



Homes  
England

Date: 29 March 2023

Our Ref: RFI4250

Tel: 0300 1234 500

Email: [infogov@homesengland.gov.uk](mailto:infogov@homesengland.gov.uk)

Making homes happen

██████████  
By Email Only

Information Governance Team  
Homes England  
Windsor House – 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
50 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0TL

Dear ██████████

**RE: Request for Information – RFI4250**

Thank you for your request for information which was processed in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

You requested the following information:

*We'd like to explore the public sector's relationship with data, strategies for data modernisation and how it is collected, stored, and categorised. We will also look into data usage, standardisation, open data, and transparency data.*

*We would like to make a Freedom of Information (FOI) request and ask you to answer the questions in the attached spreadsheet.*

For clarity, the questions are as follows:

1. *Do you have a policy/strategy on how you use your data? (Outside of data protection and data privacy covered under general legislation)*
2. *(If yes) What considerations are included in your data policy/strategy?*
3. *Do you have a dedicated resource aligned to your data initiatives (excluding data protection)?*
4. *Do you have these roles within your organisation?*
5. *Do you outsource these roles?*
6. *Who is responsible for setting your data strategy? (Understanding how senior the ownership is within the organisation)*
7. *What percentage of your data is stored:*
  - a. *On-premise*
  - b. *Private Cloud*
  - c. *Public Cloud*
8. *What percentage of your data is stored:*
  - a. *With UK providers*
  - b. *With USA providers*
  - c. *With European providers*
  - d. *Other*
9. *Post brexit will your organisation store more data in the UK or less data in the UK?*

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10. *When developing your data storage strategies what are your main considerations?*
11. *What is the maximum period you would hold data for? (If there are varying period for different types of data, please provide more information)*
12. *What is the process for identifying obsolete data in your organisation?*
13. *How mature is your architecture in managing your data end-to-end, from ingestion / generation to final consumption?*
14. *At what level does data add value to your organisation?*
15. *What level of analytics methodologies do you master and support?*
16. *How far does your analytics architecture span across your organization?*
17. *What are the biggest obstacles in your organization to creating value from data and implementing a data-centric strategy?*
18. *Do you have a policy for open data or transparency data*
19. *Do you outsource your open data service?*
20. *Do you have definitive protocols for managing your data in terms of...*
  - a. *Lineage*
  - b. *Provenance*
  - c. *Heritage*
  - d. *Not sure*

## **Response**

We can confirm that we do hold some of the requested information. We will address each of your questions in turn.

### **1. *Do you have a policy/strategy on how you use your data? (Outside of data protection and data privacy covered under general legislation)***

Yes, we have a data strategy on how our data is used.

## **Advice and Assistance**

We have a duty to provide advice and assistance in accordance with Section 16 of the FOIA. To comply with this duty we are able to confirm that our data strategy encompasses all of our departments and is aligned to our organisation's goals.

### **2. *(If yes) What considerations are included in your data policy/strategy?***

We can confirm that the data strategy includes the management, use, storage and security of our data.

### **3. *Do you have a dedicated resource aligned to your data initiatives (excluding data protection)?***

Yes.

## **Advice and Assistance**

We have a duty to provide advice and assistance in accordance with Section 16 of the FOIA. To comply with this duty we are able to confirm that there is a cross-departmental budget for our data strategy which is provided centrally.



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**4. Do you have these roles within your organisation? Data analyst, Data scientist, Data engineer and Machine Learning engineer?**

We can confirm that we do have the roles of Data Analyst, Data Scientist and Data Engineer. We do not have the role of a Machine Learning Engineer.

**5. Do you outsource these roles?**

No, we do not outsource the above roles.

**6. Who is responsible for setting your data strategy? (Understanding how senior the ownership is within the organisation)**

The data strategy is signed off by our Executive Leadership Team and is currently the responsibility of the Chief Digital and Data Officer.

**7. What percentage of your data is stored: On-premise, Private Cloud and Public Cloud?**

We can confirm that Homes England does not hold the information detailed in your request.

