

Corporate Affairs
Privacy Notice



Comhairle Contae Laoise
Laois County Council

REGISTER OF ELECTORS

1. Introduction

Laois County Council (the Council) is the democratically elected unit of Local Government in County Laois and is responsible for the provision of an extensive range of public services. The Council processes and uses certain types of information about individuals (Data Subjects) and organisations to provide the most effective and targeted range of services to meet the needs of the citizens, communities, and businesses of Laois.

Depending on the service being sought or provided, the information collected may include 'personal data'. This is defined by the Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018, and by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and may relate to current, past and future service users; past, current and prospective employees; suppliers; and members of the public who may engage in communications with the Council.

In addition, the Council may, from time to time, collect, process, and use certain types of personal data to comply with regulatory or legislative requirements. This includes contact details to allow for efficient communication. You do not have to provide all contact details but providing details, such as email, phone, address, makes it easier to communicate with you. If you do not provide this data, the Council may be unable to comply with certain obligations. The Council will inform you about the implications of that decision.

2. Requirement for a Privacy Statement

Laois County Council has created this privacy notice to demonstrate our firm commitment to privacy and to assure you, that in all your dealings with the Council as the Registration Authority for Laois with responsibility for the formation of the Register of Electors and all associated activities, the Council will ensure that your data is secure and that it is:

- Obtained lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner
- Obtained for only specified, identified and legitimate purposes
- Processed for purposes which we have identified or purposes compatible with the purposes that we have identified.
- Adequate, relevant, and limited to what is necessary for purpose for which it was obtained.
- Personal data collected and processed must be accurate and (where necessary) kept up to-date.
- Kept only for as long as is necessary for the purposes for which it was obtained.
- Processed in a manner that ensures the appropriate security of the personal data including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing.

More detail is available in our Data Protection Policy Statement which is available here <https://laois.ie/privacy-statement/>

3. What is the activity referred to in this Privacy Statement?

As the Registration Authority for Laois, Laois County Council is responsible for the preparation, publication, dissemination, validation, and management of the rolling Register of Electors, as required in accordance with the Electoral Act 1992 (as amended) and the Electoral Reform Act 2022.

4. What is the lawful basis for the processing of this personal data?

The processing is necessary for compliance with a legal obligation to which Laois County Council is subject to and for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest in accordance with Article 6(1) (c) and 6(1) (e) of the General Data Protection Regulation, 2018. Specifically, the lawful basis for this process is the Electoral Act 1992 (as amended), the Electoral Reform Act 2022 and any Regulations made thereunder.

5. What personal information is collected by the Council and why do we need it?

To be able to vote at a General, Presidential, European Parliament, Local Elections or at a Referendum, a person (who is referred to as an Elector) must be entered on the Register of Electors/Balancing Books for the area in which he/she ordinarily resides.

To determine eligibility for inclusion on the Register persons wishing to be included are required to provide the following personal data:

- Name,
- Date of birth - A person must be at least 18 years of age to vote. You can register to vote at any time (up to 15 days before an electoral event). You can also pre-register to vote if you are 16 years or over. By pre-registering at the age of 16, it means that Laois County Council will be able to move you to the rolling Register once you reach the age of 18.
- Citizenship: while every adult resident is entitled to be registered, Laois County Council needs to know a person's citizenship because it is citizenship that determines the elections at which a person may vote.
- Address: a person must be ordinarily resident at the address in question. A person may be registered at one address only.

To assist in the accuracy of the register, the following information can also be submitted:

- Eircode – providing your Eircode helps to accurately identify your address.
- PPSN – providing your PPSN will allow a basic check to help confirm your identity details and help to protect the integrity of the Register.

Registration forms require your full name, address, date of birth, eircode, data regarding your previous address and contact details. There is a range of forms to suit a range of circumstances. More information on this process together with copies of the forms is available on the Council's website at: <https://laois.ie/about-the-council/register-of-electors/>

Postal/Special Voters List

Laois County Council also prepares a Postal/Special Postal Voters List as part of the Register of Electors process. Specific categories of electors may be eligible to apply for inclusion on the Lists. There is a range of forms to suit the different circumstances. More information on this process is available on the Council's website at: <https://laois.ie/about-the-council/register-of-electors/>

6. How is your personal data used by the Council?

Laois County Council is required to prepare and publish the following:

- A rolling Register of Electors,
- Postal/Special Voters List and any supplement to same,
- A list of Anonymous Voters,
- A list of Pending Electors.

The personal data provided to the Council is used to prepare the above.

7. How can I ensure the accuracy of my personal data?

Electors can update their electoral details at any time (up to 15 days before an electoral event) by accessing www.checktheregister.ie. This website allows the elector to register for the first time, review existing details and amend details. Access to the checktheregister.ie database by Laois County Council staff is password protected. Register of Elector staff in Laois County Council input the information from checktheregister.ie to a database called IReg. The IReg database records the personal data provided by electors. This data is used to generate the Register of Electors, which is a continuous rolling register. Access to IReg is password

protected and restricted to Council staff with responsibility for generating the Electoral Register.

Members of the public can submit amendments in hard copy format. Forms are available from this office, on request. Completed registration forms provided by individuals are stored by the Council in a safe and secure area. Access to these records is restricted to staff responsible for generating the Electoral Register.

A comprehensive publicity campaign is undertaken both at national and local level to encourage the electors to check the Register to ensure that they are correctly registered.

A person who is on the Register and moves residence from one constituency to another or within the same constituency (different local electoral area) can apply for entry to the Register at their new address. The entry at their previous address will then be deleted.

