

Electoral Office for Northern Ireland

Privacy Notice

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Introduction

This is the general Privacy Notice. It sets out how we use your data and what rights you have. Employees or potential employees can access the HR Privacy Notice on our website <http://www.eoni.org.uk/Utility/About-EONI/Recruitment>.

Data Controller Name: Dr David Marshall

Address: Electoral Office for Northern Ireland, Colby House, Stranmillis Court, Belfast BT9 5TA

Interim Data Protection Officer Name: Lisa Cherry

Address: Electoral Office for Northern Ireland, Colby House, Stranmillis Court, Belfast BT9 5TA

Email: dpo@eoni.org.uk

Why are you processing my personal information?

We process your information to enable the Chief Electoral Officer to create and maintain an accurate and up-to-date electoral register and process applications for postal/proxy votes and electoral identity cards, to allow you to vote in elections and to fulfil our duty to conduct elections and referendums.

Lawful basis for processing

Our legal basis for processing your data is that the processing is necessary for compliance with a legal obligation to which the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland is subject. The Representation of the People Act 1983 requires the Chief Electoral Officer to maintain an accurate and up-to-date electoral register and conduct a periodic canvass. The Representation of the People Act 1985 requires the Chief Electoral Officer to issue postal and proxy votes. The Electoral Fraud (Northern Ireland) Act 2002 enables the Chief Electoral Officer to issue electoral identity cards. Processing is also necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland.

The Representation of the People (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2008 (Regulation 24) enables the Chief Electoral Officer to require you to give such information as is required to maintain the electoral register and failure of a person to comply is a criminal offence.

What categories of personal data are you processing?

We may collect the following information when you register to vote, apply to vote by post or proxy or apply for an electoral identity card:

- Full name (first name, middle name, family name, previous surname)
- Full residential address including postcode
- Any previous address from the last time you registered
- Any other residence, including an address where you are currently registered
- Nationality
- Date of birth
- National insurance number

- Signature
- Your preference for opting out of the edited register
- Your voting preferences (in person or by post)
- Reason for requesting a postal or proxy vote or anonymous status
- If you have chosen to provide your telephone number and or email address (this will only be used to contact you if there is a query about your application).
- Information provided for an Electoral Identity Card application.
- For Overseas electors, service voters, Crown servants serving overseas additional relevant information in order to establish your eligibility status (e.g. service number)
- Details of Attorneys or Representatives and Court Orders
- We also collect information about the use of our website through cookies. Where we use non-essential cookies, you will be asked whether you agree to these. If you do agree our lawful basis for using the website usage data will be that agreement. Our cookie policy is on our website and it tells you how you can withdraw your consent.
- Biometric data
- Details of the person appointed as your proxy (name, address and date of birth)
- Details of the person who attests your absent vote application (name, address, occupation, signature)
- Email address and contact number

In order to comply with our legal obligations in relation to health and safety at the workplace and in the public interest to control disease and to protect the vital interests of data subjects we may need to collect information relating to Covid-19 or health information. Any information collected will be processed in accordance with Data Protection legislation.

In order to run elections we will need to process personal information from key holders and other personnel in relation to polling premises.

Where do you get my personal data from?

We obtain information from completed registration forms, online registration applications, online applications for registration information, postal/proxy vote applications, electoral identity card applications and communications from you to the office.

As part of the nomination process for an election, a person's political affiliation may also be recorded, and as part of the postal and proxy voting application process, certain information about a person's health may also be captured. These also class as special category data.

As part of our duty to conduct elections and referendums, we are also required to collect additional information to assist in this function.

This includes:

- Whether you have voted at a particular election or referendum, the method of voting (whether it was at a polling station or by post), but not how or for whom you voted
- Information about candidates – this may include name, home address, place of work and employer, details of any land owned or occupied by the candidate, date of birth and party affiliation (if any)
- Information about agents – this may include name, home and office address, party affiliation and contact details
- Expenditure incurred and/or donations received as declared on Candidate's Spending returns
- Name and signature of anyone proposing, seconding or assenting to a candidate's nomination

Name, address and signature if you have acted as a witness to a Candidate's consent to nomination

The Chief Electoral Officer (under legislation) can also require certain public authorities to provide information to ensure the register is as accurate as possible.

