

**Chief Executive**  
2 Franklin Street  
BELFAST  
BT2 8DQ

Tel: 028 9536 3863  
Email: FOI.BSO@hscni.net

**26th January 2024**

**BY EMAIL**

**Our Ref: FOI 1958**

Dear 

Your request for information was received on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2023 and was dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please be advised that the Business Services Organisation (BSO) has now completed its search for the information you requested below:

- **The duration of time utilising cloud infrastructure.**
- **The criteria used to choose a cloud provider.**
- **The percentage of infrastructures employing cloud services.**
- **The supplier of cloud infrastructures used. (AWS/Oracle/Azure etc.)**
- **Case studies highlighting the successful implementation of the 'Cloud-first' strategy.**
- **The uptime of the cloud infrastructure.**
- **The annual budget over the last five years for IT-managed services**
- **Please provide the percentage spent on cloud-managed services**

Firstly, please accept my sincere apologies for the delay in providing you with a formal response.

Please find the response below:

1. **The duration of time utilising cloud infrastructure.**  
From March 2020



**2. The criteria used to choose a cloud provider.**

This information is considered exempt from disclosure under Section 31 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000('Law Enforcement'). Section 31 is a qualified exemption which means that the public interest test (PIT) must be considered. This involves weighing the harm resulting from possible disclosure against the likely benefit to the wider public. A copy of the PIT is attached for your reference.

In considering the PIT, I acknowledge that there may be a public interest for disclosure in line with BSO's requirement to be open and transparent in its use of public monies and provision of public services. However, while I make no suggestion that there is any malicious intent on your part; provision (and therefore publication) would be capable of making BSO, and the wider Health and Social Care, vulnerable to malicious attack. I therefore consider that the public interest in withholding this information outweighs the public interest in supplying it.

**3. The percentage of infrastructures employing cloud services.**

Estimated at 2%

**4. The supplier of cloud infrastructures used. (AWS/Oracle/Azure etc.)**

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**5. Case studies highlighting the successful implementation of the 'Cloud-first' strategy.**

We do not use 'Cloud-first' strategy. Our strategy is provided by DHCNI.

**6. The uptime of the cloud infrastructure.**

Estimated at 99.9%

**7. The annual budget over the last five years for IT-managed services**

I should advise you that the Freedom of Information Act (2000) ('FOIA') states that a public body, such as the BSO, may apply charges in order to provide information to the public. If a public body spends more than £450 on staff time in complying with a request, then charges may be applied; this figure is based on

an hourly rate of £25 over 18 hours. Please refer to sections 12 and 13 of FOIA and sections 3 and 4 of The Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 ('The Fees Regulations') for further information.

BSO ITS, in reviewing your request have advised that they have estimated that it would take a minimum of 90 hours to determine what information is held in relation to the above parts of your request. Minus the appropriate limit of £450, the minimum cost to comply with your request would therefore equate to £1,800.

In line with the above, I must advise you that the BSO are unable to comply with this element of your request on the grounds of cost exemption, as set out with Section 12 of FOIA.

As such, we are unable to provide a full response until the fee is paid. If you wish the BSO to continue to process your request, you should pay the fee within 3 months of receipt of this letter. If the BSO does not receive payment of the fee by this date, the request will be considered closed.

#### **8. Please provide the percentage spent on cloud-managed services**

licences ~BSO only ~ 2m  
support ~ £135k

Furthermore, it should be noted that that while the BSO are provided with an overall budget from the DoH, there is no information specific to spend on cloud-managed services.

I hope that the information provided assists you. If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter, as the BSO, along with all other public authorities are not obliged to accept internal review requests after this period has lapsed.

In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to

Information Governance Manager,  
2 Franklin Street,  
Belfast,  
BT2 8DQ

If, following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision-making panel, you remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request, you may make a complaint under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to the Information Commissioner's Office and ask that they investigate whether the BSO has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act.

You can contact Information Commissioner at:

**Website:** [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)

**Phone:** 0303 123 1113  
**Email:** [casework@ico.org.uk](mailto:casework@ico.org.uk)  
**Post:** Information Commissioner's Office  
3rd Floor, 14 Cromac Place  
Belfast  
BT7 2JB

In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out. However, the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen Bailey".

**Karen Bailey**  
Chief Executive

## Public Interest Test (PIT)

Exemption claimed in respect of Section 31 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('Law Enforcement') for disclosure of details on contracts registers

In considering this PIT, the following have been taken into account:

- the public interest in issues of accountability and transparency and in scrutinising how BSO's affairs are conducted
- the public interest in ensuring that BSO is able to protect its systems from cyber-attacks which could damage security
- the public interest in ensuring that BSO can proactively manage the risks around cyber security, for the wellbeing and safety of all its stakeholders

In favour of disclosure of information	In favour of not disclosing information
<p>Openness and transparency: it is recognised that releasing this information would provide the public with assurance that we are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• protecting our technologies;</li><li>• spending public money responsibly, especially where this relates to the provision of public services</li></ul>	<p>BSO hosts a vast range of software, systems and data on behalf of the wider Health and Social Care (HSC) within Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Release of this information would make BSO, and by association the wider HSC more vulnerable to crime (namely a malicious attack on BSO's network). As such release of this information would be seen to prejudice the prevention or detection of crime by making BSO more vulnerable to hacking at a given time.</p>
	<p>Under data protection legislation, BSO has a legal obligation to process personal data in a manner that ensures its appropriate security using appropriate technical or organisational measures. The release of this information is therefore a reasonable threat to the security and integrity of confidential personal data held on our systems.</p>
	<p>BSO and the wider HSC operate the majority of their services with a high dependency on IT. Many services operate almost exclusively via information held within our network infrastructure. Any disruption of BSO's network infrastructure, even for a short period would be likely to severely restrict our ability to carry out statutory functions across the wider HSC network.</p>

	<p>There is therefore an overwhelming public interest in keeping BSO's systems secure which would be served by non-disclosure.</p> <p>It has therefore been decided that the balance of the public interest lies clearly in favour of withholding the material on this occasion.</p>
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