The full range of forms is available on the Council's website at: <https://laois.ie/about-the-council/register-of-electors/> or www.checktheregister.ie

8. Is my personal data shared with other organisations or accessible to other persons?

Laois County Council is required to provide the following free of charge:

- a) One copy of the Register for each Dáil constituency or part of a Dáil Constituency, or for an electoral area to
 - The local agent of each duly nominated candidate at a Presidential Election
 - Each candidate duly nominated for a constituency at a Dáil Election and
 - Each candidate duly nominated for the local electoral area at a local election.
- b) One copy of the Register for each European Parliament constituency or part thereof to each candidate duly nominated at a European election for that constituency.
- c) One copy of the Register for each Dáil constituency to each member of the Dáil for that constituency and to each member of the Seanad resident in the constituency for use by a personation agent appointed by such Member of the Dáil or Seanad or a body declared by An Coimisiún Toghchain to be an approved body under Section 7 of the Referendum Act 1998 at a Referendum.
- d) The number of copies of the Register for each Dáil constituency or part of a Dáil constituency, or a local electoral area which are required by the Returning Officer in respect of a Dáil or local election or by the local returning officer in respect of a Presidential election or referendum,
- e) The number of copies of the Register for the registration area as the Returning Officer or Local Returning Officer requires for a European election.
- f) The information is processed on IREG with the Local Government Management Services Agency. A Data Processing Agreement is in place in respect of same.
- g) A Data Sharing Agreement is in place with the Department of Social Protection in order to allow staff working on the Register in Laois County Council to verify the identities of individuals applying to be added to the electoral register.

Laois County Council must also supply a copy of any computer files which are used in the production of the Register to the Returning Officer in respect of a Dáil or local election, the Local Returning officer in respect of a Presidential election or referendum or the Returning Officer or Local Returning Officer at a European election for the purpose of such polls. Laois

County Council may also be requested to forward a copy of the Register to the Minister for the Housing, Planning and Local Government.

In addition, and to assist the compilation of the Register, the Council will, where persons have made applications notifying a local authority of a change of address to a location outside the county of Laois, forward that information to the relevant local authority who has responsibility for managing that Register. This is done to ensure that the person is included on the correct Register and will be entitled to vote at the next election.

In addition, a copy of the computer files is also provided to the printing company engaged for the purpose of printing polling cards.

Other specific uses of the Register that are authorised by statute are:

- Section 6 of the Juries Act 1976 – Qualification and liability for Jury Service
- Rule 3 of Schedule 4 of the Grangegorman Development Agency Act 2005 - Election of Residents' Nominee to the Agency and Residents' Members of the Consultative Group
- Section 1 of the Electoral Amendment Act 2012 – the selection of citizens of Ireland to participate in the Convention on the Constitution.

In addition, Laois County Council is also required to publish the Register by sending a copy free of charge to the following persons in electronic format to:

- The Minister, if requested and the County Registrar and each head Postmaster in the Registration area,
- Each member of the European Parliament for a European Parliamentary constituency to which the Register relates,
- Each member of the Dáil for a Dáil Constituency to which the Register relates and to each member of the Seanad residing in the constituency and
- Each member of Laois County Council for a local electoral area to which the Register relates.

Available for inspection and purchase

Laois County Council is required to supply to any person at his or her request a copy of the Register, or any parts of same on payment of a fee. The information maintained in the Register may only be used for electoral or other statutory purposes.

Following Local Elections

Following the conclusion of a local election, the Council's Local Returning Officer will retain the marked Register of Electors for 6 months. The marked Register shows whether an individual voted or not. For the period of 6 months, this Register is open to public inspection at such time and under such conditions as may be specified by the Returning Officer. The Local Returning Officer is also required to provide copies of the marked Register to any person demanding same on payment of such fees not exceeding the reasonable cost of copying same.

In this instance, Laois County Council requires that requests for copies of the marked Register be made in writing. Applicants are required to complete a written undertaking regarding the use of and security arrangements applying to the safekeeping of the data and use of the marked Register. After the period of 6 months has expired, the Local Returning Officer will arrange for the safe and secure permanent destruction of the marked Register.

9. Records Retention Policy

Laois County Council complies with the National Policy in relation to the Retention of Local Authority records, a copy of which can be accessed here <https://laois.ie/data-protection/>

10. Your Rights

You have the right to request access to personal data held about you, obtain confirmation as to whether data concerning you exists, be informed of the content and source of data and check its accuracy. If the data held by the Council is found to be inaccurate you have the right to change, remove, block, or object to the use of, said personal data. In certain circumstances blocking access to data may delay or remove access to a service where the data is required by law or for essential purposes related to delivery of a service to you. In other situations, as in the Register of Electors, it may not be possible to correct your data until such time as the legislation permits. Please note that to help protect your privacy; the Council will take steps to verify your identity before granting access to personal data.

In addition, Data Subjects have a right to;

- exercise data portability, i.e., obtain a transferable copy of information the Council holds to transfer to a third party/provider
- obtain details of any transfer of data to a third country (outside the European Economic Area) and safeguards in place
- obtain details of any automated decision making.

To exercise these rights, you can make a Subject Access Request. Laois County Council has developed a Subject Access Request Policy and application form, copies of which are available here.

For all enquiries relating to Data Protection, you can contact the Council at:

Phone: 057 866 4000
E-mail: dataprotection@laoiscoco.ie

Postal Address: Data Protection Officer,
Laois County Council
Áras an Chontae
Portlaoise
Co. Laois
R32 EHP9

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the response you receive from the Council in relation to your request, then you are entitled to make a complaint to the **Data Protection Commissioner** who may investigate the matter for you.

The Data Protection Commissioner's website is www.dataprotection.ie or you can contact their Office at:

Phone: 076 104800 or 057 8684800
E-mail: info@dataprotection.ie

Postal Address: Data Protection Commissioner
Canal House
Station Road
Portarlinton
R32 AP23
Co. Laois.

