GLOBAL RESEARCH

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# Public Perceptions

# Research Report

**March 2018**

Information Commissioner's Office

## METHOD

Global Research & Strategy Group Ltd. used Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) to interview a representative sample of 400 Bermuda residents aged 18 years and over.

All interviews were conducted in March 2018.

The data were weighted to be representative of Bermuda's population on the following factors: gender, age, parish and education.

The results are compared to those of a benchmark survey conducted with 400 Bermuda residents in March 2016 and March 2017.

The aim of the research was to provide insights into the following areas:

- Public awareness of PATI and the Information Commissioner's Office
- Public awareness of the rights that PATI gives everyone regarding access to information held by Bermuda authorities
- Public understanding of the term "Bermuda Public Authority"
- Whether residents have requested information from Bermuda public authorities
- Whether residents would like to make such requests in the future
- Whether residents believe in PATI and that it will be respected by public authorities

The results will assist the Information Commissioner's Office in understanding the marketing and public education needed to ensure that the public are aware of, and understand the importance and role of PATI.

## KEY FINDINGS

**Public Requests: Past & Future**

- 19% had asked for a copy of recorded information that a public authority holds (vs. 22% in 2018).
- Residents were more likely to recall requesting information from the Registrar General and Bermuda Police Service.
- 87% were satisfied with the response received from a public authority (vs. 90% in 2017).
- 15% were likely to ask for information from a public authority next year (vs. 13% in 2017).

**Public Awareness**

- 77% had heard of the PATI Act (vs. 80% in 2017).
    - Residents aged 55 years and over were more likely to have heard of the PATI Act, younger residents aged 18-34 years were less likely to have heard about it.
- 37% had heard of the Information Commissioner's Office for Bermuda (vs. 42% in 2017).
    - Residents aged 18-34 years were less likely to have heard of it.

**Function of Information Commissioner's Office of Bermuda**

- Residents were more likely to believe that the Bermuda Information Commissioner's Office ensures that public authorities comply with the PATI Act (34% vs. 41% in 2017).
- They were least likely to believe that the Bermuda Information Commissioner's Office deals with requests to amend a personal record held by public authorities (15% in 2018 and 2017).

**Confidence in PATI**

- Residents continued to believe that the PATI Act was important to them (87% vs. 86% in 2017).
- Residents were significantly more likely to believe that public authorities would become more open and accountable (67% vs. 59% in 2017) and that members of the public will have more confidence in the decisions made by public authorities (60% vs. 55% in 2017).

<u>Conclusions/Next Step</u>

- Awareness of the PATI Act and the Information Commissioner's Office for Bermuda declined marginally this year as did requests for recorded information that a public authority holds.
- However, residents continued to be satisfied with the responses they received from public authorities and were significantly more confident that the PATI Act would lead to more open and accountable practices by public authorities.

❖ *The Information Commissioner's Office for Bermuda should aim to increase public awareness of the role of the PATI Act and the Information Commissioner's Office for Bermuda especially among younger residents aged 18-34 years.*

❖ *Increased education and awareness of the functions of the Office and the PATI Act will assist residents with understanding how these resources can benefit them.*

## DETAILED FINDINGS

*Q1: Which of the following organizations that I am going to read out to you would you say is a public authority?*

Residents continued to believe that the Bermuda Police Service was a public authority (88% vs 86% in 2017), followed by H.M. Customs (77% vs. 78% in 2017) and the Ministry of Education Headquarters (57% vs. 60% in 2017).

| | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sample | 400 | 401 | 400 |
| Bermuda Police Service | 90% | 86% | 88% |
| H.M. Customs | 74% | 78% | 77% |
| Ministry of Education Headquarters | 64% | 60% | 57% |
| Corporation of Hamilton | 56% | 46% | 46% |
| The Bermuda Archives | 41% | 44% | 37% |
| West End Development Corporation | 41% | 31% | 30% |
| Devonshire Parish Council | 37% | 27% | 27% |
| Bermuda National Trust | 20% | 20% | 23% |
| BELCO | 14% | 8% | 10% |
| Bermuda Red Cross | 13% | 8% | 15% |
| None of the above | 2% | 3% | 2% |

- Residents aged 35-44 years were less likely to believe that Bermuda Police Service was a public authority (78%).
- Residents aged 25-44 years were less likely to believe that H.M. Customs was a public authority.
- Residents aged 18-24 years (46%) and 35-44 years (48%) were less likely to believe that Ministry of Education Headquarters was a public authority.

