[redacted]

From: FOI
Sent: 22 June 2021 11:42
To: [redacted]
Subject: FOI 099-21 - Response

Dear [redacted],

Our Ref: FOI 099-21

Thank you for your email to the Electoral Commission dated 8 June 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.

I would like to know:
1) how many mail-in ballots were requested by the electorate for the May 6th 2021 election
2) how many mail-in ballots were posted out in total for the May 6th 2021 election
3) how many mail-in ballots were returned for the May 6th 2021 election
4) how many mail-in ballots were counted in the May 6th 2021 election

Our response is as follows:

The Commission is currently collecting data from the May 2021 elections with the intention of publishing it on our website in the autumn of this year.

When released, the data will be published here.

The 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.

Please note, however, that we do not collect information on how many mail-in ballots were requested by the electorate. Local councils may hold this information and you would need to contact them for these numbers.

The Commission strives to be an open, transparent authority but 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
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The Electoral Commission
electoralcommission.org.uk