

[REDACTED]

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**From:** FOI  
**Sent:** 04 April 2023 11:09  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** FOI 023-23 - Response

Dear [REDACTED],

**Our Ref: FOI-023-23**

Thank you for your email to the Electoral Commission dated 10 March 2023 and received by the Commission on 13 March 2023.

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.

*My inquiry is about postal or absentee voting in the UK. This is not in reference to any particular election.*

- 1) I would like to have a view of the end to end process by which postal votes are processed.*
- 2) What is the process by which signatures are used / validated for each vote?*
- 3) What technologies, if any, are used in the signature validation process?*
- 4) What statistics are available for postal voting (eg. volume) over the last few years, as well as information about fraud (eg. frequency)?*

**Our response is as follows:**

We hold some of the information you have requested.

In relation to questions 1 to 3, we do not hold the information you have asked for as Returning Officers (ROs) are responsible for planning and delivering of the postal vote process in their area.

Our [guidance for Returning Officers](#) sets out what ROs are legally required to do as part of this process. How ROs deliver these requirements will vary depending on local circumstances.

In relation to question 4 (statistics for postal voting), the information that you have requested is exempt from disclosure under Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Section 21 provides for an exemption where the information requested is reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means. The information that you have requested is accessible to you in our [Report on the May 2022 local elections in England | Electoral Commission](#) which is available on our website, and which includes data ([2022 England Electoral data 0.xlsx \(live.com\)](#) ) on postal votes at that election. Additionally, data relating to electoral fraud can be accessed on our website [Electoral fraud data | Electoral Commission](#).

The Commission strives to be an open, transparent authority and 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: <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](http://electoralcommission.org.uk)