

Trade Remedies Authority
Premier House
60 Caversham Road
Reading
RG1 7EB

Ref: Fol 13-25/26
Date: 4 March 2026

Dear

Freedom of Information: Software-based data destruction assurance

Thank you for your email of 12 February 2026 to the Trade Remedies Authority (TRA) in which you requested the following information:

“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?

I am not requesting technical configuration detail, security sensitive information or supplier specific vulnerabilities. I am seeking confirmation of the assurance model relied upon for software-based data destruction.”

Our response

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('the Act'), you have the right to:

- know whether we hold the information you require
- be provided with that information (subject to any exemptions under the Act which may apply).

In response to each of your questions I can confirm that:

1. As a small Arm's Length Body within Government, created in 2021, we have yet to complete any kind of software-based data destruction, but our internal procedures would require a guarantee confirming that personal data has been rendered irretrievable through software-based erasure when carried out by our external supplier. However, to clarify, when we have a user leave the business all their licenses and accounts are deactivated and subsequently removed by our external supplier, according to our internal procedures.

2. We would not perform this software-based data destruction internally as it would be done by our external supplier but at this time, we have not had to instruct them to do this. We have internal retention policies that will guide us when this will be necessary.

3. As we have yet to complete any software-based data erasure we do not hold any recorded information, at this time.

4. Not applicable.

Appeals procedure

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original request and should be addressed to Knowledge and Information Management:

Knowledge and Information Management
Trade Remedies Authority
Premier House
60 Caversham Road
Reading
RG1 7EB

Email: InformationRights@traderemedies.gov.uk

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely,

Information Rights

Trade Remedies Authority

E: InformationRights@trade.remедies.gov.uk