*Q2: Can you think of any other organizations that are public authorities?*

The top three organizations that residents also believed were public authorities were Bermuda Government/Government Departments, Bermuda Fire Service and Bermuda Hospitals Board/KEMH.

| | 2018 |
|---|---|
| Total Responses | 264 |
| Bermuda Government/Government Departments | 79 |
| Bermuda Fire Service | 25 |
| Bermuda Hospital Board/KEMH | 23 |
| Bermuda Regiment | 21 |
| Bermuda Tourism Authority | 12 |
| Bermuda Transport Control/depart. Of transport/aviation/ships/public transportation | 11 |
| Bermuda Monetary Authority | 10 |
| Bermuda Regulatory Authority | 9 |
| Postal Services | 9 |
| Bermuda Courts/Supreme Court/judicial system | 8 |
| Department of Immigration | 8 |
| Registrar General | 7 |
| Bermuda Health Council | 7 |
| Bermuda Library/National library | 5 |
| Corporation of St. George's | 5 |
| Prisons/Dept. of Corrections | 5 |
| Parish Councils | 3 |
| Children Protection Agency | 3 |
| Bermuda Housing Corporation | 2 |
| Road Safety Council | 2 |
| BEDC | 2 |
| BLDC | 2 |
| Bermuda Casino Gaming Commission | 2 |
| Seniors | 2 |
| MWI | 2 |

*Q3: Have you ever asked for a copy of recorded information that a public authority holds (by information I do not mean things such as phoning a hospital for visiting hours or checking the availability of a book from your local library, but copies from the records or documents that a public authority might hold)?*

19% had asked for a copy of recorded information that a public authority holds.

| | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sample | 400 | 401 | 400 |
| Yes | 10% | 22% | 19% |
| No | 88% | 77% | 78% |
| Don't Know | 2% | 1% | 4% |

- Residents aged 18-24 years were less likely to have requested recorded information from a public authority (9%), while residents aged 45-54 years were more likely to have done so (28%).

*Q4: Can you please name the public authority(ies) that you requested information from?*

The most popular places that residents recalled requesting information from included the Registrar General and Bermuda Police Service.

| | 2018 |
|---|---|
| Total Responses | 89 |
| Registrar General | 15 |
| Bermuda Police Service | 12 |
| KEMH/Bermuda Hospitals Board | 7 |
| Ministry of Education | 6 |
| Bermuda Archives | 5 |
| Bermuda Library | 5 |
| Department of Immigration | 5 |
| Courts/Justice/Supreme Courts | 4 |
| Registrar of Companies | 4 |
| Bermuda Government | 4 |
| Social Insurance | 3 |
| Department of Planning | 2 |
| Criminal Record Check | 2 |
| Post Office | 2 |
| Community and Cultural Affairs | 1 |
| Department of Statistics | 1 |
| Ministry of Finance | 1 |
| Parliamentary Registrar | 1 |
| TCD | 1 |
| Red Cross | 1 |
| HRM Bermuda | 1 |
| GP Office | 1 |
| Human Rights Commission | 1 |
| The Royal Gazette | 1 |
| BELCO | 1 |
| Dept. of Public Transportation | 1 |
| Pension Department | 1 |

*Q5: Thinking about your most recent request, which of the following best describes the response that you received?*

87% were satisfied with the response received from a public authority (vs. 90% in 2017).

