From:	FOI
To:	[redacted]
Cc:	FOI
Subject:	FOI Response - Optical Scanners in the EU Referendum 2016 - 165/17
Date:	10 November 2017 11:04:03

Dear [redacted]

Our Ref: FOI 165/17

Thank you for your email to the Electoral Commission dated **18 October 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.

I would like to enquire if the Electoral Commission holds any of the following information regarding the use of optical scanners for vote counting in the EU referendum of 2016.

1. Are any figures available as to what percentage of votes were scanned optically (if any) and what hand-counted?

2. If optical scanners were used: Were any audits conducted at the time with the final ballot paper on the accuracy of the optically scanned votes: eg a hand counted comparison on a sample? And if so were any differences observed?

3. If optical scanners were used: What make of optical scanner/s were utilised?

4. Does the Electoral Commission specify a standard for optical scanners and error rates or is this devolved to the COs?

5. If this information is not held by the Electoral Commission, does the Electoral Commission at least know which COs made use of optical scanning services?

Our response is as follows:

We do not hold the information you have requested.

The European Union Referendum (Conduct) Regulations 2016 Order http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2016/219/contents/made prescribed the processes for how the verification and count of ballot papers at the European Referendum was to be conducted.

The conduct rules did not include any provision which allowed optical scanning equipment to be used at the counting of the votes, and we therefore do not hold any information relating to their use at the European Union Referendum. There would need to be specific legislative provision made if this type of equipment were to be used at any future referendums.

I trust that this information satisfies your request. The Commission strives to be an open, transparent authority.

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: https://ico.org.uk/

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]
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