GLOBAL RESEARCH

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Public Perceptions Research Report

February 2020

Information Commissioner's Office

METHOD

Global Research & Strategy Group Ltd. used Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) to interview a representative sample of 402 Bermuda residents aged 18 years and over.

The reported data was collected in a stand-alone survey.

All interviews were conducted from February 5th – 9th 2020.

The results reported are compared to those obtained in March 2016, March 2017, March 2018 and February 2019.

Any questions on the methodology of this research study should be directed to Dr. Leslie Steede, Director of Research for Global Research at leslie@globalresearch.bm or 604-360-4051.

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

- 24% had asked for a copy of recorded information that a public authority holds (vs. 21% in 2019).
- Residents were more likely to recall requesting information from the Bermuda Police Service and the Bermuda Hospitals Board.
- 82% were satisfied with the response received from a public authority, a 4-point decline from 2019.
- 17% were likely to ask for information from a public authority next year (vs. 14% in 2019).

Public Awareness

- 81% had heard of the PATI Act (vs. 82% in 2019).
    - Residents aged 45 years and over were more likely to have heard of the PATI Act, while younger residents aged 18-34 years were less likely to have heard of it.
- 46% had heard of the Information Commissioner's Office for Bermuda (vs. 44% in 2019).

Function of Information Commissioner's Office for Bermuda

- Awareness of the duties of the Bermuda Information Commissioner's Office was similar to the results of 2019.
- Residents were more likely to believe that the ICO was responsible for "making sure that public authorities comply with the PATI Act" (42% vs. 42% in 2019) and "investigating complaints when people don't get the information they requested from public authorities" (38% vs. 40% in 2019).
- They were least likely to believe that the ICO was responsible for "issuing legally binding decisions to public authorities concerning the release of information" (30% vs. 29% in 2019) and "dealing with requests to amend a personal record held by public authorities" (18% vs. 19% in 2019).

Confidence in PATI

- Residents continued to believe that the PATI Act was important to them (88% vs. 87% in 2019).
- Residents continued to believe that "public authorities will find a way round the Act and won't provide any information they don't want to" (58% vs. 57% in 2019).
- Compared to 2019, residents were less likely to believe that "public authorities will become more open and accountable" (11 point decline, from 66% to 55%) and that "members of the public will have more confidence in the decisions made by public authorities" (10 point decline, from 59% to 49%).
- Fifty seven percent (57%) believed that the Act would be useful to them (vs. 59% in 2019).

CONCLUSIONS/NEXT STEPS

- The majority of residents (81%) were aware of the PATI Act, but less than half (46%) were aware of the Information Commissioner's Office for Bermuda.
- Younger residents aged 18-34 years were less likely to be aware of the PATI Act.
- Satisfaction with the response received from public authorities declined marginally.
- Confidence in the impact of the PATI Act declined.
    - Compared to 2019, residents were less likely to believe that public authorities would become more open and accountable as a result of the Act, and that members of the public would have more confidence in the decisions made by public authorities.

❖ *The Information Commissioner's Office for Bermuda should aim to increase public awareness of the ICO office and its activities.*
❖ *The ICO should increase awareness of the PATI Act among residents aged 18-34 years.*
❖ *Efforts should be made to increase public confidence in the role that the ICO plays in ensuring that public authorities remain accountable in their activities and decisions.*

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 (87% vs 89% in 2019), followed by H.M. Customs (75% vs. 77% in 2019) and the Ministry of Education Headquarters (57% vs. 60% in 2019).

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Sample	*400*	*401*	*400*	*405*	*402*
Bermuda Police Service	90%	86%	88%	89%	87%
H.M. Customs	74%	78%	77%	77%	75%
Ministry of Education Headquarters	64%	60%	57%	60%	57%
Corporation of Hamilton	56%	46%	46%	48%	50%
Devonshire Parish Council	37%	27%	27%	29%	33%
West End Development Corporation	41%	31%	30%	34%	31%
The Bermuda Archives	41%	44%	37%	32%	31%
Bermuda National Trust	20%	20%	23%	22%	23%
Bermuda Red Cross	13%	8%	15%	16%	19%
BELCO	14%	8%	10%	8%	12%
None of the above	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%

- Residents aged 18-24 years were less likely to believe that the West End Development Corporation was a public authority.
- Residents aged 25-34 years 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.

	Total		Total
# of responses	*274*		*274*
Bermuda Government/Government Departments	37	Postal Services	2
Bermuda Fire Service	34	Bermuda Health Council	2
Bermuda Hospitals Board/KEMH	28	Bermuda Library/National Library	2
Royal Bermuda Regiment	14	Home Affairs	2
Bermuda Tourism Authority	13	Fisheries/ Maritime Administration	2
Bermuda Monetary Authority	13	Works & Engineering	2
Bermuda Regulatory Authority	12	Ministry of Education	2
Department of Immigration	11	Airport Authority	2
Prisons/Dept. of Corrections	10	Department of Child and Family Services	1
Quangos	8	Bermuda Casino Gaming Commission	1
Bermuda Courts/Supreme Court/Judicial System	7	House of Assembly	1
Department of Health	7	Summerhaven	1
Ministry of Finance	7	Community Affairs	1
Corporation of St. George's	6	Pension Commission	1
Registrar General	4	Corporation of Hamilton	1
Public Works	4	Ministry of Transport	1
National Security	4	Department of Social Insurance	1
PLP/OBA/MP's/Cabinet Office	4	Health Insurance	1
Bermuda Transport Control/Dept. of Transport/Aviation/Ships/Public Transportation	4	Customs	1
Ambulance Services	3	Environmental Authority	1
Parish Councils	3	Bermuda Cancer and Health Centre	1
Planning Department	3	Attorney General	1
Parks Department	3	Royal Bermuda Regiment	1
Department of Marine and Ports	3	Accountant General	1

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)?

Twenty four percent (24%) had asked for a copy of recorded information that a public authority holds (vs. 21% in 2019).

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Sample	*400*	*401*	*400*	*405*	*402*
Yes	10%	22%	19%	21%	24%
No	88%	77%	78%	77%	74%
Don't Know	2%	1%	4%	2%	1%

- Residents aged 18-24 years and 55-64 years were less likely to have requested recorded information from a public authority.
- Residents aged 25-34 years were most likely to have requested recorded information from a public authority.

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 Bermuda Police Service and KEMH/Urgent Care/Bermuda Hospitals Board.

	Total
# of responses	*100*
Bermuda Police Service	17
KEMH/Urgent Care/Bermuda Hospitals Board	16
Registrar General	11
Bermuda Government	10
Bermuda Archives	6
Department of Immigration	5
Courts/Justice/Supreme Courts	4
Registrar of Companies	4
Ministry of Education	3
Department of Planning	3
Information Commissioner	2
Ministry of Health	2
Bermuda Library	1
Department of Statistics	1
TCD	1
The Royal Gazette	1
Dept. of Public Transportation	1
BHeC	1
Refused	11

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

Eighty Two percent (82%) were satisfied with the response received from a public authority (vs. 86% in 2019).

Residents were least satisfied with the response received from the Ministry of Education.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Bermuda Police Service	KEMH/Urgent Care/ Bermuda Hospitals Board	Registrar General
Sample	*39*	*92*	*75*	*85*	*100*	*17*	*17*	*10*
Top 2	79%	90%	87%	86%	82%	76%	82%	100%
Very positive, I got information I asked for promptly	33%	49%	45%	41%	39%	35%	53%	20%
Satisfactory, I was given the information but it took some time	46%	41%	42%	45%	43%	41%	29%	80%
Unsatisfactory, they replied but I didn't get the information I requested	18%	7%	8%	8%	12%	6%	12%	0%
Poor, they didn't reply to my request	3%	2%	0%	2%	4%	6%	6%	0%
None of the above	0%	1%	5%	4%	2%	12%	0%	0%

	BDA Govt.	BDA Archives	Dept. of Immi-gration	Courts/ Justice/ Supreme Courts	Registrar of Com-panies	Ministry of Education	Dept. of Planning	Other
Sample	*16*	*6*	*5*	*4*	*4*	*2*	*3*	*17*
Top 2	75%	100%	80%	100%	100%	50%	100%	71%
Very positive, I got information I asked for promptly	38%	67%	20%	50%	0%	50%	67%	35%
Satisfactory, I was given the information, but it took some time	38%	33%	60%	50%	100%	0%	33%	35%
Unsatisfactory, they replied but I didn't get the information I requested	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	0%	24%
Poor, they didn't reply to my request	0%	0%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%
None of the above	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

*Note – The Other column includes the combined results of the remaining public authorities that were mentioned.

Q6: Have you ever heard of the PATI Act?

Eighty one percent (81%) had heard of the PATI Act (vs. 82% in 2019).