Residents were least satisfied with the response received from KEMH/Bermuda Hospitals Board and the Ministry of Education.

| | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | Registrar General | Bermuda Police Service | KEMH/ Bermuda Hospitals Board | Ministry of Education |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sample | 400 | 401 | 400 | 15 | 13 | 6 | 3 |
| **Top 2** | **79%** | **90%** | **87%** | **94%** | **86%** | **67%** | **67%** |
| Very positive, I got information I asked for promptly | 33% | 49% | 45% | 38% | 43% | 50% | 0% |
| Satisfactory, I was given the information, but it took some time | 46% | 41% | 42% | 56% | 43% | 17% | 67% |
| Unsatisfactory, they replied but I didn't get the information I requested | 18% | 7% | 8% | 6% | 14% | 17% | 33% |
| Poor, they didn't reply to my request | 3% | 2% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| None of the above | 0% | 1% | 5% | 0% | 0% | 17% | 0% |

| | Bermuda Archives | Bermuda Library | Department of Immigration | Courts/ Justice/ Supreme Courts | Registrar of Companies | Bermuda Government | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sample | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 14 | 6 |
| **Top 2** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **75%** | **84%** | **58%** |
| Very positive, I got information I asked for promptly | 75% | 33% | 25% | 100% | 50% | 46% | 29% |
| Satisfactory, I was given the information, but it took some time | 25% | 67% | 75% | 0% | 25% | 38% | 29% |
| Unsatisfactory, they replied but I didn't get the information I requested | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 15% | 0% |
| Poor, they didn't reply to my request | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| None of the above | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 25% | 0% | 43% |

*Q6: Have you ever heard of the PATI Act?*

77% had heard of the PATI Act (vs. 80% in 2017).

| | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sample | 400 | 401 | 400 |
| **Top 2** | **72%** | **80%** | **77%** |
| Yes, definitely | 56% | 65% | 58% |
| Yes, I think so | 16% | 15% | 19% |
| No, don't think so | 13% | 12% | 14% |
| No definitely not | 15% | 6% | 6% |
| Unsure | 1% | 1% | 3% |

- Residents aged 55 years and over were more likely to have heard about the PATI Act, younger residents aged 18-34 years were less likely to have heard about it.

*Q7: The PATI Act came into effect in April 2015. To the best of your knowledge, what rights do you think the Act entitles you to?*

Residents were most likely to believe that the PATI Act entitled them to documents of a public nature/public records.

| | 2018 |
|---|---|
| Total Responses | 431 |
| Access to any documents of a public nature/public records (information that is not confidential) | 128 |
| Allows people to request information/certain documents/public information | 105 |
| Information about Government and Government funded organisations | 69 |
| Provides access to any information in my name | 22 |
| See how much is being collected and spent | 8 |
| The ability to investigate actions of public entities | 7 |
| Access to information about what is happening in Bermuda | 4 |
| General questions requested about businesses (financial information, planning) | 3 |
| Transparency of operations and accountability | 2 |
| A lot of info | 2 |
| Information regarding safety and wellbeing of individuals | 1 |
| Court cases | 1 |
| Don't Know/Unsure | 79 |

*Q8: How likely are you to ask for information from a Bermuda public authority next year?*

15% were likely to ask for information from a Bermuda public authority next year (vs. 13% in 2017).

| | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 400 | 401 | 400 |
| **Top 2** | **22%** | **13%** | **15%** |
| Very likely | 7% | 3% | 2% |
| Quite likely | 15% | 10% | 13% |
| Neither / Nor | 12% | 22% | 22% |
| Quite unlikely | 36% | 42% | 39% |
| Definitely unlikely | 19% | 11% | 11% |
| Unsure | 11% | 11% | 13% |

*Q9: Have you ever heard of the Information Commissioner's Office for Bermuda?*

37% had heard of the Information Commissioner's Office for Bermuda (vs. 42% in 2017).

| | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 400 | 401 | 400 |
| **Top 2** | **37%** | **42%** | **37%** |
| Yes, definitely | 24% | 22% | 18% |
| Yes, I think so | 13% | 20% | 19% |
| No, I don't think so | 34% | 36% | 43% |
| No, definitely not | 27% | 20% | 16% |
| Unsure | 2% | 2% | 3% |

- Residents aged 18-34 years were less likely to have heard about Information Commissioner's Office for Bermuda.

