

**09/2015**

**REQUEST**

I am looking to use the Freedom of Information Act to find out details of any complaints made to the returning officer connected to the Clacton parliamentary by-election on October 9.

A search should be contained to four weeks before the election and one week after, please.

Names of the prospective politicians can be redacted, likewise the name of the party if it identifies the politician. It would be acceptable to provide details of generic complaints, however (eg "A Conservative party activist" or a complaint against a party generally).

**RESPONSE**

Further to your request for information in respect of any complaints made to the Returning Officer in respect of the Clacton Parliamentary By-Election on 9<sup>th</sup> October, I would point out that in accordance with guidance issued by the Information Commissioner, they state that:

“ Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers are not a public authority under this Act and, as such, are exempt from the disclosure requirements imposed by it. However, where possible, ROs and EROs should disclose the requested information, provided this information is already in the public domain, or the information requested does not include personal data. An example of non-personal data would be statistical data providing the total number of electors registered in your area or the turnout of postal voters”.

Notwithstanding that, I can confirm that this Authority did not receive any complaints in respect of the by-election.