[redacted]

From: FOI
Sent: 10 June 2021 08:48
To: [redacted]
Subject: FOI 077-21 - Response

Dear [redacted],

Our Ref: FOI-077-21

Thank you for your email to the Electoral Commission dated 11 May 2021 and received by the Commission on 12 May 2021.

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 shown below followed by our response.

What is the estimated number of electoral fraud cases in the country if you hold that statistic- i.e. how many people illegally vote at different elections, whether this be the recent May 2021 local council elections or the 2019 General Election.

Our response is as follows:

We hold the information you have requested.

We take the risk of electoral fraud very seriously.

Throughout the year, all police forces across the UK send us data about allegations of electoral fraud that they receive and investigate.

Each year we report on the number, type, and outcome of these allegations, so people can understand what's happened and how cases are resolved. We analyse this data to identify any trends or issues. Our analysis of the data reported to us between 2017 and 2020 is available on our website, here: https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/our-views-and-research/our-research/electoral-fraud-data.

In 2019, a total of 595 cases of alleged electoral fraud were investigated by the police. Of these, four led to a conviction and two individuals were given a police caution. More than half of all cases resulted in the police taking no further action. This means that the cases were not investigated further by the police because there was no evidence (or there wasn't enough evidence), or no offence was found. Elections held in 2019 included the UK Parliamentary general election, European Parliament elections and local government elections in England.

Very few polls took place in 2020, which meant that the number of allegations reported to police forces for investigation was particularly low. Because this was not a normal year for elections in the UK, this data cannot be meaningfully compared with data for previous or future years.

The 2021 information that you have requested is exempt under section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Section 22 provides for an exemption where the information requested is

intended for future publication. Section 22 is a qualified exemption which requires the public interest test to be considered. We understand that there is a legitimate public interest in the information you have requested, and the need for transparency in relation to electoral events, specifically the publication of key statistical data; however, it is not in the public's interest to release partial data or an incomplete analysis of that data. There is a clear need for the information requested to remain within our predetermined publication timetable, and as such we determine the exemption remains in favour of withholding the information.

We will be provide an update on the outcomes of cases investigated during 2021 in March 2022. You will be able to access this information using the web link above.

The Commission strives to be an open, transparent authority and I trust that this information satisfies your request. In some circumstances we cannot responsibly release requested information, and we ask for your understanding in this regard.

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: https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/freedom-information/make-a-freedom-information-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

Information Officer
FOI@electoralcommission.org.uk

The Electoral Commission
electoralcommission.org.uk