Annual electoral registration canvass

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Why is the form not addressed to me?

The purpose of the Household Enquiry Form is to identify who should be registered to vote at an address. It is addressed to the present occupier/homeowner because the person we have registered at an address may no longer be there.

Q. I am already registered to vote do I need to respond to the Household Enquiry Form?

Yes. The Electoral Registration Officer is required by law to run an electoral registration canvass each year to help determine who should be registered to vote. This includes not only identifying where changes need to be made, but also confirming where there is no change needed to registered elector details.

Residents are required by law to provide the information requested on the form.

If there is no change residents can respond by completing the form, online, by telephone or by text.

Q. The form threatens a £1,000 fine...

It is not intended to be a threat, however legally failure to respond or providing false information could potentially result in a fine. We are therefore required by law to make residents aware of this.

Q. Why am I not registered to vote – I am paying Council Tax?

Paying Council Tax does not automatically add you to the Electoral Register – not all people paying Council Tax are entitled to be registered, and not all people entitled to be registered to vote at an address are named Council Tax payers. Also the law requires each individual to register to vote themselves to vote.

Q. How do I remove people who should no longer be registered at my address? (for example if they have moved out)

Either complete and return the form, crossing through the names of any listed elector who is no longer there, or respond online, where you will be given the option to mark those electors who should not be registered as no longer being there.
Q. Some or all of the current occupiers are not yet registered to vote, how can register?

First either complete and return the Household Enquiry Form, or respond online. Both methods will allow you to add new names. However, this will not automatically add them to the electoral register.

Each new individual will be sent an Invitation to Register – they will then need to either complete and return the Invitation to Register form or they can go online at [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote)

If an individual registers to vote online, someone in the property must still respond to the Household Enquiry Form.

Q. Who should be included on the Household Enquiry Form?

Everyone who is eligible to register to vote. Residents at the address who are:

- 16 years of age or above
- a British, Irish or European Union citizen
- or
- a Commonwealth citizen who has leave to enter or remain in the UK or who does not require such leave

Students – Students can register at both their home address and term time address, they just need to ensure that they do not vote from both addresses in the same election.

Second home-owners – Second home owners can register at more than one address, but only if they are resident in both, so if they split their time between the two addresses.

More information regarding registration criteria can be found at [www.croydon.gov.uk/democracy/dande/elections/electoral-register/who-can-vote](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/democracy/dande/elections/electoral-register/who-can-vote)

Q. Who should not be included on the Household Enquiry Form?

- Residents at the address who are under 16 years of age
- Residents who are not British, Irish, European Union or Commonwealth citizens
- Visitors staying at the address at the time the Household Enquiry Form is responded to
- Landlords who do not live at the address.
Q. Who should respond to the Household Enquiry Form?

Only one person needs to respond to the Household Enquiry Form for each property, this should be one of the occupiers – but it does not need to be someone considered ‘head of household’.

If the property is empty the landlord should respond to the form and confirm this information.

Q. I do not vote so I don’t want to register…

It is not a legal requirement to vote but the law requires eligible residents to register when requested. There are also benefits of being on the register that are unconnected with elections. Credit referencing agencies are entitled to receive the electoral register and use the information contained in it as part of an individual’s credit records, using it as verification of their address. If someone is not on the electoral register then it may affect their ability to obtain credit, get a mortgage or access other financial services.

Q. How to respond to the Household Enquiry Form

Residents may respond using ONE of the options below:

- **Complete** the form and then **post** it back in the envelope provided. The envelope is addressed to Electoral Reform Services who have been contracted by the Electoral Registration Officer to receive and scan returned forms. Postage is free.
- **ONLINE** at [www.householdresponse.com/croydon](http://www.householdresponse.com/croydon). Residents will be required to enter a two part security code for their address which is included on their Household Enquiry Form

If nothing has changed residents may also:

- **TEXT** **NOCHANGE** followed by their two-part security code to **80212** (If nobody is eligible to vote to include a reason e.g empty, business, 2nd home)
- **CALL 0800 197 9871** and when prompted enter their two-part security code.

Responding quickly to this form will save the Council money. The Electoral Registration Officer is required to follow-up the initial form with reminder forms and personal visits to non-responding addresses.

It is also a legal requirement for residents to provide the information requested; if they do not they could be fined £1,000.
Q. Why are the return envelopes addressed to Electoral Reform Services?

