



Information Governance Team

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Dear Sir/Madam

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)

Request ID: FOI651275636

Thank you for your request for information relating to Cyber and Information Security Spending in Schools.

You have requested the following information:

1. Total spending on cyber and information security for schools within the local authority's jurisdiction, including but not limited to:

Network security solutions (e.g., firewalls, intrusion detection systems, etc.)

Endpoint security (e.g., antivirus, anti-malware software)

Email security (e.g. spam filtering)

Patch and vulnerability management (e.g. vulnerability scanners, patch management tooling etc)

User access control systems (e.g., two-factor authentication, user account management)

Data protection measures (e.g., encryption, data loss prevention systems)

Cybersecurity training and awareness programs for staff and students

Cyber security consultancy services or dedicated personnel

Following careful consideration, the information you requested falls under the exemption(s) in Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which relates to 'information reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means.'

The exemption applies as the information is published and publicly available to view by accessing the Council website, please use the following link:

https://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/download/1362/contracts_register

The relevant contract reference is COV-9344.

This exemption is not subject to the public interest test.

2. Breakdown of spending per school or group of schools (if available), detailing individual expenditures for each of the above categories.

In regards to a breakdown of spending per school, it is confirmed that the Council does hold information pursuant to your request. However, it is our view that the information is exempt from disclosure under Section 43(2) – Commercially Sensitive Information. Section 43(2) exempts information from disclosure where disclosure of that information would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (an individual, a company, the public authority itself or any other legal entity).

It is the Council's position that the third-party providers and its own commercial interests would be prejudiced and/or would be likely to be prejudiced by the disclosure of the requested information.

Once the information is disclosed this means that it will be in the public domain, and it could not only be used by the requester but also any other providers in a similar market.

Arguments in favour of disclosure.

- Promote accountability and transparency for the Council's decisions and in its spending of public money.
- Assist the public to understand and challenge our decisions.
- Inform the public of the activities carried out on their behalf, allowing for more user involvement and collaborative decision making.
- Enable the public to better scrutinise the public monies spent

Arguments against disclosure.

- There is a public interest in allowing public authorities to withhold information which if disclosed, would reduce providers' ability to compete in a commercial environment.
- The successful providers operate in a competitive market. If prejudicing the commercial interests of the successful providers in the market would distort competition in that market, this would not be in the public interest.
- Disclosure of information may cause unwarranted reputational damage or loss of confidence in the Council.
- Revealing information such as a pricing mechanism can be detrimental to a provider's commercial interest. If an organisation has knowledge of a provider's business model, it can exploit this for its own commercial interest. This would also have a detrimental impact on the Council on other contracts and procurements by distorting the market, for the reasons stated above.

Having considered the arguments for and against disclosure, the Council has decided that the public interest in this case is best served by maintaining the exemption under section 43(2) FOIA and by not disclosing the information requested.

The decision to withhold the information requested is therefore upheld on the basis that Section

43(2) in relation to commercially sensitive information has been applied correctly.

3. Details of any funding allocated for cybersecurity that was not spent or remained unused during the requested financial years.

ICT Budgets for schools are delegated to individual schools.

**4. Any internal or external assessments or reviews of the adequacy of the cyber and information security controls in place for the schools, particularly in relation to:
Compliance with data protection laws (e.g., GDPR)
ISO 27001 and/or Cyber Essentials compliance
Cybersecurity threats and risks identified in risk assessments
Recommendations made and actions taken in response to security reviews.**

We confirm that we do not hold this information and are advising you as per Section 1(1) of the Act. Schools are responsible for this area.

5. Information on any cybersecurity incidents or breaches reported by schools within the local authority's jurisdiction, including the number of incidents and a summary of the nature of these incidents (e.g., ransomware, data breaches).

Please refer to Question 3.

The supply of information in response to a FOI/EIR request does not confer an automatic right to re-use the information. You can use any information supplied for the purposes of private study and non-commercial research without requiring further permission. Similarly, information supplied can also be re-used for the purposes of news reporting. An exception to this is photographs. Please contact us if you wish to use the information for any other purpose.

For information, we publish a variety of information such as: [FOI/EIR Disclosure Log](#), [Publication Scheme](#), [Facts about Coventry](#) and [Open Data](#) that you may find of useful if you are looking for information in the future.

If you are unhappy with the handling of your request, you can ask us to review our response. Requests for reviews should be submitted within 40 days of the date of receipt of our response to your original request – email: infogov@coventry.gov.uk

If you are unhappy with the outcome of our review, you can write to the Information Commissioner, who can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or email icocasework@ico.org.uk.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in your response.

Yours faithfully

Information Governance