.

We require a response to these emails, the method for which is detailed within the email. If we do not receive a response to the email, we will follow this up by post.

Have you received a canvass form in the post?

If we do not receive a response to our email, or if we do not hold an email address for any member of the household, we must send a canvass form to the property by post.

The canvass form will explain what action, if any, you must take. If you are required to respond, please do so as soon as possible by visiting www.elecreg.co.uk/cumberland and using the security codes included in the form to confirm the information and/or make any necessary changes.

If there are no changes to make you can also respond by phone or text using the contact numbers printed on the form.

If you need to make a change and do not wish to respond online, you can post the form back to us by returning it to Electoral Services, Cumberland Council, PO Box 9672, Poole, BH12 9PE. Please note that no return envelope will be provided with the initial form and we would encourage you to make changes online where possible.

If a response is required and not received, then we will follow this up with a reminder form followed by a canvasser visit to the property.

In person visit to complete the canvass

If you are required to respond to the annual canvass and do not do so, we will make further attempts to contact you by email or post. From October 2023 our team of canvassers will be visiting properties that have not responded in order to obtain the necessary information. Canvassers will carry photographic ID badges issued by Cumberland Council.

New Electors

Please note that adding a person's name to a canvass form or online response will not automatically add them to the electoral register. The person will also need to complete their registration by going online to www.gov.uk/register-to-vote or by completing the application form that we will send them if they do not register online.

Please note that it is a legal requirement to apply to register to vote when invited by the Electoral Registration Officer to do so.

If you have any questions regarding registering to vote, please email elections3@cumberland.gov.uk or telephone 0300 373 3730.

Key Dates for Canvass

- 7 August 2023 - Emails sent to properties where email address is held.
- 18 August 2023 - Letters to properties where no response was received to emails.
- 18 August 2023 - Letters sent out to properties that require a response.
- 15 September 2023 - Reminder Forms to properties that require a response.
- 16 October – 24 November 2023 – Personal canvass visits to non-responding properties.
- 1 December 2023 Publication of revised register of electors.

What could happen if you don't respond

- You will receive reminders via email, paper form or a door knock up until 25th November 2023.
- If you do not respond, a canvasser will visit your property to collect the information.
- If you do not provide the requested information at all you could be fined up to £1,000.
- If you fail to respond you could lose your right to vote.
- Your credit rating could be affected by not being on the Electoral Register.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need to respond to the Annual Canvass?

The canvass uses a data matching exercise to decide which route a property goes into for the canvass. If we match all electors registered in a property with Department for Work and Pensions(DWP) or local council tax data, we will send you a Canvass Communication A letter (CCA).

If you receive this letter, you will only need to respond if your household has changed.

If we have not matched each elector registered at your property, you will receive a Canvass Communication B letter (CCB).

You will need to respond even if the information in the letter is still correct. Therefore, you will report no change, or you will be letting us know of a change that has occurred within your household.

The letter will clearly state if you have received a CCA or a CCB letter and whether you are legally required to respond.

How can I respond to the canvass?

We are trying to promote automated methods of response:

Online: Visit the household update service page, www.elecreg.co.uk/cumberland and enter both security codes shown on the letter, and the properties postcode (as printed on the letter) then follow the prompts to update and confirm household information.

Phone: Call 08082841462 and when prompted, enter part 1 and part 2 of the security code.

Text: Text your security codes (separated by a space) to 07786209362. This option can only be used to confirm that the information is correct and no changes are required. There is a standard rate charge using text.

By post:

Make any changes to the form and send it to:

Electoral Services
Cumberland Council
PO Box 9672
Poole
BH12 9PE

Please note, we will not be issuing prepaid reply envelopes with the CCA or CCB forms.

Why is the letter addressed to The Occupier?

We address all canvass property communications to The Occupier as someone else may have moved into the property since we did the last canvass.

I've already registered. Will I still get an annual canvass communication?

Yes. Every year, we will contact you to find out if there have been any changes to anyone living at your address. If there are changes, you must provide the information requested. The purpose of the canvass communication is to confirm

who lives at your address. We can then invite other residents, including any 16 and 17 year-olds, to register to vote.

Why do you still need to send a canvass communication every year?

To know who is eligible to register to vote, including any 16 or 17 year-olds, we need to know who lives at your address. The canvass communication is designed to collect this information. The information provided on the form will allow us to send a separate individual registration form to all the people in your household who are eligible to vote.

There are people listed on the canvass communication that don't live here

If the form contains names not living at your address, their names should be crossed through or removed when using the online response.

