From: FOI
To: [redacted]
Subject: FOI 83/17 Complaints re Postal Votes Response
Date: 05 July 2017 18:48:56

Dear [redacted],

Our Ref: FOI 83/17

Thank you for your email to the Electoral Commission dated **7 June 2017**.
The Commission aims to respond to requests for information promptly and has done so within the statutory timeframe of twenty working days.
Your request is in bold below followed by our response.
You have requested:

I am writing to request information about the number of complaints the electoral commission has received about postal vote ballots that have gone missing in the post prior to the election on 8th June 2017.

Our response is as follows:
The Commission does hold information relevant to your request.
Because of the way that our records are categorised, we are only able to confirm the number of enquiries received which relate in some way to absent or postal voting. The FOI act does not require us to create new information in order to respond to a request, therefore we are not in a position to determine how many of these enquiries could be described as “complaints that postal vote ballots have gone missing”.
From the records held, it appears that the Commission received 1,283 such enquiries relating specifically to the most recent General Election and 13,064 since 2010.
The above figures relate to Great Britain only. Any complaints of the type you describe received by our Northern Ireland office would have been transferred to the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland (EONI) without being recorded. Therefore, to obtain figures for Northern Ireland you should contact EONI.

You may find the following background information useful. The Returning Officer within each local authority is legally responsible for the dispatch of postal ballot packs as soon as practicable after the close of nominations which for a UK Parliamentary General Election would be 19 working days (4pm) before polling day. Postal ballot packs, which include the ballot paper with the names of candidates, then need to be printed and checked prior to being dispatched.

The dispatch date of postal votes will vary amongst local authorities and it is for each individual Returning Officer to determine. Returning Officers are advised to dispatch postal vote ballot packs to overseas voters as a first priority. After that, electors that have been registered as a postal voter for a period of time are likely to be the next group of electors to receive their postal vote ballot pack.
I trust that this information satisfies your request.

If you are not satisfied with this response, please note that the Commission operates a review procedure, details of which can be found on the Commission website at: http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/about-us/freedom-of-information-requests/how-do-I-make-an-foi-request

Please also note that if you have exhausted all internal Commission review procedures and you are still not satisfied you have the right to appeal to the

Information Commissioner. Details of this procedure can be found on the ICO website: http://www.ico.gov.uk
Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Senior Information and Knowledge Adviser
The Electoral Commission
3 Bunhill Row
London EC1Y 8YZ
FOI@electoralcommission.org.uk
electoralcommission.org.uk
yourvotematters.co.uk
Twitter | **Facebook** | **Blog**