The authorities that may currently be required to provide information are:

- Business Services Organisation
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Department of Education
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive
- Registrar General for Northern Ireland
- Secondary schools and further education colleges
- Prison Service
- Coroner's Office
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (British Citizenship data)

How long do you keep my personal data?

We will only retain your data for as long as necessary to keep the electoral register up-to-date and to ensure free and fair elections. You will remain listed on the register until you are removed. When your personal data is no longer needed it will be securely deleted, except where we must keep it in order to comply with our legal obligations.

Information published in the full or edited register will be placed in the public domain, and may remain there indefinitely.

Data processed by the Register to Vote service

Your data is deleted by the Register to Vote service once your application to register to vote is processed by EONI. Once EONI downloads the application, the Register to Vote service marks it for deletion from their systems within 48 hours. Most applications are downloaded within one business day. The Register to Vote service works with EONI to ensure that all applications are downloaded within 30 days. The Register to Vote service also holds back-ups of data for 14 days. Data identifiers about your use of their website collected by cookies is kept for 26 months.

The Register to Vote service retains some data about your application, for example time, date, postcode to help them troubleshoot problems with your registration. Other data, such as age and if you have recently moved are used to create aggregated statistics. This data is not associated with any other personal identifiers.

Who we share your personal data with

The Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland maintains the full electoral register for Northern Ireland.

The full electoral register contains the names and addresses of all persons who have registered to vote, except those who have registered via the anonymous registration scheme, which is reserved for individuals who are concerned about their safety or the safety of persons residing in their household (in which case the only details which appear on the register are an electoral number and the letter “N”).

The full electoral register version of the register is used for a variety of purposes, which are set out in law. It is a criminal offence for anyone to supply or use the register for other purposes. The full register is used for electoral purposes – such as making sure only eligible people can vote – and for other limited purposes specified in law. The personal data in both the full and edited register must always be processed in line with data protection legislation.

People are entitled to be registered on the electoral register if they will attain voting age within a defined period. Legislation requires that their entry on the register includes the date on which they will attain that age.

Dates of Birth for electors and proxies are prepared to support polling stations to enable a decision as to whether or not a specified document raises a doubt as to the voter’s apparent age.

Otherwise, data, such as age and if you have recently registered are used to create aggregated statistics and not associated with any other personal identifiers.

Information provided in support of an Electoral Identity Card application may be shared with the relevant organisation to verify the application.

Electoral administration

The Electoral Office for Northern Ireland uses the full electoral register for the purposes of an election, including helping to ensure that eligible individuals are registered and able to vote in relevant elections.

Inspecting the Register

Individuals inspecting registers may only do so under supervision at the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland office in Belfast. Individuals may only make copies of any particulars included on the register via hand-written notes.

Political entities and individuals

The organisations and individuals listed below are entitled to receive copies of the full electoral register, on request. A number of them are entitled to use it for “electoral purposes”. “Electoral purposes” is intended to cover a wide range of political activities inside and outside election periods, including but not limited to: democratic representation; communicating with electors and interested parties; surveying and opinion gathering, campaigning activities; activities to increase voter turnout; supporting the work of elected representatives, prospective candidates and official candidates; and fundraising to support any of these activities. In some cases, they may also use the register for additional purposes in connection with the office that they hold. They may also be given information when acting in a representative capacity.

These are indicated below.

- A Member of Parliament, who is entitled to a copy of the register for the constituency they represent, who can use the register for purposes connected with their office or for electoral purposes.
- A Member of the Northern Ireland Assembly, who is entitled to the register for the constituency they represent, who can use the register for purposes connected with their office or for electoral purposes.
- A local councillor, who is entitled to the register for the local district electoral area they represent, who can use the register for purposes connected with their office or for electoral purposes.
- Candidates in Parliamentary, Northern Ireland Assembly and local government elections who are standing in an area in which you are registered. These individuals may also use the register for complying with rules on political donations. They can also use the register for electoral purposes.
- Registered political parties, recognised third parties who intend to promote or procure electoral success at any relevant election, and permitted participants (for example referenda campaigners). These entities may use the register for electoral purposes and also for the purposes of complying with the laws on political donations. Permitted participants may also use the register for the purposes of a referendum campaign.
- Local constituency representatives of registered political parties who operate in the area in which you are registered. These entities may also use the full register for electoral and electoral registration purposes.

