

FOI DOF/2025-0263

Request

Q1. Can you please list the number of devices deployed by your organisation for the following?	
Device Type	Number of Devices
Desktop PCs	
Laptops	
Mobile Phones	
Printers	
Multi Functional Devices (MFDs)	
Tablets	
Physical Servers	
Storage Devices (for example: NAS, SAN)	
Networking Infrastructure (for example: Switches, Routers, Interfaces, Wireless Access Points)	
Security Infrastructure (for example: Firewalls, Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS), Virus Monitoring Tools)	

Q2. Does your organisation have plans to procure any of the below services, if yes then please provide information in the below format?	2025/26 Spend/Budget	2026/27 Spend/Budget	27/28 Spend/Budget	28/29 Spend/Budget
Example: Platform as a Service	1,000,000	50,000	200,000	50,000
a. Cloud computing				
b. Software as a Service (SaaS)				
c. Platform as a Service (PaaS)				
d. Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS)				
e. Anything as a Service (XaaS)				

Q3. Does your organisation have any plans to procure the below services, if yes then please provide required information in the below format?	2025/26 Spend/Budget	2026/27 Spend/Budget	27/28 Spend/Budget	28/29 Spend/Budget
Example: IoT security	50,000	50,000	80,000	50,000
a. Network Security				
b. Cloud Security				
c. Endpoint Security				
d. Mobile Security				
e. IoT Security				
f. Application Security				

Q4. Does your organisation have any plans to procure below services, if yes then please provide information in the below format?	2025/26 Spend/Budget	2026/27 Spend/Budget	27/28 Spend/Budget	28/29 Spend/Budget
Example: Data and Analytics	1,750,000	2,000,000	1,750,000	1,750,000
a. Data and Analytics				
b. AI and Automation				
c. Digital Transformation				
d. ERP Systems				

Q5. Has your organisation implemented any form of AI or Automation services, and if not, what is the reason for not implementing?	Yes	No	Reason
Example: Yes, Example: No, Legacy System			
a. Implemented			
b. Minor implementation with completed AI strategy			
c. Plans to develop implementation			
d. Due to legacy systems			

Response

I can confirm that the Department of Finance (DoF) is holding some information in relation to your request.

The questionnaire provided by you for completion has been populated and is attached as a separate document (see Annex B) for your ease of reference.

Please note that question 1 has been answered by DoF on behalf of the NICS, question 2 to 5 relates to DoF only.

I have also included a link to upcoming procurement opportunities, which you may find useful:- <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/articles/view-current-cpd-procurement-pipelines-supplies-and-services-opportunities>

Some of the information requested is exempt from release under s.31(1)(a), which relates to 'the prevention and detection of crime' and s.43(2) Commercial Interests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

As Section 31 & 43 are qualified exemptions, DoF have carried out the appropriate Public Interest Tests on the information held as part of their decision-making process.

This has concluded that the balance of the public interest has been found to fall in favour of withholding the information covered by the Section 31 exemption see Public Interest Test at Annex C and Section 43 exemption see Public Interest Tests at Annex D & E below for further information.

Annex C

PUBLIC INTEREST TEST					
Request Ref:	DOF 2025/0263				
Request summary of information being withheld.	<p>The number of devices deployed by your organisation for Security Infrastructure.</p> <p>Does your organisation have plans to procure a. Cloud computing b. Software as a Service (SaaS) c. Platform as a Service (PaaS) d. Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) e. Anything as a Service (XaaS).</p> <p>Does your organisation have plans to procure a. Network Security b. Cloud Security c. Endpoint security d. Mobile Security e. IoT Security f. Application Security</p> <p>Does your organisation have any plans to procure a. Data and Analytics b. AI and Automation c. Digital Transformation d. ERP Systems</p>				
Exemption Applied	Section 31(1)(a) - Prevention & Detection of Crime				
Information details:	Disclosure		Non-disclosure		
Annual expenditure figures on software/Cyber Security services for Department of Finance (DoF).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a general public interest in the disclosure of information; • Openness in government may increase public trust in and engagement with the government; and • There is a public interest in what planned IT/cyber security services will be put in place to enhance security to protect information held and the amount spent by the public sector on the same. 		<p>With emerging technologies such as AI expected to heighten the global ransomware threat, it is more important than ever to take steps to prevent cyber criminals from getting hold of our data, and devices. This also means that we need to continually assess and review the type and nature of information that is placed within the public domain.</p> <p>Information such as that being requested i.e. providing budget on services or details identifying the systems/software we utilise, could be used to deduce security maturity and resilience measures within our</p>		

