

Reference Number:	FOI20164834GC	19-Oct-16
Date Received:	06-Oct-16	
You Requested:	Requestor: George Carty	

I wish to make the following request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000:

Could you please provide the following information for the County Durham voting area in respect of postal voting in the EU Referendum held on 23rd June 2016?

Overseas voting entitlement

- a) The TOTAL number of registered overseas voters;
- b) The number of overseas voters who have permanent postal vote set up;
- c) The number of overseas voters who registered a postal vote specifically for the above referendum ;
- d) The number of overseas voters who have a periodic postal vote set up, that entitled them to vote in the above named referendum;
- e) The number of overseas voters who had named a proxy to vote on their behalf in the above named referendum;

Number of votes issued and returned:

- a) The TOTAL number of postal votes issued;
- b) The TOTAL number of postal votes returned;
- c) The TOTAL number of postal votes rejected;
- d) The number of OVERSEAS postal votes issued;
- e) The number of OVERSEAS postal votes returned;
- f) The number of OVERSEAS postal votes rejected;

In respect of verification of postal votes, could you please confirm what method (or methods) were used to verify the validity of the completed postal vote:

- a) Visual comparison of both original documents;
- b) Visual comparison where one or more of the comparison documents was a scanned image;
- c) Use of automated recognition software and if this method was employed, the name of the software used;
- d) Other form of verification (please detail) Could you please provide the following in electronic format, preferably as a device-independent or plain-text document.

## **Our Response:**

The information requested is not readily available in amongst our electoral management system report options. And the reports available are 'current' and not as they were at the EU Referendum back in June.

With regard to the numbers of postal votes issued and returned:-

Q2a	Issued	86,177
Q2b	Returned	74,761 &
Q2c	Rejected	1,420

If we were to look on our elections management system at the number of overseas postal votes issued/returned/rejected (2d, e&f) they wouldn't be accurate because those numbers include a number of postal votes to overseas destinations (including holiday

makers). Again there isn't a report that would highlight just the overseas electors. All postal voters were issued identical documentation and while the receipt of all postal packs is recorded through the scanning process, the validation process is entirely separate.

Q3. B & C cover this - Regarding the verification process of postal votes returned, we use the Express Election Management System and the systems standard verification processes. The system uses auto recognition between the electronic images of the original application and the postal voting statement returned. If the matching does not achieve a system defined 'threshold', both images are returned to a screen for manual checking.

**Attachments:**

**Exemptions Applied:**

**The Public Interest Test:**

**Review Procedure**

I hope that this information is of assistance. However, if you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, please contact: The Information Management Team [Tel:03000 268034](tel:03000268034) Email: [foi@durham.gov.uk](mailto:foi@durham.gov.uk)

After you have exhausted our internal appeals procedure, you also have a right of appeal to the Information Commissioner at: Telephone: 01625 545 745 Email: [casework@ico.org.uk](mailto:casework@ico.org.uk)

Lawrence Serewicz  
Information & Records Manager  
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