



Response to Request for Information

Reference FOI 081510
Date 04 August 2015

General Election - Supporting people with a Learning disability to vote

Request:

Dear Wolverhampton City Council,

1. Ahead of the 2015 General Election, did the local authority give training to polling station staff around supporting people with a learning disability to vote?
2. Ahead of the 2015 General Election, a) was the local authority aware of Mencap's 'Easy guides to voting and registering to vote' (https://www.mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Easy_guide_voting.pdf); and b) if so, did the local authority distribute this to relevant local organisations/groups/services?
3. How many voter registration events did the local authority attend/run for people with a learning disability ahead of a) the 2015 General Election and b) the 2010 General Election?
4. Ahead of the 2015 General Election, a) did the local authority receive a fact sheet from the Electoral Commission – produced jointly by the Electoral Commission and Mencap – entitled 'What you need to do if you want to vote on 7 May'; and b) if so, was this distributed to polling station staff?
5. Are all of the polling stations in the local authority area accessible for people using wheelchairs?
6. How many complaints have you received about the accessibility of your polling stations in the local authority area, following the 2015 General Election?
7. Was the local authority made aware of any problems with people with a learning disability voting on 7th May 2015? If so, a) how many people with a learning disability were affected, and b) how many people with a learning disability were stopped from voting?

Response:

We refer to your request under the Freedom of Information Act regarding the May 2015 Elections.

The Electoral Registration Officer and The Returning Officer do not carry out their duties on behalf of the local authority but in own personal capacity. 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. It follows that the Electoral Registration Officer, Returning Officer or any other person appointed under the Act are not subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

Notwithstanding that there is no statutory obligation to provide this information; I list below the responses to your questions.

1. As part of training given to polling station staff, information was provided on assisting all disabled persons.
2. We were not aware of the Mencap guide.
3. No specific registration events were held for persons with a learning disability.
4. We did receive the factsheet; it was not distributed to staff.
5. All polling stations are wheelchair accessible
6. One complaint was received about accessibility to a polling station.
7. We are not aware of any problems persons with a learning disability had in voting.

We would also add that we continuously strive to improve our services and we will look at the MENCAP guide to see how we can take further steps to improve our services.