

FOI number: **HBC\_FOI\_20200633**  
Date FOI Received: **5/11/2020**  
Department: **Information Digital Services**  
Title: **Data retention systems**  
Description: **Data retention systems**

**Request: (As Redacted sent by requestor)**

1. Which of the following data sources is the local authority responsible for protecting?
  - ☐ Personal citizen data
  - ☐ Personal staff / civil servant data
  - ☐ Research data
  - ☐ Intellectual property
  - ☐ Other, please specify
2. What is the average length of time data is stored by the local authority?
  - ☐ Less than one year
  - ☐ More than one year
  - ☐ More than three years
  - ☐ More than five years
  - ☐ More than 10 years
  - ☐ Other, please specify
3. Do you store data in the following locations?
  - ☐ Private cloud
  - ☐ Public cloud
  - ☐ On-premise data centre
  - ☐ Colocation data centre
  - ☐ File server
  - ☐ Other, please specify
4. A) Do you have a back-up of your organisation's data?
  - ☐ Yes
  - ☐ No
  - ☐ Other, please specify

B) If yes, what third party organisations (vendor and/or supplier) do you use to backup your organisation's data?

5. Does your organisation have a disaster recovery plan in case of IT failure/outage?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other, please specify

6. A) Does your organisation have an official/formal policy detailing the disaster recovery process in the event of an IT failure/outage?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other, please specify

B) If yes, how often is this updated?

- ☐ At least once a month
- ☐ Once or more a year
- ☐ Less than once a year
- ☐ It has never been updated
- ☐ Other, please specify

C) Can you share the official policy?

7. A) Does your organisation conduct tests on its data backup and IT disaster recovery system?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other, please specify

B) If yes, how often does your organisation test its data backup and IT disaster recovery system?

- ☐ At least once a month
- ☐ Once or more a year
- ☐ Less than once a year
- ☐ It has never been updated
- ☐ Other, please specify

8. A) Does your organisation use Microsoft Office 365?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other, please specify

B) If so, how many users do you currently have?

- ☐ 0-99
- ☐ 100-249

- 250-499
  - Over 500
  - Other, please specify
9. A) How many unplanned IT outages has your organisation experienced in the last 12 months? (from the date of receiving this request)
- B) If more than zero, on average, how long did each of these unplanned IT outages last?
10. A) How many cyber-attacks against your organisation have you recorded in the last 12 months? (from the date of receiving the FOI request)
- B) If more than zero, of these incidents, how many had an impact on the organisation's operations?
11. When was the last time your organisation updated the following processes?
- The way data is backed up
    - Insert date:
  - The way data backup and IT disaster recovery systems are tested
    - Insert date:
  - Your organisations use of cloud computing technology
    - Insert date:

**Definitions:**

Re the above, the following definitions have been provided to help with this request.

- A backup is a copy of computer data taken and stored elsewhere so that it may be used to restore the original after a data loss event.
- An unplanned IT outage is a period of downtime during which IT systems are unavailable due to a network or power fault/failure.
- A cyber-attack is an attack launched from one or more computers against another computer, multiple computers or networks. Specific examples include but are not limited to ransomware and phishing attacks.

**Response: (Response as Redacted sent by service)**

1. Using your nomenclature, personal citizen data and personal staff data.
2. More than 10 years.
3. Public Cloud
4.
  - (A) Yes
  - (B) See note below
5. Yes
6. Yes, Once or more a year
7. Yes
8. Yes, 250-499

9. See note below
10. See note below
11. When was the last time your organisation updated the following processes?
  - The way data is backed up
    - Annual review of Business Continuity plan January 2020
  - The way data backup and IT disaster recovery systems are tested
    - Annual review of Business Continuity Plan January 2020
  - Your organisations use of cloud computing technology
    - External report November 2020

Note:

With regard to questions 4B, 9 and 10, on inspecting our records and the information which we hold, it would appear that the information requested is covered by an exemption or exemptions contained within the Act. We are required to explain why we believe this to be the case.

The information, which you have requested, is, in our opinion, exempt from a request under Section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2002 because of the exemption contained in Section 35 of the Act.

While we believe the exemption in Section 31(1)(a) applies in this case, we would still be obliged to release this information in respect of your request except for where the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. Hertsmere Borough Council acknowledges the significant public interest in openness and transparency and therefore recognises that any request under Section 1 of the Act is potentially in the public interest. However, in dealing with your request we have taken into consideration whether the public interest is best served by disclosing or withholding the information. Disclosure of this information could potentially facilitate cyber-attacks on the Council, which would not be in the public interest. We are not aware of any particular public interest in the subject matter of your inquiry, which would outweigh maintaining the exemption.

If you have any queries about the processing of your request then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Further information explaining the Council's process for responding to information requests together with a complaints/appeals procedure is available in our reception or via our website at:

<https://www.hertsmere.gov.uk/Your-Council/Official-Publications--Guides--Policies/Access-to-Information.aspx>

The Information Commissioner oversees the application of the Freedom of Information Act. You may contact the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioners Office  
Wycliffe House, Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire SK9 5AF  
Telephone: 01625 545700  
Website: [www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk)

Please include the above reference number on all correspondence related to this request.

Thank you for your request.

Kind regards  
Information Services