Data Protection Privacy Statement – Electoral Registration

In order to deliver services to the citizens and communities in Bedford Borough, it is necessary for the Council to collect, gather and process personal data about residents, staff and other individuals. Bedford Borough Council is committed to protecting your personal data when you use its services and/or correspond with it.

The Council has registered as a Data Controller with the Information Commissioner's Office. This registration can be viewed on the ICO website (opens in a new window) Registration Number Z5916725.

As a Data Controller, the Council sets out the purposes and methods for processing information and ensures safeguards over any personal and special category information it processes.

The sections below explain the arrangements we have in place to protect the information entrusted to the Council.

In relation to Electoral Registration, Bedford Borough Council will process your personal data for the following processing purposes:

Your personal data is collected for the purpose of identifying individuals who should be sent an invitation to register, processing applications to join the register of electors, checking and updating details on the register of electors, reviewing and removing those who it is believed should no longer be registered, determining which electors to include on the Open/Edited Register, to facilitate applications for and process those applications to vote by post/proxy, to facilitate inspection of the register of electors and to supply copies of the same to those identified in law who must be sent a copy, to those who may request a copy and those who can purchase the edited/Open Register. You need to be registered to be able to vote in any election or referendum for which you are eligible. We have a duty to maintain a complete and accurate register throughout the year.

It is processing this personal data by virtue of the following Lawful Basis:

Compliance with a legal obligation, Performance of a task carried out in the public interest or otherwise processing is necessary for the purposes of the legitimate interests pursued by the controller

Personal data provided for Electoral Registration may be shared with, or obtained from the following organisations (in addition to any other disclosure required by a Court of Law or in response to a valid request by, normally, a law enforcement agency:

To verify your identity, the data you provide will be processed by the Individual Electoral Registration Digital Service managed by the Cabinet Office. As part of this process your data will be shared with the Department of Work and Pensions and the Cabinet Office 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

The information you provide is also held in electoral registers – the full electoral register and the open (edited) register. The full register is published once a year and is updated every month and can only be supplied to the following people and organisations:

- British Library • UK Statistics Authority
- Electoral Commission
- Boundary Commission for England
- Jury Summoning Bureau
- Elected Representatives (MPs, MEPs, The Mayor, Local Councilors)
- Police and Crime Commissioner
- Candidates standing for elections
- Local and National Political Parties
- The Council
- Parish Councils
- Police Forces, National Crime Agency
- Public Library and local authority archive services
- Government departments or bodies
- Credit Reference Agencies
- National Fraud Initiative
- Other Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers (for the purposes of them performing their duties at an election)

We also have to disclose (share) your information with our Software providers and contracted printers.

It is a crime for anyone who has a copy of the full register to pass information from this register on to others, if they do not have a lawful reason to see it. Anyone can inspect the full electoral register, and the inspection of the register will be under supervision. They can take extracts from the register, but only handwritten notes. Information taken must not be used for direct marketing purposes, in accordance with data protection legislation, unless it has been published in the open version

The processing of your personal data will be restricted in time to:

Your details will be kept and updated in accordance with our legal obligations and in line with statutory retention periods and otherwise where there is a continuing business need solely connected with the maintaining of electoral registers and enquiries by electors seeking to exercise their legitimate rights in relation to registration as an elector. Registers of electors are passed to the Council's Archive Service after 15 years and these are therefore available for research purposes from that date.

Your personal data will be held by/for the Council within the UK or the EU.

The information you have provided is a statutory or contractual requirement: this is something we have to do. Please see details below, including any consequences if we do not receive the information:

The requirements around electoral registration are primarily set out in the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Electoral Registration and Administration

Act 2013 and Representation of the People Regulations 2001 although there are other related statutory provisions relevant to electoral registration. You need to be registered to be able to vote in any election or referendum for which you are eligible. We have a duty to maintain a complete and accurate register throughout the year. The processing of your personal data ensures you are registered to vote in any election or referendum for which you are eligible. The law makes it compulsory to provide information to an electoral registration officer for inclusion in the full register. Failure to provide any, all or false information may lead to a civil penalty or commission of an offence; in addition to preventing you participating in an election/referendum.

We have a range of measures to protect the personal data you provide. These include: cyber security; physical security of the Council's buildings and training on Data Protection for staff.

Bedford Borough Council is the Data Controller processing your information, who can be contacted as follows:

Information Governance
Bedford Borough Council
Borough Hall
Cauldwell Street
Bedford MK42 9AP
Email: dpo@bedford.gov.uk
Telephone: 01234 267422

If you wish to enquire about your rights as a data subject, whether you wish to request a copy of your own information that Bedford Borough Council holds, request for data portability; rectification or erasure of your data for any reason or objection to any processing, please contact the Council's GDPR Data Protection Officer email: dpo@bedford.gov.uk or send to the above address.

Alternatively, in the event that you remain dissatisfied with the way Bedford Borough Council has handled the processing of your information (i.e. after liaising with the Council to find a satisfactory solution), you have the right to contact the UK's Statutory Authority: The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who can be contacted by using the details displayed at the bottom of the page entitled Personal information and your rights | Bedford Borough Council on our website under the "Challenging the response" heading.

Changes to this Notice:

We keep this Privacy Notice under regular review; this Notice was last updated in August 2025.