

FOI number: **HBC\_FOI\_20200606**  
Date FOI Received: **21/10/2020**  
Department: **Benefits**  
Title: **Benefits and welfare automation**  
Description: **Benefits and welfare automation**

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

1. Does any stage of decision making across benefits and welfare (defined as including but not limited to allocation of social housing, personal social care budgets, council tax support and the assessment of fraud within) presently involve automation, AI or algorithms at your council?
  - a. For clarity, automation may include (non-exhaustively), predictive analytics (ie to assess rent arrears or child welfare risks), risk assessment of claims (commonly known as risk based verification), the use of computer programs or algorithms to guide resource allocation, the use of datasets to guide how benefits are processed and disbursed.
2. If Yes, please provide details:
  - a. Of the algorithms or automated decision-making programs you use;
  - b. If you use a commercial product or whether you have developed your own system;
  - c. Of the purpose for which the algorithm or automated decision-making system operates;
  - d. Of the decisions the algorithm or automated decision-making system is asked to make;
  - e. Of the type, classification and amount of data that the algorithm or automated decision-making system uses to make its decision;
  - f. If a commercial product, how much has it cost the council over the past three years.
3. If no, has your council stopped using this kind of automation in the last three years and what automation/algorithms were previously used?
4. Does your council use Amazon Rekognition software, and if yes, what for?

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

1. The council does not use any of the software described
2. As above
3. The council have not stopped using any of the software
4. The council does not use Amazon Rekognition

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

**Information Services**

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