

[REDACTED]

From: FOI
Sent: 12 December 2016 10:51
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FOI 163/16 - Overseas Voters and Postal Complaints

Dear [REDACTED]

Our Ref: FOI 163/16

Thank you for your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 dated 07 December 2016.

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:

How many UK citizens living in other EU countries were entitled to vote in the EU Referendum and how many complaints were received from those who did not receive their ballot papers in time to register a vote.

Our response:

We do not have the exact figures for the number of UK citizens living in EU countries that were entitled to vote – although I can confirm that there were a total of 135,396 overseas voters registered for the referendum.

In order for UK citizens living overseas to vote, they need to have appeared on a UK electoral register within the past 15 years. Following this they will need to register as an overseas voter under the local authority they were last registered to vote under while living in the UK. The Electoral registers are prepared and maintained at a local level by Electoral Registration Officers at each local authority, for information on how many UK citizens living in EU (as opposed to other) countries were registered to vote you will need to contact each Electoral Registration Officer as the Commission does not hold this information centrally.

We do hold information relevant to the other part of your request.

I can confirm that, between 23 June and 3 October this year the Commission's public information team records show that we received a total of 160 emails and 8 letters from electors that had problems with their postal ballots. At the time of writing, the last date the Commission received a complaint regarding postal ballots at the referendum was 3 October.

I can also confirm that the Commission received 49 calls about postal votes between 23 June and 3 August.

Unfortunately the Commission is unable to provide details of the enquiries broken down by local authority area as our records do not capture information in this format, nor is it the case that all complainants would necessarily refer to specific authorities.

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

I thought I would also take this opportunity to highlight that, as part of our statutory responsibilities, the Commission produced a report on the conduct of the EU referendum. This report included reference to: the processes put in place to help the postal ballot process run as effectively as possible (page 64-66); our analysis of some of the problems that occurred in this area (page 80 – 81); and our recommendations for change (page 88). You can find this report on our website here - http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0008/215279/2016-EU-referendum-report.pdf

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


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