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The Open Register

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Frequently asked questions about the open register.

There are two registers. Why?

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 - and for other limited purposes specified in law. The personal data in the register must always be processed in line with data-protection legislation.

Who uses the electoral register?

- Election staff, political parties, candidates and holders of elected office use the register for electoral purposes.
- Your local council and the British Library hold copies that anyone may look at under supervision. A copy is also held by the Electoral commission, the Boundary commissions (which set constituency boundaries for most elections) and the Office for National Statistics.
- We can use the register for duties relating to security, enforcing the law and preventing crime. The police and the security services can also use it for law enforcement.
- The register is used when calling people for jury service.
- Government departments may buy the register from local registration officers and use it to help prevent and detect crime. They can also use it to safeguard national security by checking the background of job applicants and employees.
- Credit reference agencies can buy the register. they help other organisations to check the names and addresses of people applying for credit. They can also use it to carry out identity checks when trying to prevent and detect money laundering.

It is a criminal offence for anyone to supply or use the register for anything else.

The open register is an extract of the electoral register, but it 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. The personal data in the register must always be processed in line with data protection legislation.

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 would not affect your right to vote.

If you wish to opt out of the open register please email ✆ elections@Hertsmere.gov.uk. You will need to include your name and address and a request to not be included on the open register. If you are contacting us on behalf of other members of your household you must confirm that you have their permission to do so.

Who uses the open register?

Users of the open register include:

- Businesses checking the identity and address details of people who apply for their services such as insurance, goods hire and property rental, as well as when they shop online;
- Businesses selling age-restricted goods or services, such as alcohol and gambling online, to meet the rules on verifying the age of their customers;
- Charities and voluntary agencies, for example to help maintain contact information for those who have chosen to donate bone marrow and to help people separated by adoption to find each other;
- Charities, to help with fundraising and contacting people who have made donations;
- Debt collection agencies when tracing people who have changed address without telling their creditors;
- Direct marketing firms when maintaining their mailing lists;
- Landlords and letting agents when checking the identity of potential tenants;
- Local councils when identifying and contacting residents;
- Online directory firms to help users of the websites find people, such as when reuniting friends and families;
- Organisations tracing and identifying beneficiaries of wills, pensions and insurance policies;
- Private sector firms to verify details of job applicants.

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