



National Audit Office

The UK's independent public spending
watchdog

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NAO SOFTWARE AND APPLICATIONS

Thank you for your request of 30 May 2023 for information about software and applications in use at the National Audit Office (NAO). We have handled your request under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

We confirm that we hold some of the information you have requested. Your specific request is set out in **Annex A** together with our response.

We have withheld a limited amount of information under section 31(1)(a) (law enforcement) and section 40(2) of FOIA. **Annex B** provides details of the exemptions we have applied to your request.

Annex C sets out the steps you may wish to take if you are not satisfied with the way we have handled your request for information under FOIA.

I hope you find this response helpful.

Yours sincerely,

NAO FOI Team

Annex A

Request for information about software and applications in use at the NAO:

(Your request is in bold and our response below)

1. Please can you provide the information requested in the table below:

Type of Application	Supplier Name	Software Name & version / release	Contract Expiry Date	Contract extensions available, if any?	Contract Value	Annual Fees (Software Support and Maintenance, or SaaS)	Hosting (customer (on premise or cloud) or supplier)
Finance (Ledgers)							
Financial Budgeting & Forecasting							
Financial Document Management							
Supplier Invoice Processing							
Secure Cheque Printing							
Income Management (Cash Receipting)							
Procurement (POs & Reqs)							
Sourcing, Tenders, Contracts,							
Catalogues / Marketplace							
Payroll / Payroll Service							
HR							
Performance Management (HR / appraisals)							
Employee Expenses							
Reporting / Analytics / Business Intelligence / Data Warehouse/ Data Pool							
CRM (Client Relationship Management)							
BACS payments							
Field Services (Works Order Management)							
Access Control Systems							
Artificial Intelligence / Machine Learning / Robotics							
Legal and Legal Forms							
Social Care (Adults and Children)							
Schools Information Management System							
Ticketing Solution (if any)							
IT Outsource Provider (if any)							

We have provided the information we hold in an Excel spreadsheet.

2. In addition, please provide your organisation's

- 1. Contract Register**
- 2. Overall non-staff spend and**
- 3. Software spend**
- 4. Number of staff / employees (FTEs)?**

Our contract register is attached in an Excel spreadsheet.

Information about our overall spending on non-staff is available in our Annual Report and Accounts for 2021-22 here: [Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22 \(nao.org.uk\)](https://www.nao.org.uk/publications/2021-22/annual-report-and-accounts-2021-22/). The information you requested can be found on page 133.

There were 942.20 FTE staff as of June 2023.

Annex B

This annex sets out the exemptions that we have applied to your request.

1. Section 31(1)(a), Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Law enforcement

Section 31(1)(a) of the FOIA provides that:

*(1) Information which is not exempt information by virtue of section 30 is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice—
(a) the prevention or detection of crime.*

Reasons why we have applied this exemption

The NAO receives sensitive, personal and confidential information from government and other third parties through the audit process. Maintaining the security of information that has been provided to the NAO in confidence is extremely important. Given the NAO's critical role helping to hold government to account, it faces persistent and evolving cyber threats. Cyber-attacks are rated as a Tier 1 threat by the UK Government. Cyber-attacks may amount to criminal offences, for example under the Computer Misuse Act 1990 or the Data Protection Act 1998.

Releasing the details of the versions of software that we're using would compromise the integrity of our IT systems. If hackers were aware of the exact software version, it would be easier for them to target known vulnerabilities before we are able to patch them.

Finally, if information were disclosed that suggested the NAO's IT systems were vulnerable to attack, government and other third parties would be reluctant to engage in a full and frank exchange of information and views with us. This would delay and diminish the audit process. We have therefore applied the section 31(1)(a) exemption to the software version and hosting details of our Access Control Systems.

Public interest test

The exemption at section 31(1)(a) is subject to the public interest test set out in section 2(2)(b) FOIA. This requires the NAO to consider whether there are any public interest factors in favour of disclosure that outweigh the harm identified above. We consider that there is a general public interest in disclosure of information that would promote transparency of the NAO's spending. This includes information about software applications. However, we do not consider that this interest is sufficiently strong to outweigh the substantial interest in maintaining the integrity of the NAO's IT systems and ultimately the audit process.

2. Section 40, Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Personal information

Section 40, paragraphs 1-4, of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) provides that:

(1) Any information to which a request for information relates is exempt information if it constitutes personal data of which the applicant is the data subject.

(2) Any information to which a request for information relates is also exempt information if—

(a) it constitutes personal data which does not fall within subsection (1), and

(b) the first, second or third condition below is satisfied.

(3A) The first condition is that the disclosure of the information to a member of the public otherwise than under this Act—

(a) would contravene any of the data protection principles, or

(b) would do so if the exemptions in section 24(1) of the Data Protection Act 2018 (manual unstructured data held by public authorities) were disregarded.

(3B) The second condition is that the disclosure of the information to a member of the public otherwise than under this Act would contravene Article 21 of the GDPR (general processing: right to object to processing).

(4A) The third condition is that—

(a) on a request under Article 15(1) of the GDPR (general processing: right of access by the data subject) for access to personal data, the information would be withheld in reliance on provision made by or under section 15, 16 or 26 of, or Schedule 2, 3 or 4 to, the Data Protection Act 2018, or

(b) on a request under section 45(1)(b) of that Act (law enforcement processing: right of access by the data subject), the information would be withheld in reliance on subsection (4) of that section.

Reasons why we have applied this exemption

We are not obliged, under Section 40(2) of the FOIA to provide personal information of another person if releasing it would contravene any of the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018.

In this instance we believe the release of the names of individual National Audit Office officers would contravene the first data protection principle which is that the processing of personal data must be lawful, fair and transparent. Processing in this context includes disclosure and therefore we consider section 40(2) is engaged.

In this instance we do not believe it would be fair to individual officers to disclose their personal information. This exemption is absolute and is not subject to the public interest test.

We have therefore withheld individual names from our contract register.

Annex C

Statement of Policy

Our policy is to respond to requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as helpfully and promptly as possible, having regard to the principles set out in the Act. I therefore hope you are happy with the way we have handled your request. If you are not, then you should take the following steps.

In the first instance, within 40 working days, write to the National Audit Office Freedom of Information (FOI) Team at FOI@nao.org.uk or by post to:

FOI Team, Green 2, National Audit Office, 157-197 Buckingham Palace Road, London, SW1W 9SP

The Head of FOI will arrange a review, which will be conducted by a senior member of staff who was not involved in decisions relating to your original request. Once the review has been completed, we will write informing you of the outcome.

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 primary way of escalating your concerns to the Information Commissioner is at: <https://ico.org.uk/foicomplaints>

Alternatively, you can contact the ICO at <https://ico.org.uk/> or Information Commissioner's Office Wycliffe House Water Lane Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF.