

**From:** Freedom of Information

**Sent:** 23 October 2020 16:02

**To:**

**Subject:** Freedom of Information Response (Our Ref: K/20/289)

Dear

**Freedom of Information Response (Our Ref: K/20/289)**

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FOI) request dated 29 July 2020, reference K/20/289. Please accept our apologies for the delay in responding to your request.

Your request read:

“Please confirm any data that was obtained in the Blackbaud hack from your university and the number of people affected - please state what types of data were accessed: names, addresses, credit card details, wealth details etc.

Please state the date at which you became aware that the data had been obtained.

Please provide any correspondence you have had from Blackbaud in relation to the hack.

Please provide any proof that Blackbaud supplied to suggest that the copied data had been destroyed.”

The University of Leeds holds some of this information. For your convenience we have responded to each of your questions below. Where appropriate we have grouped questions in order to provide a single response.

**Please confirm any data that was obtained in the Blackbaud hack from your university and the number of people affected - please state what types of data were accessed: names, addresses, credit card details, wealth details etc.**

**Please provide any correspondence you have had from Blackbaud in relation to the hack.**

We address these questions together. We are withholding this information under the following sections of the FOI Act.

Section 31(1)(a) – prevention and detection of crime

To release either the exact information which we know to have been obtained, or correspondence which speaks to this, would reveal to those responsible how much we currently know about the attack. This information could be used by the responsible party or parties to adapt future attacks, prioritising methods and/or elements which do not appear to have been detected while discontinuing efforts which are readily noticed. This would make us more vulnerable to future attacks,

which jeopardises our ability to provide services to students, alumni and staff. The information is therefore exempt under section 31(1)(a).

#### Section 31(1)(b) – identification and apprehension of offenders

To release records which demonstrate how much we know about the attack would provide the individuals responsible with information which could be used to avoid identification and apprehension. By revealing how much we know, offenders may be able to establish how close the investigation is to identifying them and can therefore take steps to thwart those efforts. This would put both the University of Leeds and other organisations at risk of future attacks by the same perpetrators. The information is therefore exempt under section 31(1)(b).

#### Section 31(1)(c) – administration of justice

We continue to work with users of the system and individuals who may have had data compromised. To release details of the nature of the attack in response to an FOI request, before we have been able to liaise directly with individuals would be inappropriate and would undermine the investigation. To do so would jeopardise the trust between the university and the individuals (trust which is already understandably threatened as a result of the attack itself) which would be likely to lead to reduced confidence in the investigation more widely. This would threaten the ability of those investigating matters to do so thoroughly. The information is therefore exempt under section 31(1)(c).

#### Public interest consideration

We appreciate that there is a strong public interest in understanding how organisations such as the University of Leeds responds to cyber-attacks. We are also particularly aware of the personal interest that individuals for whom the University holds personal data will have in this incident and our response to it. For broad information in relation to the data which was obtained please refer to the statement on our [Alumni website](#). However, we consider that there is a very strong public interest in protecting the investigation process and in ensuring we do not increase our own vulnerability to attacks in future. We therefore conclude that the overwhelming public interest in this case is in favour withholding the requested information.

#### **Please state the date at which you became aware that the data had been obtained.**

16 July 2020

#### **Please provide any proof that Blackbaud supplied to suggest that the copied data had been destroyed**

Please refer to the [statement issued by Blackbaud](#) in relation to this matter. As outlined above, to provide any further detail would compromise the ongoing investigation.

We hope this information is helpful. If you have any questions about this email, however, please do not hesitate to contact us on [foi@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:foi@leeds.ac.uk)

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint or request a review of our decision, you can request an

Internal Review. Requests for Internal Review should be made in writing using the following contact information:

Post: Mr D Wardle  
Deputy Secretary  
The University of Leeds  
Leeds  
LS2 9JT

Email: [foi@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:foi@leeds.ac.uk)

Requests for Internal Review should be submitted within 40 working days of receiving the University's response to your request. Further information about how the University manages Freedom of Information requests and about our complaints procedure is also available on our website ([www.leeds.ac.uk](http://www.leeds.ac.uk)).

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. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the review/complaints procedure provided by the University. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Kind regards

**Chloe Wilkins**  
Freedom of Information Officer

Secretariat  
University of Leeds