To conclude that the information is not held, we have searched with our Digital team who would have the requested information if held.

The FOIA does not oblige a public authority to create information to answer a request if the requested information is not held. The duty under section 1(1) is only to provide the recorded information held.

The full text of section 1 in the legislation can be found here:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/1>

Advice and Assistance

We have a duty to provide advice and assistance in accordance with Section 16 of the FOIA. To comply with this duty we are able to confirm that we have a mix of on premise and cloud storage however we do not record the percentage of data stored in each of these areas.

**8. What percentage of your data is stored: With UK providers, With USA providers, With European providers and Other?**

We can confirm that Homes England does not hold the information detailed in your request.

To conclude that the information is not held, we have searched with our Digital team who would have the requested information if held.

The FOIA does not oblige a public authority to create information to answer a request if the requested information is not held. The duty under section 1(1) is only to provide the recorded information held.

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### Advice and Assistance

We have a duty to provide advice and assistance in accordance with Section 16 of the FOIA. To comply with this duty we are able to confirm that our data is stored with UK providers however we do not record the percentage of data stored.

**9. *Post brexit will your organisation store more data in the UK or less data in the UK?***

We can confirm that our organisation will store more data in the UK.

**10. *When developing your data storage strategies what are your main considerations?***

We can confirm that our main considerations when developing data storage strategies are data security, storage latency, data gravity and data sovereignty.

**11. *What is the maximum period you would hold data for?***

We can confirm that Homes England's maximum period is permanent retention which applies to records in any medium or format i.e. physical and/or electronic.

**12. *What is the process for identifying obsolete data in your organisation?***

We can confirm that Homes England stores a majority of its hardcopy files in off-premise secure storage. The hardcopy files are identified and recommended for destruction or transfer by the end of their allocated retention periods. For our electronic data, our Structured Filing System is reviewed yearly against our Records Retention Policy and data is deleted as necessary.

**13. *How mature is your architecture in managing your data end-to-end, from ingestion / generation to final consumption?***

We have legacy technology however we are currently undertaking a transformation project with the development of a cloud-based Data Platform.

**14. *At what level does data add value to your organisation?***

At all levels.

**15. *What level of analytics methodologies do you master and support?***

We can confirm that we use spreadsheet-based analytics and simple data science methodologies.

**16. *How far does your analytics architecture span across your organization?***

We can confirm that our analytics use cases consume data from data warehouses/data lakes.

**17. *What are the biggest obstacles in your organization to creating value from data and implementing a data-centric strategy?***

We can confirm that our main challenge is due to data residing on legacy systems and spreadsheets.

**18. *Do you have a policy for open data or transparency data***

Yes.



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### Advice and Assistance

We have a duty to provide advice and assistance in accordance with Section 16 of the FOIA. To comply with this duty we are able to confirm that we do have a policy under an existing IT/data strategy.

#### **19. Do you outsource your open data service?**

No.

#### **20. Do you have definitive protocols for managing your data in terms of Lineage, Provenance, Heritage?**

No.

### Right to Appeal

If you are not happy with the information that has been provided or the way in which your request has been handled, you may request an internal review. You can request an internal review by writing to Homes England via the details below, quoting the reference number at the top of this letter.

Email: [infogov@homesengland.gov.uk](mailto:infogov@homesengland.gov.uk)

The Information Governance Team  
Homes England – 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Windsor House  
50 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0TL

Your request for review must be made in writing, explain why you wish to appeal, and be received within 40 working days of the date of this response. Failure to meet this criteria may lead to your request being refused.

Upon receipt, your request for review will be passed to an independent party not involved in your original request. We aim to issue a response within 20 working days.

You may also complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) however, the Information Commissioner does usually expect the internal review procedure to be exhausted in the first instance.

The Information Commissioner's details can be found via the following link:

<https://ico.org.uk/>

Please note that the contents of your request and this response are also subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Homes England may be required to disclose your request and our response accordingly.

Yours sincerely,

**The Information Governance Team**  
For Homes England