*Q10: Where do you recall seeing/hearing about the Information Commissioner's Office for Bermuda?*

The news/newspaper (i.e. The Royal Gazette) was the most popular place that residents recalled hearing about the Information Commissioner's Offices for Bermuda.

| | 2018 |
|---|---|
| Total Responses | 169 |
| News/Newspaper | 76 |
| Online/Social Media | 22 |
| At work | 11 |
| Colleague at home or work, a family member | 9 |
| PATI website/PATI Act/Presentation | 9 |
| Bernews | 8 |
| Media (did not specify) | 8 |
| Government/gov.bm | 7 |
| Television | 6 |
| Radio | 4 |
| Bermuda Jobs Board | 3 |
| Email (from ICO or Bermuda Government) | 2 |
| ZBM | 2 |
| Corner of Parliament and Reid | 1 |
| Town hall meeting | 1 |

*Q11: I am going to read out a list of duties that may be carried out by the Bermuda Information Commissioner's Office. How aware would you say that you are that these duties are in fact carried out by the Bermuda Information Commissioner's Office?*

Compared to last year, residents were less likely to believe that the Bermuda Information Commissioner's Office ensures that public authorities comply with the PATI Act (34% vs. 41% in 2017).

Residents were also less likely to believe that the Information Commissioner's Office investigates complaints when people don't get the information they requested from public authorities (32% vs. 37% in 2017).

They were also less likely to believe that the Information Commissioner's Office issues legally binding decisions to public authorities concerning the release of information (24% vs. 30% in 2017).

| | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 400 | 401 | 400 |
| Making sure that public authorities comply with the PATI Act. | 46% | 41% | 34% |
| Telling people about their right to get copies of information held by Bermuda public authorities. | 50% | 36% | 33% |
| Providing information about public services. | 38% | 35% | 33% |
| Investigating complaints when people don't get the information they request from public authorities. | 43% | 37% | 32% |
| Hearing appeals when people do not receive requested information from public authorities. | 32% | 29% | 27% |
| Issuing legally binding decisions to public authorities concerning the release of information. | 28% | 30% | 24% |
| Dealing with requests to amend a personal record held by public authorities. | 21% | 15% | 15% |

*Q12: I am going to read out some statements about the PATI Act and ask you to tell me how much you agree or disagree with each statement. Even if you aren't aware of this Act, it's your impression that I am interested in. As a result of the PATI Act…?*

Residents were significantly more likely to believe that public authorities would become more open and accountable (67% vs. 59% in 2017) and that members of the public will have more confidence in the decisions made by public authorities (60% vs. 55% in 2017).

| | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sample | 400 | 401 | 400 |
| Public authorities will become more open and accountable. | 76% | 59% | 67% |
| Members of the public will have more confidence in the decisions made by public authorities. | 62% | 55% | 60% |
| This act will be useful to me. | 53% | 54% | 56% |
| Public authorities will find a way round the Act and won't provide any information they don't want to. | 52% | 54% | 55% |
| No one will bother to use the rights provided by the act. | 25% | 21% | 20% |

*Q13: The PATI Act gives Bermudians and Bermuda residents a right to access records held by public authorities. How important is this right to you?*

Residents continued to believe that PATI Act was important to them (87% vs. 86% in 2017).

| | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sample | 400 | 401 | 400 |
| **Top 2** | **79%** | **86%** | **87%** |
| Very important | 48% | 48% | 51% |
| Somewhat important | 31% | 38% | 36% |
| Neither / nor | 9% | 7% | 7% |
| Somewhat unimportant | 4% | 2% | 2% |
| Not at all important | 5% | 3% | 1% |
| Don't Know | 4% | 2% | 4% |

*Q14: Which of the following best describes your opinion of the PATI Act?*

Down by 4 points in 2017, 76% believed that creating and enforcing the PATI Act is a very important public investment.

| | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 400 | 401 | 400 |
| I believe that creating and enforcing the PATI Act is a very important public investment. | 77% | 80% | 76% |
| The PATI Act is not important and the public funds required for creating and enforcing PATI should be spent elsewhere. | 5% | 3% | 5% |
| Don't Know | 19% | 17% | 19% |

- Residents aged 55 years and over were more likely to believe in the importance of the investment.
- Residents aged 18-34 years were less likely to believe in it.