



Government Legal Department

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Ref No: FOI 26_014

6th March 2026

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 12th February 2026 containing your request for information. The Government Legal Department ("GLD") have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("the Act", "FOIA")

Request

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, 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.

Response

Pursuant to Section 1(1)(a) of the Act, GLD confirms that it holds the information you have requested.

1 – GLD Digital and Data (GDnD) have a policy listing contractual requirements and internal procedures that will give cyber security assurances that any personal data removed from GLD computing devices is irretrievable.

2 – GLD Digital and Data (GDnD) would on some occasions sell laptops to staff, and the internal procedure to ensure that personal data is irretrievable would be to partition and format the hard drives.

3 – When GLD Data and Digital disposes of laptops via a secure disposal service provider (external third party), a certificate or record of secure data erasure or destruction must be issued to assure GDnD that cyber and information standards are complied with. The secure disposal supplier must also give confirmation that the erasure software used is approved by NCSC's CAPs scheme.

4 – N/A

Your Rights

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask GLD for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted to GLD within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original correspondence. Please use the contact details provided at the top of this letter in order to request an internal review relating to your original request.

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
www.ICO.org.uk

Yours sincerely,

Freedom of Information Team

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