

NNDC Electoral Roll Annual Canvass - August to November 2011

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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1 “At risk” persons

Question: I am at risk and am worried that, if I include my name on the voter registration form, my ex partner will be able to find my new address where I am living. How can I avoid this happening?

Answer: Although the electoral register is a public document, it is not widely available and can only be viewed at the Council Offices in Cromer and at Fakenham Connect, Oak Street, Fakenham under the supervision of a member of staff. Our electoral register is in address order, not alphabetical surname order. Therefore, unless someone knows your address they will be unable to search by name.

However, if you feel you are at risk, please either write “at risk” on the voter registration form or contact Electoral Services either by phone 01263 516046 or 516317 or email register@north-norfolk.gov.uk. We will then advise you of the anonymous registration procedure and provide the relevant application form if required.

2 Edited Register

Question: What is the Edited Register and what does it mean if there is a “Z” in the Edited Register box next to my name?

Answer: The Edited Register is separate from the “full” register, although it is compiled from the details supplied on the voter registration form. It is available for general sale and it can be used for any purpose such as marketing – what you may consider to be “junk mail”.

If there is a “Z” in the edited register box next to your name, it means that you have already asked us NOT to include your name in the edited register. If a person with a “Z” no longer wishes to opt-out, they should cross through the “Z” mark and we will include their details in the edited register. **Please make sure each person named on the form is asked this question.** If there is not a “Z” here and you do NOT want your details sold, you can tick the edited register box.

Question: If I opt out of the Edited Register, does this stop me getting credit?

Answer: It makes no difference. By law the credit referencing companies can use the full electoral register lists to check identities. Opting out means that commercial companies, such as mailing firms, cannot buy your details.

3 Who can register?

Question: How do I know if I am eligible to have my name included in the Register of Electors and be able to vote?

Answer: To be included in the Register of Electors, a person:

- a. must be resident on 15 October 2011 at an address in the district of North Norfolk;
- b. must be aged 18 or over before 1 December 2012 i.e. date of birth **before** 1 December 1994. However, all 17 year olds and 16 year olds who will be 17 by 1 December this year should be included on the new register. They may vote as soon as they reach their 18th birthday. Please don't disappoint them by forgetting to add their names to your form.
- c. must not be disqualified, i.e. serving a prison sentence.

- d. must be either a British Citizen, including British Dependent Territories, British Overseas Citizens, and British Nationals (Overseas) or other Commonwealth Citizen, Citizen of the Irish Republic, or European Union Citizen.
A female who is a foreign national does not automatically acquire British Citizenship upon marriage to a man who is a British Citizen. However, a female who is a British Citizen and marries a foreign national male retains her British Citizenship irrespective of whether or not her husband intends to apply for British Citizenship;

Question: I am NOT a British Citizen, a Citizen of a British Dependent Territory, a British Overseas Citizen, a British National (Overseas) or other Commonwealth Citizen: neither am I a Citizen of the Irish Republic or other European Union Citizen. How do I complete my annual electoral canvass form?

Answer: Unfortunately, you are not entitled to be included on the electoral roll. Please tick the statement in section 2 that states that residents are not entitled to vote due to nationality and state your nationality in the space provided. Please cross out any names that may be listed in section 3 of the form and leave this section blank. Sign and date the form in section 5 and return it in the pre-paid envelope provided.

4 Exemption from jury service

Question: There is a J in the “Jury Service exemption” box of the voter registration form against my name. What does this mean?

Answer: This means that you have previously advised us that you are over 70 years of age and, therefore, exempt from jury service. If you are not over 70 and there is a “J” in that box, please cross through the “J” and we will amend our records.

If you or anyone living at the property believes you should be exempt from jury service for a reason other than age, you need to leave the box blank on the form and contact Her Majesty’s Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCS), telephone number 0845 8038003 or email jurysummoning@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk.

5 Voter registration form shows correct details

Question: My details are the same as last year; do I need to return the form?

Answer: Yes – we need confirmation of this. Simply check all the details pre-printed on the form. If they are correct, sign (anyone detailed on the form can sign), print name of signatory and date at the bottom. Then return in the pre-paid envelope provided.

For most people, the information we have is a year old and we don't know if the situation has changed since last autumn when the previous canvass took place. If there are no changes, simply sign the form in part 5 and return it straightaway in the pre-paid envelope provided.