		<p>infrastructure. Incurring this risk would be deemed not to be in the public interest</p> <p>Although there is a general public interest in openness in releasing this information, the NICS need to safeguard the security of public sector specific systems and defences.</p> <p>Government has a duty to maintain the integrity of personal and sensitive personal information, in accordance with Legislation such as the Data Protection Act, so increasing the chances of an attack would have potentially serious repercussions.</p> <p>Attacks on our systems could also result in increased government expenditure, due to the cost of implementing system fixes and dealing with compensation claims etc.</p> <p>Previously, the department issued limited data on cyber security to help increase awareness of the challenges faced in the digital landscape. However, as the cyber threat environment has significantly evolved, so has the tactics and strategies of potential attackers. The sharing of any data relating to cyber security now carries a greater risk of being used to build up a picture of the cyber resilience of the Civil Service.</p>
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PUBLIC INTEREST DECISION: After weighing up the competing public interest considerations, we consider it is reasonable in all the circumstances that the information held should be withheld from disclosure under Section 31(1)(a) - Prevention & Detection of Crime, and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

Signed: Colin Daysh

Date: 03 June 2025

PUBLIC INTEREST TEST			
Request Ref:	DoF/2025-0263		
Request summary of information being withheld.	<p>Does your organisation have plans to procure a. Cloud computing b. Software as a Service (SaaS) c. Platform as a Service (PaaS) d. Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) e. Anything as a Service (XaaS).</p> <p>Does your organisation have any plans to procure a. Data and Analytics b. AI and Automation c. Digital Transformation d. ERP Systems</p>		
Information details:	Exemption applied	Disclosure	Non-disclosure
		(Please complete both columns to show all factors have been considered)	

<p>Annual expenditure figures on software services for Digital Security and Finance Shared Services (DSF) within the Department of Finance (DoF)</p>	<p>Section 43 (2): Commercial Interest</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To show compliance with the FOI Act by disclosing information held by the Department as a Public Authority; • There is a general public interest in the accountability, openness and transparency of government, and to promote public understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DoF has confirmed the information is considered commercially sensitive and that the release of such information could unfairly prejudice ongoing and planned procurement competitions which are linked to the ERP contract for Integr8. • Disclosure of this information could prejudice future procurements for the Integr8 programme by revealing commercially sensitive information and/or information of potential use to economic operators competing in associated procurement processes. As such, this information is withheld where such confidentiality is provided by law to protect a legitimate economic interest of the Department in running open and fair procurement competitions for the Integr8 Programme to support delivery of its strategic outcomes for NICS. • Previously the department have released limited data to increase awareness of how public funds are utilised and to promote public understanding. However, as the Interg8 Pprogramme evolves it is imperative that the release of this type of information is reviewed at the time each request is received, and that consideration is given to ongoing procurement and the department's commercial interests.
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PUBLIC INTEREST DECISION: After weighing up the competing public interest considerations, we consider it is reasonable in all the circumstances that the information held should be withheld from disclosure under Section 43 (2) Commercial Interests, and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

Signed: Kirstie Murray

Date: 30 May 2025

Annex E

PUBLIC INTEREST TEST			
Request Ref:	FOI DOF/2025-0263		
Request Summary of Information being withheld.	Does your organisation have plans to procure b. Software as a Service (SaaS).		
Information details:	Exception applied	Disclosure	Non-disclosure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Software as a Service Budgets for Land & Property Services (LPS) within the Department of Finance (DoF). 	<p>Section 43(2): Commercial interests</p>	<p>There is a public interest in individuals being able to exercise their rights under the FOIs, in order to enhance their understanding of the reasons for decisions taken by senior members of a public body.</p> <p>Showing compliance with the spirit of the FOI Act 2000 by disclosing information held by the Department.</p> <p>Promoting accountability and transparency by public authorities.</p>	<p>Any planned budget for services not yet agreed would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interest of Land & Property Services.</p> <p>The disclosure of this information would or would be likely to weaken LPS position in an ongoing tender process. Revealing amounts LPS have consider or budgeted would enable potential suppliers to adjust their tenders accordingly. Release of the information would therefore influence the pricing offered by potential suppliers and potentially result in LPS not achieving a competitive price for services.</p> <p>As such, this information is withheld where such confidentiality is provided by law to protect a legitimate economic interest of the Department in running open and fair procurement competitions for the new Valuation Solution to</p>

			support delivery of its strategic outcomes for NICS.
PUBLIC INTEREST DECISION: After weighing up the competing public interest considerations, we consider it is reasonable in all the circumstances that the information held should be withheld from disclosure under Section 43 (2) Commercial Interests, and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.			
Signed: Angela McGrath		Date: 27/05/2025	