Other Public bodies

The following organisations and individuals are also entitled to receive a copy of the full electoral register:

- The Electoral Commission for use in carrying out its functions
- The British Library

- The Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland; the Local Government Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland; and the District Electoral Area Commissioner for use in carrying out their functions.
- Deputy returning officers at a local election to use for the purposes of that election.
- A police force in Great Britain, the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Police Service of Northern Ireland (Reserve), the National Crime Agency, the Police Information and Technology Organisation, and body of constables established under an Act of Parliament to use for the purposes of detection and prevention of crime and enforcement of criminal law.
- UK Government departments and Northern Ireland Departments.
- The Electoral Office for Northern Ireland may share your data to law enforcement agencies for law enforcement purposes as defined under the Data Protection Act 2018.

Credit reference agencies

Credit reference agencies are entitled to purchase copies of the full electoral register, and may use it to vet applications for credit, prevent and detect money laundering, or for the statistical analysis of credit risk assessments.

Jury service

The Chief Electoral Officer is required to provide lists of individuals, compiled from entries on the full register, for the purpose of the Juries Officer calling individuals for jury service.

Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency are supplied with a copy of the full register. They can use this for statistical purposes and may provide it for public inspection. The Chief Electoral Officer may also provide information about your date of birth and nationality to the Agency. The Agency may use that information for statistical purposes or assisting the Chief Electoral Officer to comply with their duties relating to registration of electors.

Medical practitioners

A registered medical practitioner may obtain details of an individual from the full register for the purpose of providing medical care to that individual or their dependents.

Approved representatives and Attorneys

To verify your identity, the data you provide will be processed by the Individual Electoral Registration Digital Service. As part of this process your data will be shared with the Department of Work and Pensions and the suppliers that are data processors for the Individual Electoral Registration Digital Service. You can find more information about this here: <https://www.registertovote.service.gov.uk/register-to-vote/privacy>

Applications are determined via a user defined set of rules in the electoral management system that meet legislative requirements. Applications that do not satisfy the user defined rules based method are reviewed by EONI staff. There is no artificial intelligence used in the determination of applications.

Organisations who process your personal data on behalf of the Electoral Office

Organisations who process your personal data on behalf of the Electoral Office, for example, delivery organisations, mailing houses and contractors or consultants. These organisations are carefully selected and measures are put in place to protect your information.

Edited/Open Register

The edited register is available for sale to any person for any purpose. The edited register omits the names and addresses of people who have asked to be excluded from that version of the register, either by ticking the Edited Register box on the registration form or asking us to have their details removed from this register (this may be done by contacting info@eoni.org.uk).

Marked Register

The marked register is the polling station register on which a mark has been placed against the name of every person who was issued with a ballot paper.

A copy of the marked register may be supplied free of charge to police forces and other law enforcement agencies but only if they have previously inspected the marked register. No other organisation is entitled to be supplied with a free copy of the marked register.

Any person entitled to be supplied with a copy of the full register (see above) may purchase a copy of the marked register.

You can make a request to the Chief Electoral Officer to inspect a copy of the marked register. The request must be made in writing and must specify:

- the area to be inspected
- the purposes for which the information will be used
- the reason why inspection of the full register would not meet your needs
- your name
- the date on which you wish to make the inspection
- whether you would prefer to inspect the register in printed or data form

It is a criminal offence to contravene the restrictions on the use of the register and of the information contained in it as set out in the Representation of the People (Northern Ireland) 2008 Regulations.

Where you ask for your personal data it is of utmost importance to ensure that information is ONLY given to the Data Subject. The information can only be given to their representative in certain circumstances. Such circumstances are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Do you transfer my personal data to other countries outside the UK?

The register may be purchased by overseas bodies or individuals as outlined above, otherwise we do not transfer your personal data to other countries outside the UK unless we are sending correspondence to the following categories of electors:

- Overseas electors
- Service voters (or their spouse/civil partner)
- Crown Servant or British Council employee (or spouse/civil partner) working abroad

Any information sent to the above categories of electors will only be sent to an address provided by them.

