LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

London Fire Brigade Headquarters
169 Union Street London SE1 0LL
T 020 8555 1200 F 020 7960 3602
Textphone 020 7960 3629
london-fire.gov.uk

Freedom of Information request reference number: FOIA2981.1

Date of response: 5 April 2017

Request and response:

1. Has your organisation completed all of the government's '10 steps to cyber security',

I can confirm that the Authority is currently in the process of reviewing its security arrangements with the help of external advisers and that the government's 'ten steps to cyber security' is a key consideration as part of that review. The review is wider ranging than the 'ten steps' and the outcome of this work will confirm whether any action is required, and how those actions will be completed.

2. Have you suffered Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) cyber attacks on your network in the last year?

3. If so, how many DDoS attacks did you experience during 2016?

4. Has your organisation ever been the victim of a DDoS attack which was used in combination with another type of cyber attack, such as a demand for ransom/ransomware, network infiltration or data theft?

5. How do you know if you've suffered a DDoS attack?

6. Does your method of DDoS mitigation detect sub-saturating DDoS attacks of less than 30 minutes in duration, which do not typically overwhelm the network?

In relation to points two to six above, I can neither confirm nor deny whether the Authority holds the information being requested. This is because under s.24 of FOIA (National Security) disclosing whether or not we hold any of the information being requested would or would be likely to, prejudice the purpose of safeguarding national security.

Whilst section 1(1)(a) of the FOIA requires a public authority to confirm whether it holds the information that has been requested, Section 24(2) provides an exemption from this duty as it states:

'The duty to confirm or deny does not arise if, or to the extent that, exemption from section 1(1)(a) is required for the purpose of safeguarding national security.'

Although the s.24 exemption applies, this is not an absolute exemption and the Authority is required to consider a public interest test. This requires us to consider whether the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosure. I have set out our public interest test considerations for and against disclosure below:

Considerations supporting disclosure:

- the public's right to information held by public authorities.

- disclosure would be consistent with government aims to improve accountability and transparency in the operation of public organisations.

- it could be argued there is a public interest in the disclosure of information on hacking and other computer-related attacks as it would provide the public with assurance that the Authority's IT systems are protected appropriately.

Considerations against disclosure:

- whilst the public has a right to know that IT systems are secure from any external threats, any steps the Authority may or may not be taking to enhance this security should not in the public domain as this might weaken those security measures.

- The Authority runs the London Fire Brigade (LFB) which is one of the three emergency services in London and is one of the key infrastructure partners in London. Disclosing details of our any security breaches the Authority may or may not have had may undermine our ability to secure our information and systems and this may harm our ability to secure the safety and security of the citizens and visitors of London and would not be in the public interest.

- To confirm the details of any successful attacks may provide useful information to anyone planning to attack the Authority's systems. Furthermore the publication of any details of methods in place to stop similar or new attacks, may facilitate further or continued attacks.

- It would not be in the public interest to disclose information that may undermine public safety or undermine law enforcement colleagues thereby assisting those who are intent on endangering national security or threatening the safety and security of the citizens and visitor to London.

Having balanced the public interest in this case, I have determined that the public interest in maintaining this exemption and neither confirming nor denying that we have or have not received such attacks outweighs the public interest in disclosure of the information requested should we hold it. I believe that, should the Authority hold the information you have requested, confirmation or denial whether these attacks have happened would, or would be likely to, prejudice any ongoing work that may be taking place to enhance our systems and defend them from attack.