[redacted]

From: FOI
Sent: 12 July 2017 14:25
To: [redacted]
Subject: FOI 80/17 Campaign Canvassing Complaints Response
Attachments: Public Information Email Redacted 1.pdf; Public Information Email Redacted 2.pdf; Public Information Email Redacted 3.pdf; Public Information Email Redacted 4.pdf; Public Information Email Redacted 5.pdf; Public Information Email Redacted 6.pdf; Public Information Email Redacted 7.pdf; Public Information Email Redacted 8.pdf

Dear [redacted],

Our Ref: FOI 80/17

Thank you for your email to the Electoral Commission dated **06 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:

- **All text of all complaints that have been received by the Electoral Commission about canvassing that has taken place during the 2017 General Election campaign.**
- **These complaints to be limited to a period between 1 May 2017 and 5 June 2017.**
- **These complaints to be limited to those made by either members of the public or political parties.**

The Electoral Commission subsequently sent a request for clarification on 21 June 2017. On 22 June, you provided the following clarification:

> **The request should be limited to complaints that were made about canvassing that involved visits to voters' houses.**
>
> **Complaints about canvassing is defined as canvassing where either it has been queried whether canvassers were operating within the rules or canvassing where the person being canvassed felt that a political representative acted inappropriately.**
>
> **The canvassing element specifically refers to activity being undertaken by candidates or their representatives.**

Our response is as follows:

We hold the information you have requested.

Between the period 1 May 2017 and 5 June 2017, the Electoral Commission received eight emails from members of the public regarding canvassing that involved visits to voters' houses. The text of these emails is attached. There are eight emails in total. For more information about the role of the Electoral Commission and campaigning please follow this link to our website.

Section 40(2) and (3)(a)(i) of the FOI Act
In the information we are releasing, we have redacted some of the information in the documents. Section 40(2) provides for an exemption where the information requested constitutes personal data as defined by the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA), and where release of the information requested would breach one of the data protection principles. Some of the information contained in the requested information falls within the description of personal data as defined by section 1 of the DPA because the information relates directly to an identifiable living individual. Release of this information would breach the first data protection principle, which states the information must be processed fairly and lawfully. The individuals in this case are junior staff members and members of the public they would not reasonably expect their information to be released.

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]

[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

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This email has been extracted from the Commissions CCM – contact management system.

Dear [redacted]

Thank you for your email to the Electoral Commission.

I do apologise for the frustration that has been caused by being canvassed by the candidate and party that visited your home.

All registered political parties, candidates and elected representatives are given access to the electoral register for the purpose of campaigning. Likewise, it is normal for candidates and parties to undertake door to door campaigning to encourage the electorate to vote for them and their party. I am sincerely sorry for the approach, however, if you are unhappy with an interaction that you have had with a campaigner, it would be best to contact the candidate or party in question in order to lodge a complaint.

Once again, I am sorry for how frightened and scared the campaigner has made you feel.

Kind regards,

[redacted]
Public Information Officer
The Electoral Commission
3 Bunhill Row
London EC1Y 8YZ
[redacted]
electoralcommission.org.uk
yourvotematters.co.uk

Twitter | **Facebook** | **Blog**



From: [redacted]
Sent: 26 May 2017 23:25
To: info_inbox
Subject: New contact form submission

- Your name: [redacted]
- Your email: [redacted]
- Your telephone number: [redacted]
- Your region/country: East Midlands
- I am a...: a member of the public
- Comment/enquiry type: electoral fraud
- Comments: I Live in [redacted] I have never been so scared and frightened in my life to have a croud of people outside my house I hear a knock on the front door approx 5.30pm today Friday 26th May 2017 woman at the door with croud of people outside my house she said and I quote "who are you voting for" she never introduced herself or said where she was from I was so scared and frightened I just replied non of your business and shut the door I immediately rang my husband and told him what had happened he tried to calm me down. Who are these people aloud to turn up on your door step demanding to know who your voting for in the election I've never been so threatened in my own home I want to take this matter further and as you are my local MP you need to look into this matter or I will need to take this further Without Prejudice [redacted]
- Eich Enw:
- Eich e-bost:
- Eich rhif ffôn:
- Eich rhanbarth/gwlad:
- Rwyf yn...:
- Math o sylw/ymholiad:
- Sylwadau:

This email has been extracted from CCM – the Commissions contact management system

Dear [redacted]

Thank you for your email to the Electoral Commission.