International transfers

As your personal data is stored on our IT infrastructure, and shared with our data processors, it may be transferred and stored securely outside the European Union. Where that is the case it will be subject to equivalent legal protection through the use of Model Contract Clauses.

Do you use automated decision-making or profiling?

We do not use automated decision-making or profiling.

What rights do I have?

1.1.1 The right to be informed: You have the right to be informed in a clear, concise and transparent way about the collection and use of your personal data.

1.1.2 The right of access: You have a right to obtain confirmation as to whether or we process personal information about you and, if so, to be provided with details of that personal information and access to it. This is known as a “Subject Access Request” and information how to do this can be accessed via [http://www.eoni.org.uk/Privacy-Notice/How-to-make-a-Subject-Access-Request-\(1\)](http://www.eoni.org.uk/Privacy-Notice/How-to-make-a-Subject-Access-Request-(1)).

1.1.3 The right to rectification: You have a right to obtain rectification without undue delay of inaccurate personal data. Where EONI is not the author, creator or originator of the information you will be informed and the request should be forwarded to the relevant party;

1.1.4 The right to erasure: You may have a right to require personal information about you to be erased *on certain grounds*. This right does not apply when the lawful basis for processing is for the performance of a public task. As there are circumstances where this cannot be done you should seek independent advice before submitting an application to EONI;

1.1.5 The right to restrict processing: You may have a right to require us to restrict processing of personal information about you *on certain grounds*. As

there are circumstances where this cannot be done you should seek independent advice before submitting an application to EONI;

1.1.6 The right to data portability: You have a right to receive personal information concerning you in a structured, commonly used and machine-readable format and to have that information transmitted to another controller, if certain grounds apply.

All requests for portability will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

1.1.7 The right to object: You may have a right for an individual to object, on grounds relating to their particular situation, to processing of personal data about you if *certain grounds* apply. As there are circumstances where this cannot be done you should seek independent advice before submitting an application to EONI;

1.1.8 Rights in relation to automated decision making and profiling: You have the right to object to any automated decision making.

1.1.9 Right to an effective judicial remedy and to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office: You should take independent advice if you believe your rights have been infringed. You can speak to us but if you remain dissatisfied with the response received, you can lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office.

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

casework@ico.org.uk
<https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/>

You have the right to withdraw your consent at any time if your consent is relied upon to process your data.

How do I complain if I am not satisfied?

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of this privacy notice, or how your personal information is being processed, please contact the Data Protection Officer (details above).

If you are still not satisfied, you have the right to lodge a complaint with the

Information Commissioner's Office (ICO):
Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF

Tel: 0303 123 1113
Email: casework@ico.org.uk
<https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/>

Use of Special Category Data Privacy Notice

This is a summary of our full Policy Statement on the use of Special Category Personal Data.

As part of the EONI's statutory and public functions, we process special category data about Electors and staff.

We do this in accordance with the requirements of Article 9 and 10 of the UK General Data Protection Regulation ('GDPR') and Schedule 1 of the Data Protection Act 2018 ('DPA 2018').

Some of the Schedule 1 conditions for processing special category data require us to have an Appropriate Policy Document in place.

Our Policy Document and where to find it

We have a Policy Document that explains our processing of special category data.

This is a summary of how we process special category data. You can read the full policy on our website <http://www.eoni.org.uk/Privacy-Notice>.

In the Policy Document we explain how and why we process special category data. We explain the legal basis. We set out the way we comply with the data protection principles.

Special Category Data

We process the special category data about electors or staff where there is a substantial interest, a statutory requirement or a legal obligation. Our processing relates to the data we receive or obtain to undertake the following:

- Monitor Equal Opportunities
- Make Statutory Returns
- Use nationality as part of the Registration process
- Employment Law Obligations:
 - Ensure that if information received will lead to the applicant not being appointed, then this will be made known to the applicant.
 - Put in place a mechanism for providing this feedback, allowing the applicant to respond and obliging those involved in the recruitment decision to take this response into account.

Links to other websites

Where we provide links to websites of other organisations, this privacy notice does not cover how that organisation processes personal information. We encourage you to read the privacy notices on the other websites you visit.

Changes to this Privacy Notice

We keep our Privacy Notices under regular review. This Privacy Notice was last updated in November 2025.