Electoral Reform Services who have been contracted by the Electoral Registration Officer to receive open, sort and scan returned forms. Images of the forms will then be uploaded to the Electoral Management Software System used by Electoral Services, and they will process the forms. Electoral Reform Services will securely store the original forms until the end of the canvass when they will be securely destroyed.

Q. I have lost my form, can you send me another one?

A reminder form is automatically generated if you have not responded by mid-August. But if you request a new form after the Reminder forms have been posted a new form will be sent to you. Email electoral.services@croydon.gov.uk and they will send this to you.

Q. What happens when changes are made to the information printed on the Household Enquiry Form?

Adding a new name to the form will not automatically register that person to vote. Each individual will also have to register themselves.

Each new person on the Household Enquiry Form will be sent an Invitation to Register form. They will then need to either complete the paper application, or they can register online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

Responding quickly to the invitation to register will save the Council money. The Electoral Registration Officer is required to follow-up the initial invitation with reminder forms and personal visits to non-responding individuals.

Removing a name on the form will not automatically remove that person from the Electoral Register. The Electoral Registration Officer is required to then review that individual’s right to be registered – normally this will mean that a letter is sent to the elector at the address at which they are registered.

Q. There is a mistake in the address on the form, can this be changed?

Please correct the address on the form and post it back, or email electoral.services@croydon.gov.uk. This will then be investigated and corrected if it is incorrect. This change will take effect on publication of the revised electoral register on 1 December.
Q. **How do I change my method of voting? (arrange or cancel a postal or proxy voting arrangement)**

The Household Enquiry Form will show against each registered elector whether they have a postal or proxy voting arrangement in force. If electors wish to cancel an existing arrangement they need to do so in writing either emailing to electoral.services@croydon.gov.uk or by writing to

Electoral Services  
Town Hall  
Katharine Street  
Croydon  
CR9 1DE

Q. **I have responded to the form already and I have received a reminder form / or a personal canvasser has visited by address...**

It takes over a week to print, dispatch and deliver reminder forms. There is always a cross-over period after data for the reminder forms is sent to our print contractors and the forms are finally delivered in which responses continue to be received. It is not possible to prevent reminder forms from being dispatched if a response is received at this point so this means that sometimes households get a reminder when they have (recently) responded.

Q. **Why have I received a personal visit from a canvasser?**

The Electoral Registration Officer is required by law to take certain actions during the annual canvass. This includes following up initial and reminder Household Enquiry Forms and Invitations to Register with personal visits by canvassers.

These visits will take place at evenings and weekends – when they are most likely to be able to make contact with residents.

Canvassers will be making visits from mid-September until early November.

Canvassers will have photographic ID and are required to show this to residents when they introduce themselves.

Q. **When will my name be added to the electoral register?**

If you register by 10 August then you will be registered on 3 September.

There are no published updates to the electoral register in October and November.

If you register by 21 November then you will be registered on 1 December.
Q. What is the open register?

There are 2 versions of the electoral register - the full version and the ‘open register’:

**The full version**

Everyone’s name and address goes on the full version of the electoral register. The full version of the register is only used for:

- elections
- preventing and detecting crime
- checking applications for loans or credit
- jury summoning in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

**The open register**

This is an extract of the electoral register, but is not used for elections. Any person, company or organisation can buy a copy of this register. It is used by businesses and charities to confirm name and address details. Your name and address is included in the open register. Removing your details from the open register does not affect your right to vote.

Q. How do I remove my name from the open register?

You can request that your name and address is excluded from the Open Register on a permanent basis.

- you cannot do this on behalf of another person
- each individual must inform the Electoral Registration Officer separately that they want to do this

You can make your request to the Electoral Registration Officer emailing to electoral.services@croydon.gov.uk or by writing to

Electoral Services
Town Hall
Katharine Street
Croydon
CR9 1DE
Q. Why can my details on the electoral register be used for non-electoral purposes (such as credit referencing) and why do I have to opt-out of being in the ‘open-register’? Does this comply with the new data protection rules?

Rules regarding the collection of data for the electoral register, and the publication, distribution and use of the electoral register are contained in electoral legislation, and is therefore comply with data protection rules. The Electoral Services Privacy Notice is on the Council’s website: www.croydon.gov.uk/privacy

Q. When is the next election?

There are no scheduled elections until the Mayor of London and Greater London Assembly elections in May 2020. However, it is always possible that a by-election or a snap General Election or even a referendum could take place before then.