



London Borough of Camden
Information and Records
Management
Judd Street
London.
WC1H 9JE
e-mail:
foi@camden.gov.uk

Date: 17/11/2020

Case reference: CAM692

Dear Requester

Thank you for your request for information dated 27/10/2020 about **cloud data breaches, cyber/ransomware attacks and data loss incidents**. We have dealt with this under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 .

Response

The council will neither confirm nor deny that it holds the information requested. Please see the refusal notice at the end which explain how and why this applies.

I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act to request the following information from your IT department.

We are conducting research on the protection of data stored within the public sector and wish to know the following:

- 1. How many cloud data breaches have occurred within your organisation in 2019 and 2020?*
- 2. How many cyberattacks have occurred within your organisation in 2019 and 2020?*
- 3. How many ransomware attacks have occurred within your organisation in 2019 and 2020?*
- 4. How many data loss incidents have occurred as a result of lost or stolen devices storing your organisation's data (such as USB flash drives, Hard Drives, Solid State Drives, mobile phones or laptops) within your organisation in 2019 and 2020?*

Please split any data supplied separately for 2019 and 2020.

We will neither confirm nor deny if we hold this information. Please see the exemption notice set out below.

Refusal Notice

The exemption that applies is:

Section 31(3) – Law Enforcement

The council believes that telling requesters if we hold information about cyber-attacks, ransom ware etc will cause damage. This is because saying if we do or do not hold information would give cyber criminals insight into vulnerabilities which may, or may not, exist. This would we likely to damage our cyber security systems and plans. Therefore we use the exemption in section 31(3). This allows us to refuse to confirm or deny if the information is held. In other words the council is allowed to refuse to say if it holds information about this or not. When we use a neither confirm nor deny response you should not assume that we do, or do not, hold any information.

Section 31(3) is a qualified exemption which means we have to do a public interest test where we compare the public interest for and against disclosing. The public interest test is not about whether we should disclose any information that we might hold. It is a test of whether we should say if we hold the information or not.

Factors in favour of confirming or denying if we hold relevant information:

- It would help transparency and accountability of the council
- It would reassure people about whether our systems are vulnerable or not
- It would provide information about how effective our security systems are

Factors against confirming or denying if we hold relevant information:

- Saying if we hold information would provide information about how effective our security systems are. This would be likely to give cyber criminals insights into the strengths of the council's cyber security and any potential weaknesses that may exist. This would increase the chances of cyberattacks. One of the reasons that cyber security measures are in place is to protect the integrity of personal and sensitive personal information so increasing the chances of an attack would have potentially serious repercussions.
- If the council confirms that it holds a lot of information then this could show criminals its systems are particularly vulnerable, encouraging attacks
- If the council confirms that it holds little information this could either show it has poor reporting and recording procedures which will encourage an attack, or it could show it has robust procedures which could encourage an attack to try out criminals' new techniques or could encourage criminals to target other councils' systems which would increase crime elsewhere
- There is public interest in complying with our legal obligations to keep personal data secure and to take appropriate measures which includes keeping areas confidential where necessary

We believe that the balance of public interest lies in upholding the exemption and not confirming or denying if we hold this information.

Further Information

We do not give our consent for any names and contact details provided in this response to be sent marketing material. Any such use will be reported to the ICO as a breach of General Data Protection Regulations and the Privacy and Electronic Communication Regulations.

Why not check our Portal [Open Data Camden](#) before making a new request as your question may already be answered by a previous [FOI response](#) or in one of our many useful and interesting datasets.

Your Rights

If you are not happy with how your response was handled you can request an Internal Review within 2 months of this letter by email to foireviews@camden.gov.uk or post: Information and Records Management Team, London Borough of Camden, Town Hall, Judd Street, London WC1H 9JE. Please quote your case reference number. If you are not satisfied with the Internal Review outcome you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office at casework@ico.org.uk telephone 0303 123 1113, or post to Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. The ICO website www.ico.org.uk may be useful.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Williams
Information Rights Officer