6 **Voter registration form shows incorrect details**

Question: The names printed on the form are wrong/my surname has changed/the previous residents no longer live here. What should I do?

Answer: If the pre-printed names on the form are of previous residents, not up to date or you need to include more names, all you have to do is:

Cross out any names that are wrong, make amendments to existing names (i.e. change of surname on marriage) or add any new names in the available spaces. If you do not complete section 3, please explain why by completing section 2.

Sign (anyone named on the form can sign), print name and date the form at the bottom, put it in the pre-paid envelope provided and post it back to us immediately.

7 **Lost/damaged/not received forms**

Question: My neighbour has received an electoral registration form but I haven't - what should I do?

Answer: Please contact the Electoral Services Office either by phone 01263 516046 or 516317 or email register@north-norfolk.gov.uk giving your name and address and we will look into the matter. If necessary, we will arrange for you to receive a new form.

Question: My original electoral registration form has been damaged/accidentally thrown away. Am I allowed to have a new form?

Answer: Yes you are. Please contact Electoral Services either by phone 01263 516046 or 516317 or email register@north-norfolk.gov.uk giving your name and address and we will arrange for you to receive a new form to complete.

Question: I've already posted my form back, so why should I complete another?

Answer: You would only be asked to complete another form if we do not appear to have received your original form. It only takes a minute or two to complete the form and to do it now will save any further visit and inconvenience to you should the one you posted be lost in transit.

8 **Additional form received**

Question: I have received more than one voter registration form with my address on; one form has names on and the other hasn't. What should I do?

Answer: Where there are five or more names detailed on the form, a blank continuation form is automatically provided in case more names need to be added and there is not enough space on the first form. If the continuation sheet is not required, simply destroy it and return the first form only.

9 British nationality queries

Question: It states on the voter registration form that my nationality is British. However, I am English. Can you please make the necessary amendment to your records?

Answer: Electoral law does not refer to English, Welsh etc, but to British. Therefore, so far as elections are concerned, the nationality of "British" is used. In addition, according to the law, a person's nationality is that which appears on a passport. English, Scottish, Northern Irish and Welsh people are stated as being British Citizens on their passports and, therefore, this is the nationality used for electoral purposes.

10 Why do I have to register?

Question: I don't want to vote so why do I need to register?

Answer: We appreciate that many people opt not to vote, as is their right. However, registration is a legal requirement and the register of electors is also used extensively for crime prevention and detection and for evidence of residence in support of applications for credit. Applications for loans, bank accounts, mortgages, rental agreements, mobile phone contracts etc. may be refused to persons who are not on the electoral roll.

There are penalties of up to £1000 fine for non-compliance via prosecution in the courts.

Question: What happens if I don't send my electoral registration form back?

Answer: Voter registration forms are delivered to all properties from the end of August to the middle of September. In October, canvassers will call on all households where the original form has not yet been received, to get a form completed at the door.

Names can only be rolled forward on to the next electoral register for one year. If your household does not return a form for two consecutive years, then all currently registered names will be deleted from the electoral register after the second year.

There are penalties of up to £1000 fine for non-compliance via prosecution in the courts.

11 New Registrations

Question: I have recently moved into a property and wish to go on the Electoral Register. If I add my name to the voter registration form I have received at the property where I'm living, when can I expect my details to be on the Register?

Answer: The revised Register will be produced on 1 December 2011. Any person who was not on the last Register produced in September 2011 and who has been added to the annual voter registration form recently received, will be included in the December Register.

Question: I need to get my details on the Electoral Register now as my bank/building society will not let me open an account/take out a mortgage until I am on the Register. Do I add my name to the voter registration form delivered to the property or is there a separate form to complete and sign?

Answer: You need to add your details to the form that has been delivered to the property in order to go on the Electoral Register. The earliest your details can appear on the Register is 1 December 2011 as no Registers are published between September and December. This is the case throughout the country –not just North Norfolk. Credit Reference Agencies are aware of this.

12 Postal votes

Question: I would like to vote by post at the next election. What should I do?

Answer: Firstly, an 'A' in the postal voting box on the form means that you already vote by post or proxy and you need take no further action. If there is not an 'A' here and you would like to vote by post, call our helpline on (01263) 516046/516317 and we will send out a postal vote application form for you to complete and return.

Question: I do not want a postal vote but there is an 'A' in the box against my name.

Answer: If you no longer wish to vote by post, please cross out the pre-printed 'A', then sign, print your name and date the form in section 5 and return it in the envelope provided. We will amend our records accordingly.

