

Request

I am writing to request that under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) you provide details of any measures in place during the May 4 Local Elections in relation to the new requirements under the Election Act 2022 to present photo ID at polling stations.

- I. Whether the authority had personnel stationed either outside or inside polling stations on 4th May 2023 for the purpose of reminding potential voters that they need to have valid photo ID
- II. Whether any potential voters who decided not to continue to enter the polling station as a result of this interaction were counted towards the total number of voters refused a ballot/turned away due to the new Voter ID regulations and
- III. Whether this figure will be published?

Response

With reference to your request for information relating to this request, I would like to draw your attention to the distinction between the roles of the local authority and those of the Returning Officer for local elections.

The role of the Returning Officer is separate from that of the Chief Executive of the local authority and the responsibilities and duties associated with the former roles are personal to the postholder. A list of public bodies and local authorities that are subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act is available at the following website:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/schedule/1>

As you will see, the Freedom of Information Act does not list any person appointed under the Representation of the People Act 1983 (or related electoral legislation). It therefore follows that the (Acting) Returning Officer or any other person appointed under the 1983 Act (or related electoral legislation) such as the Counting Officer, are not subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

Therefore, as there is no statutory obligation to provide you with this information, I am on this occasion unable to supply any answers to your question.

Please note: The Electoral Commission will be publishing a post poll analysis of Voter ID, using the data they have collected from all relevant Returning Officers. We believe initial findings are due at the end of June, with a more detailed report available in September, which will include recommendations.