We will send a review letter to anyone who has been deleted during the canvass response, informing them they will be removed. This process allows for any deletion errors to be rectified before final deletion after 14 days if no response is received.

What happens after I complete the canvass communication?

If no changes were made, your property will be marked as responded and that is the end of the canvass.

If new names have been added, we will send out registration forms to any new names that have been added at the property who are not registered to vote.

If names are crossed out, we will remove anyone who no longer lives at the property.

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)

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

Commonwealth citizens must be resident in the UK and have leave to enter or remain in the UK. 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
- Welsh Parliament and Northern Ireland Assemblies (if they live in those areas)
- some referendums (based on the rules for the particular referendum), but cannot vote in UK Parliamentary general elections.

How can I register to vote?

You can apply to register to vote on the government website, www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

You will need to provide the following:

- National Insurance number
- date of birth
- postal voting preferences
- whether you wish to appear on the open register

Registering to vote will not complete the canvass response. This response should be made using one of the methods above.

I moved house, am I still registered?

When you move home, you need to register at your new address, and if you previously had a postal or proxy voting arrangement, you will need to make a new application if you wish this to continue.

Can I register at two addresses?

Usually, 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 live 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.

A person's name may appear on the electoral register only if they reside at an address within the electoral area. A 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. Based on this criterion, a person can be registered to vote in two different electoral areas.

However, it is unlikely that ownership of a second home used only for recreational purposes would meet the residency qualification. Ownership of a second home that a voter pays council tax 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.

Do I need to register, and what happens if I don't?

If we have invited you to register to vote by post, you must respond. If you don't, we will send you reminders, and someone could 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 an adequate reason, you may be fined £80. Not being registered can also impact applications for mortgages or mobile phones since credit reference agencies use the register to validate applications.

How do I change my name on the register?

If your name has changed, amend your name accordingly using the online response or by completing the form and returning by post. We will then send you a change of name form to complete. You will need to provide evidence to support the name change, such as a marriage certificate or deed poll. Alternatively, you can submit a new registration on the government website. You will need to provide your previous name and your new name.

What is the Invitation to Register form?

Once a Canvass response has been completed, and the new eligible person is added to a property, we will send an Invitation to Register form by post or email. You must complete this form and include the following:

- National Insurance number
- date of birth
- previous address in the last 12 months,
- postal voting preferences
- whether you wish to appear on the open register

You will not be registered to vote without completing this form.

This form needs to be checked to ensure the name and address details are correct and that all other information is provided. Please provide an email address so we can contact you regarding your registration.

Do I need to include my email address and phone number on the canvass form?

No. We invite you to include your email address and phone number on the canvass form, but you do not have to. An email or phone number allows us to contact you in future canvasses and save money that could be used on other council services. We will use this information only in connection with your registration and contact you if there is a problem.

The address shown on my canvass communication has changed or is incorrect

Please advise us of any changes, which we will pass on to our street naming and numbering team to investigate.

Will my details be shared with other organisations?

Using information received from the public, we keep two registers:

- electoral register
- open register (also known as the edited register)

Electoral register

The electoral register contains the names and addresses of everyone who is registered to vote in public elections. We use this register 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.

Open register

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

Your name and address will be included on the open register unless you ask to be removed or state this when you register to vote. Removing your details from the open register does not affect your right to vote.

In addition, the electoral registration officer will process your personal information under current data protection legislation.

Is the data I enter online secure?

Yes. 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 individual electoral registration system, people need to provide their date of birth and National Insurance number. These details are checked against government records to verify the person's identity. This process makes the system more secure.

How do I get added or removed from the open (edited) register?

Your name and address will be included in the open register unless you ask them to be removed. Removing your details from the open register does not affect your right to vote. You can change your preferences at any time by making a request. We will need your:

- full name
- address
- whether you wish to be included or omitted from the open register

You can do this in writing or by email to elections3@cumberland.gov.uk. We will also write to you to confirm any change.

The credit reference agency does not believe I am on the electoral roll

We provide monthly updates to the main credit reference agencies. If you have an issue, we can provide a certificate of residency free of charge. We can email this certificate to you to confirm your current electoral registration, which you can then pass to your credit reference agency.

I have no fixed address. Can I register?

Yes. You can still register to vote. You need to complete a declaration of local connection to show that you are connected to and spend time at a particular place. You can typically do this only for one place. We can issue this form by post, to a relevant address or by email.

Can I register anonymously?

Anonymous registration is available if your safety or 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 attestation in support of the application. A separate application form must be completed in writing – if you cannot register anonymously online.