13 Second homes/empty properties

Question: My property within North Norfolk is a second home and I am on the Electoral Register elsewhere. How should I complete the electoral registration form?

Answer: Tick the statement "This property is a second home" in section 2, confirming your property is a holiday home or second address. Please cross out any names of previous occupants that may be printed in section 3 and leave this section blank. Sign, print your name and date the form in section 5 and return it to us in the prepaid envelope.

Question: My property in North Norfolk is a second home and I live here for part of the year. Am I able to register?

Answer: If this property is your second home (not your main residence) you need to show that your residence here has a considerable degree of permanence in order to register to vote here if you so choose. If you reside here for at least 6 months of a year and do not rent out at other times, you are able to register by completing this form.

If you reside here for **less** than 6 months of a year please complete section 2 by ticking the second home box (do not complete any name details in section 3), sign at section 5 and return.

Question: My property is empty and will not be occupied on 15 October 2011. Do I need to complete and sign the voter registration form?

Answer: Yes. We have delivered to and need a form back from every property in North Norfolk even if it is empty, a second home, holiday let, business premises or a property where nobody is entitled to register.

If it is just a matter of you or someone else who normally resides in the property on a permanent basis, being away temporarily (for example, on holiday or in

hospital) and the property being empty on that specific day, the names still need to be on the form.

14 House moves before 15 October 2011

Question: I am moving house before 15 October 2011. What should I do?

Answer: You should leave the voter registration form that has been delivered to your old address at that property for the new occupiers to complete. There should be a form waiting for you at your new address, which you should complete and return.

Do not amend the voter registration form for your old address to read your new address, as each form has a unique bar code which relates to the address printed on the form only.

Question: What should I do if there isn't an electoral registration form at my new address?

Answer: If it is in our area, please contact Electoral Services either by phone 01263 516046 or 516317 or email register@north-norfolk.gov.uk giving your name and new address and we will send you a new form to complete. If you have moved to a property outside our area, contact your new Council.

Question: I expect to be moving in the next few weeks, but have not yet got a completion date – what should I do?

Answer: Wait until you are sure where you will be on 15 October. If you will still be at this address on that date, complete the form and return it. When you then move **after** 15 October please contact us (or your new local authority if moving out of our area) for a voter registration form. This form will be different to the one you completed at your old property.

If you move **before** 15 October, then leave the form for the new occupants and remember to complete the form that should have been left for you at your new address.

15 House moves after 15 October 2011

Question: I am moving house after 15 October 2011. What should I do?

Answer: Right across the country, everyone has to register for where they are living on 15 October. With rolling registration, you can re-register as soon as you move house. Therefore, complete the form for your present address and then, when you have moved, let us know by contacting Electoral Services either by phone 01263 516046 or 516317 or by emailing register@north-norfolk.gov.uk giving your name, together with your old and new address and we will send you a form to complete.

16 Moves to residential homes

Question: My spouse/partner/parent has moved permanently into a nursing home. Should I include their name on my voter registration form?

Answer: Cross their name off your form if they are no longer permanently living at your address. Nursing and residential homes register their residents direct with the local authority by completing a form for the home. You may wish to check that they will add your relative to their form.

17 **University students/people working away or emigrating/gap years**

Question: I am going away to university. Should I still register at home?

Answer: As a student you are allowed to register at both your home address and your term-time address. You are advised to leave your name on the voter registration form for your home address and you can apply to vote by post or by a proxy vote. Please note that it is not illegal to be on the electoral register at two different addresses, but it **is** illegal to vote more than once at the same type of election. As students tend to move often it is probably safer to include your name on the register for your home address.

Question: I am emigrating abroad or will be going to work abroad for at least a year. What should I do?

Answer: You are advised to leave your name on the voter registration form for the moment. If there are no other changes to be made to your form, please confirm your registration by signing the form in section 5 and returning it in the pre-paid envelope provided. Please write a note on the form regarding your circumstances and, if appropriate, we will send you an Overseas Electors form if you are emigrating permanently. Once Electoral Services receives the completed overseas form, we will update your registration and send an acknowledgement to your overseas address.

Question: I am travelling/working away/taking a gap year over the next 12 months and will be away from home. What should I do?

Answer: You are advised to leave your name on the voter registration form and apply to vote by post or by a proxy vote for the period that you are away.