

Reference: 2026-015

Thank you for your email in which you requested the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA):

Please provide the following recorded information held by your department regarding assurance processes for software based data erasure of end of life IT equipment. For clarity, this request relates solely to software based data destruction. Please exclude physical destruction methods such as shredding, crushing, degaussing or disintegration.

- 1. Please confirm whether departmental policy, contractual terms or internal procedures require an explicit outcome based warranty or guarantee confirming that personal data has been rendered irretrievable through software based erasure, whether carried out internally or by an external provider.**
- 2. Where software based data destruction is performed internally, what recorded evidential assurance does the department rely upon to conclude that the final data state is irretrievable?**
- 3. Where software based data destruction is performed by a third party provider, does the department hold recorded information demonstrating that any warranty or assurance provided explicitly extends to the software erasure method used and its claimed effectiveness? If so, please confirm the recorded nature of that verification.**
- 4. Where no explicit outcome based warranty is required or provided, what recorded form of evidential assurance does the department rely upon to conclude that software based erasure has rendered personal data irretrievable?**

Response

The SFO does not hold information falling within the scope of your request. This is because the SFO does not use software-based erasure as a method of data destruction for end-of-life IT equipment.