

FOI DOF/2026-0143

Request

To avoid any misunderstanding, I would like to clarify the distinction I am drawing. I am not questioning the adequacy of your processes or suggesting anything is being done incorrectly. My enquiry relates solely to the type of recorded assurance held by your organisation.

You have explained that suppliers are required to comply with CESG Infosec Standard 5 and NCSC criteria, that written confirmation of compliance is provided, and that reports of actions taken are received at disposal stage.

A certificate or record confirming that an erasure process was applied demonstrates that a recognised method was used. What I am seeking to understand is whether your organisation holds any recorded evidence of the outcome, namely evidence that the data on a specific storage device is irrecoverable following erasure, rather than confirmation that the erasure process was executed.

With that distinction in mind, please confirm:

Do the reports, written confirmations, or related contractual terms held by your organisation constitute an explicit outcome based warranty or guarantee that the personal data on each specific storage device has been rendered irrecoverable as a final data state, or do they primarily confirm that a certified erasure process compliant with CESG Infosec Standard 5 was followed?

Beyond reliance on supplier accreditation, recognised standards including but not limited to CESG Infosec Standard 5, NCSC criteria, ISO accreditation, or confirmation that an erasure process was completed, does your organisation hold any recorded, device specific documentation evidencing independent verification, testing, or validation that the data on the particular storage media processed has been rendered irrecoverable in practice?

For clarity, this request relates specifically to recorded outcome evidence demonstrating irrecoverability of data on the individual storage device, not documentation confirming that an accredited or certified method was applied.

If no explicit outcome based warranty or device specific outcome evidence is held beyond certification, accreditation, or confirmation of process completion, please confirm accordingly.

DoF response

I can confirm the Department of Finance holds some of the information requested.

The third-party supplier is contracted to take forward all the necessary actions to ensure personal data is completely deleted/sanitised, and to provide assurance/reports to the Department that the same has been carried out as per the agreed contractual terms & standards in place. Supporting documentation to evidence the specific actions taken, to enable assurances to be provided, is the responsibility of the supplier.

Information held by the Department relating to your request has been provided in FOI 2026 - 0071 & FOI 2026 - 0103 responses. No further information is held.

Annex B - Internal Reviews

An Internal Review request examines the response based on applied exemptions, search adequacy, or response timeliness.

It is not the following, which will be treated as specified:

- Questions asking for clarification on information provided: Will be treated as part of the original FOI request.
- Additional questions about the information in the response: Will be treated as a new FOI request.
- Questions about the subject not related to the original request: Will be treated as new FOI request.
- Questions regarding how a service operates or why a decision was made: Will be treated as normal business and responded to accordingly.
- Complaints or concerns raised in response to information provided: Will be treated in line with relevant complaints procedure.

To make an Internal Review request:

- **Clearly state:** That you want an internal review of a previous FOI response and provide the necessary details.
- **Follow the timeline:** Be sure to submit your request within 40 working days of receiving the original response. If the Department has not responded at all, you have 40 working days after the original 20-day response period has passed.
- **Wait for a response:** The review is typically completed within 20 working days but can take up to 40 working days in exceptional circumstances. The Department should inform you of any delays.

What the review includes

- A fresh decision based on a reconsideration of all relevant factors.
- An assessment of whether the request was handled correctly and if exemptions were applied appropriately.
- The review will be conducted by someone who was not involved in the original decision.

If you wish to request an internal review, please email foi@finance-ni.gov.uk or write to FOI/EIR Team, Department of Finance, 2nd Floor, Craigantlet Buildings, Stoney Road, Belfast, BT4 3SX.