I do apologise for the frustration and upset that has been caused.

All registered political parties, candidates and elected representatives are given access to the electoral register for the purpose of campaigning. Likewise, it is normal for candidates and parties to undertake door to door campaigning to encourage the electorate to vote for them and their party. I am sincerely sorry for the approach, however, if you are unhappy with an interaction that you have had with a campaigner, it would be best to contact the candidate or party in question in order to lodge a complaint.

Once again, I am very sorry for how angry this campaigner has made you feel.

Kind regards,

[redacted]
Public Information Officer
The Electoral Commission
3 Bunhill Row
London EC1Y 8YZ
[redacted]
electoralcommission.org.uk
yourvotematters.co.uk

Twitter | **Facebook** | **Blog**



From: [redacted]
Sent: 26 May 2017 18:30
To: info_inbox
Subject: New contact form submission

- Your name: [redacted]

- Your email: [redacted]
- Your telephone number: [redacted]
- Your region/country: West Midlands
- I am a...: a member of the public
- Comment/enquiry type: other
- Comments: Wednesday THIS WEEK I HAD A VIST FROM THE POLICE BECAUSE,APRIL I TOLD A LABOUR PARTY OFFICIAL DILIVERING THIER LEAFLETS TO GET OFF MY PROPERTY,I GAVE HIM THE LEAFLET BACK HE THREW IT AT ME,AND STARTED TALKING ABOUT SOCIALISM/COMUNISM AND THIER POLITICS,I SAID IM A CONSERVATIVE NOW GO AWAY AND TAKE YOUR PROPAGANDA WITH YOU.THE POLICE SPOKE TO ME ABOUT ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVOUR.....WEST MIDS LABOUR PARTY SHOULD BE CHARGED WITH HARRASMENT,FALSE ACUSATIONS WASTEING POLICE TIME.THIS IS MY PROPERTY AND THE CROWN PROSECTION SEVICE SAID I AM WITH IN MY RIGHTS TO ASK A PERSON TO GET OFF MY PROPERTY,CAN YOU PLEASE BRING THIS TO JUSTICE,AND REPREMAND THEM AND IM LOOKING FOR COMPENSATION.....I WILL TAKE THIS TO THE HIGH COURT IF I HAVE [redacted],I DONT NEED THIS KIND OF HARRASSMENT
- Eich Enw:
- Eich e-bost:
- Eich rhif ffôn:
- Eich rhanbarth/gwlad:
- Rwyf yn...:
- Math o sylw/ymholiad:
- Sylwadau:

This email has been extracted from the Commissions CCM – contact management system

Dear [redacted]

Thank you for contacting the Electoral Commission.

The Commission does not regulate the content of election campaigns so there is no action we are able to take. However, we do produce guidance for candidates, political parties and electoral administrators to enable them to understand the rules governing elections.

Campaigners should always secure the permission of the landowner before putting up posters on private land and any complaint you may have about unauthorised posters or advertising on your property should be made to the party directly. You may also wish to inform the Returning Officer for the election at your local authority as they will be able to discuss the matter with the candidate or agent responsible and advise them on their responsibilities.

You can find contact details for the elections office at your local authority by entering your postcode at www.yourvotematters.co.uk.

I hope this information is useful.

Kind regards,

[redacted]
Communications Officer
The Electoral Commission
3 Bunhill Row
London EC1Y 8YZ
Advice and guidance line: 0333 103 1928
Advice and guidance email: infoengland@electoralcommission.org.uk
electoralcommission.org.uk
yourvotematters.co.uk

Twitter | **Facebook** | **Blog**

From: [redacted]
Sent: 17 May 2017 12:44
To: info_inbox
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: Labour in Tonbridge and Malling

Dear Sir, Madam

I take this matter quite seriously and hop you will direct to the relevant department.

I have just had a visit from a local Labour representative to drop off their literature regarding the upcoming election.

I have CCTV and saw them approach. They did not ring my bell to speak to me.

Instead of placing their literature in my post box (which is like any normal post box!) they left it in a prominent place that would lead any other visitors to my house to think I was voting Labour!

This is despicable behaviour!

Earlier in the week a friend in my village had a Labour poster attached to the private gate to his property. Again implying he was voting labour.

Surely this cannot be legal practice and should be stamped on immediately.
If it is not illegal then they should surely ask permission!
I suspect he has done the same to everyone he has delivered to!

I look forward to some action being taken.

Yours

[redacted]

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This e-mail transmission and any attachments are hereby labelled confidential. The information is only for the use of the individuals or entity to whom it is intended even if addressed incorrectly. If you have received this e-mail in error please immediately notify the sender by e-mail at the address shown. Please delete it from your files if you are not the intended recipient

This email has been extracted from the Commissions CCM – Contact management system

Dear [redacted],

Thank you for your email to the Electoral Commission. Please accept my apologies for the delayed response.

The Electoral Commission does not regulate the content of political campaigns, though our regulatory remit does include regulating the money spent on campaigning at elections.

It is legal for non-party organisations to campaign at elections. Non-party campaigners are individuals or organisations that campaign in the run-up to elections, but are not standing as political parties or candidates. In electoral law, these individuals or organisations are called 'third parties' and they may campaign on particular issues or for or against particular parties or candidates.

Canvassing or other political campaigning activity by a non-party campaigner is covered by the laws on political campaign spending and there are spending limits that apply to non-party campaigners. During the regulated period for the UK Parliamentary general election, the maximum amount a registered or unregistered non-party campaigner can spend on regulated campaign activity in a particular parliamentary constituency is £9,750.

Any non-party campaigning organisation that spends, or plans to spend, more than £20,000 in England or £10,000 in any of Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland on regulated campaign activity during the regulated period for an election must register with the Electoral Commission and must submit spending and donation returns to us which we publish on our website.

Once again, I do apologise for the delay in responding to your email.

Kind regards,

[redacted]
Public Information Officer
The Electoral Commission
3 Bunhill Row
London EC1Y 8YZ
electoralcommission.org.uk
yourvotematters.co.uk

Twitter | **Facebook** | **Blog**

From: [redacted]
Sent: 07 June 2017 08:49
To: info_inbox
Subject:

Dear Sirs

I live in the [redacted] constituency and yesterday we had a group called the Progressive Alliance knocking on doors essentially publicising 'anyone buy conservative'. I don't know if they were promoting tactical voting but i would like to know if this sort of thing is allowed.

Thank you for taking the time to read into this case.

Kind regards

[redacted]

Get Outlook for Android

[redacted]

From: [redacted]

Sent: 13 June 2017 16:22

To: [redacted]

Subject: FW: Complaint regarding canvassing

-----Original Message-----
From: [redacted]
Sent: 07 June 2017 11:10
To: [redacted]
Subject: FW: Complaint regarding canvassing

-----Original Message-----
From [redacted]
Sent: 03 June 2017 12:22
To: info_inbox
Subject: Complaint regarding canvassing

Hi

I have just had a doorstep visit by a canvasser on behalf of the Labour Party. The discussion was fairly brief and civil as I do not discuss politics with anyone. However I was very concerned that the canvasser claimed to have a list of how everyone voted in the last election and that he claimed to know how I voted. Unless there has been some change in the law I can't see how this could be as I don't tell anyone how I vote and I thought we had a secret ballot in elections. Either the canvasser is being deceitful - possibly to try to trick me into telling him how I voted - or he has indeed broken the law in some way. I'm not sure if this falls within your scope or is even the sort of thing you are particularly bothered about but I feel I should draw the matter to your attention in any case.

For the record I live at [redacted] and the incident occurred around 12:05 today 3 June 2017.

Regards,

[redacted]

[redacted]

From: [redacted]
Sent: 13 June 2017 16:23
To: [redacted]
Subject: FW: New contact form submission

From: [redacted]
Sent: 05 June 2017 16:59
To: [redacted]
Subject: FW: New contact form submission

From: [redacted]]
Sent: 01 June 2017 18:43
To: info_inbox
Subject: New contact form submission

- Your name: [redacted]
- Your email: [redacted]
- Your telephone number: [redacted]
- Your region/country: Yorkshire and the Humber
- I am a...: a member of the public
- Comment/enquiry type: other
- Comments: Hi, Are party activists allowed to target residents according to voter intention when they canvass addresses to increase their party's vote share? I have just seen off a bunch of Labour activists who asked for me by name when they came to my door. The canvassers were reading through a list on a clipboard (I assume a list of non Labour voters) as they walked down the street. Is this not tantamount to voter intimidation by, for instance, attempt to shame voters in front of their neighbours? This is a high Labour support area that I live within. I'm not quiet about my political convictions but, even so, I do not appreciate voters being strong armed by party activists. Where would canvassers discover information about the electorate such as name, address and vote intention? Surely this is a breach of privacy and electoral law? The activists didn't even appear to be from [redacted] accents). What other details might those canvassers know about me? Please advise me about the regulation around this and whether you will be investigating this.
- Eich Enw:

- Eich e-bost:
- Eich rhif ffôn:
- Eich rhanbarth/gwlad:
- Rwyf yn...:
- Math o sylw/ymholiad:
- Sylwadau:

[redacted]

From: [redacted]

Sent: 30 June 2017 15:02

To: [redacted]

Subject: [redacted]

-----Original Message-----
From: [redacted]
Sent: 07 June 2017 11:26
To: [redacted]
Subject: [redacted]

Dear [redacted],

Thank you for your email to the Electoral Commission.

It is a requirement of the election rules that the elector number is written against the number of the ballot papers issued to a particular elector on the corresponding number list. This system is essentially an updated version of a system that dates from the Ballot Act 1872, which was introduced to avoid the possibility of counterfeit ballot papers being used and to assist with the detection of alleged fraud.

Clearly, if the ballot papers are numbered, it is far more difficult for an unscrupulous person to introduce copies of official ballot papers into the ballot box. If a fraudulent act has occurred, it would be possible to detect the offence by reference to the corresponding number list.

There is a safeguard to prevent the ballot paper numbers on the corresponding list being linked with the marked ballot papers. At the close poll, the corresponding number list is placed in a sealed envelope by the Presiding Officer at the polling station. The sealed envelope is then taken to the Returning Officer. The only occasion when the sealed packets can be opened is on the order of a judge as a result of an election petition or in furtherance of an investigation into an alleged election offence. Even then, it is very rare for the documents to be examined except in cases where fraud or personation (i.e. someone voting illegally on someone else's behalf) are being investigated.

Because of these safeguards, it is virtually impossible for any person to be in a position to marry up an elector to a particular ballot paper. For that reason, electors can be confident that the ballot remains secret. Electors have no grounds to fear that the way in which they voted could be detected, except under the very special circumstances outlined above.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further information.

Kind regards,

[redacted]
Swyddog Cyfathrebu / Public Info Officer Y Comisiwn Etholiadol / The Electoral Commission Y Comisiwn

Etholiadol / The Electoral Commission Swyddfa Cymru / Wales Office Ty'r Cwmnïau / Companies House
Ffordd y Goron / Crown Way Caerdydd / Cardiff CF14 3UZ Ffôn / Tel: 029 2034 6800
www.comisiwnetholiadol.org.uk / www.electoralcommission.org.uk

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg We welcome correspondence in Welsh and English

Putting voters first
Rhoi pleidleiswyr yn gyntaf

P Ystyriwch yr amgylchedd os gwelwch yn dda cyn argraffu'r ebost hwn Please consider the environment before printing this email

-----Original Message-----
From: [redacted]
Sent: 03 June 2017 12:22
To: info_inbox
Subject: Complaint regarding canvassing

Hi

I have just had a doorstep visit by a canvasser on behalf of the Labour Party. The discussion was fairly brief and civil as I do not discuss politics with anyone. However I was very concerned that the canvasser claimed to have a list of how everyone voted in the last election and that he claimed to know how I voted. Unless there has been some change in the law I can't see how this could be as I don't tell anyone how I vote and I thought we had a secret ballot in elections. Either the canvasser is being deceitful - possibly to try to trick me into telling him how I voted - or he has indeed broken the law in some way. I'm not sure if this falls within your scope or is even the sort of thing you are particularly bothered about but I feel I should draw the matter to your attention in any case.

For the record I live [redacted] and the incident occurred around 12:05 today 3 June 2017.

Regards,

[redacted].

[redacted]

From: [redacted]
Sent: 13 June 2017 16:10
To: [redacted]
Subject: FW: Complaint regarding canvassing.

From: [redacted]
Sent: 08 June 2017 11:21
To: [redacted]
Subject: FW: Complaint regarding canvassing.

From: [redacted]
Sent: 04 June 2017 15:55
To: info_inbox
Subject: Complaint regarding canvassing.

I have this afternoon had canvassers at my door from the campaign of Andrew Rosindell, MP for Romford. I understood that all canvassing and electioneering was suspended today in light of last night's terrorist attack on London. I found it extremely offensive that an MP should be using this of all days for canvassing.

Regards,

[redacted]