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Sample	*400*	*401*	*400*	*405*	*402*
Top 2	71%	80%	77%	82%	81%
Yes, definitely	56%	65%	58%	65%	65%
Yes, I think so	16%	15%	19%	17%	16%
No, don't think so	13%	12%	14%	13%	12%
No definitely not	15%	6%	6%	4%	6%
Unsure	1%	1%	3%	1%	0%

- Residents aged 45 years and over were more likely to have heard of the PATI Act, while younger residents aged 18-34 years were less likely to have heard of 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.

	2020
# of responses	*407*
Access to any documents of a public nature/public records (information that is not confidential)	205
Allows people to request information/certain documents/public information	63
Public policy information/ access to government data and info	12
See how much is being collected and spent	10
Transparency of operations and accountability	9
The ability to investigate actions of public entities	7
Provides access to any information in my name	6
Freedom of access to information/freedom of speech	4
General questions requested about businesses (financial information, planning)	3
Access to archived information	3
Information regarding safety and well-being of individuals	2
Public records from court cases/legal records	2
Privacy of information	2
Information about land ownership	1
Population statistics	1
TV News	1
Don't Know/Unsure	76

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

Seventeen percent (17%) were likely to ask for information from a Bermuda public authority next year (vs. 14% in 2019).

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Sample	*400*	*401*	*400*	*405*	*402*
Top 2	22%	13%	15%	14%	17%
Very likely	7%	3%	2%	5%	6%
Quite likely	15%	10%	13%	9%	11%
Neither / Nor	12%	22%	22%	22%	22%
Quite unlikely	36%	42%	39%	40%	31%
Definitely unlikely	19%	11%	11%	11%	15%
Unsure	11%	11%	13%	13%	14%

- Residents aged 65 years and over were more likely to ask for information from a public authority next year, while residents aged 18-34 years were less likely.

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

Forty six percent (46%) had heard of the Information Commissioner's Office for Bermuda (vs. 44% in 2019).

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Sample	*400*	*401*	*400*	*405*	*402*
Top 2	37%	42%	38%	44%	46%
Yes, definitely	24%	22%	18%	26%	27%
Yes, I think so	13%	20%	19%	18%	19%
No, I don't think so	34%	36%	43%	39%	37%
No, definitely not	27%	20%	16%	15%	15%
Unsure	2%	2%	3%	3%	2%

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

The News/Newspapers/The Royal Gazette was the most popular place that residents recalled hearing about the Information Commissioner's Office for Bermuda.

	2020
# of responses	*196*
News/Newspapers/The Royal Gazette	99
At work	16
Online/Social Media	13
Television	13
Word of mouth/Public knowledge/Family	10
PATI website/PATI Act/Presentation	9
Radio	9
Media (did not specify)	6
Email (from ICO or Bermuda Government)	5
Their location	5
Bernews	2
Government/gov.bm	1
Brochures	1
BHB	1
Through the HRC	1
They act in the public's interest	1
Lunch and learns	1
Telephone book	1
LinkedIn	1
Information stand in Washington Mall	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?

Awareness of the duties of the Bermuda Information Commissioner's Office was similar to the results of 2019.

Residents were more likely to believe that the ICO was responsible for "making sure that public authorities comply with the PATI Act" (42% vs. 42% in 2019) and "investigating complaints when people don't get the information they requested from public authorities" (38% vs. 40% in 2019).

They were least likely to believe that the ICO was responsible for "issuing legally binding decisions to public authorities concerning the release of information" (30% vs. 29% in 2019) and "dealing with requests to amend a personal record held by public authorities" (18% vs. 19% in 2019).

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Sample	*400*	*401*	*400*	*405*	*402*
Making sure that public authorities comply with the PATI Act.	46%	41%	34%	42%	42%
Investigating complaints when people don't get the information they request from public authorities.	43%	37%	32%	40%	38%
Telling people about their right to get copies of information held by Bermuda public authorities.	50%	36%	33%	43%	36%
Providing information about public services.	38%	35%	33%	37%	35%
Hearing appeals when people do not receive requested information from public authorities.	32%	29%	27%	34%	32%
Issuing legally binding decisions to public authorities concerning the release of information.	28%	30%	24%	29%	30%
Dealing with requests to amend a personal record held by public authorities.	21%	15%	15%	19%	18%

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…?

Compared to 2019, residents continued to believe that "public authorities will find a way round the Act and won't provide any information they don't want to" (58% vs. 57% in 2019).

Compared to 2019, residents were less likely to believe that "public authorities will become more open and accountable" (11 point decline, from 66% to 55%) and that "members of the public will have more confidence in the decisions made by public authorities" (10 point decline, from 59% to 49%).

Fifty seven percent (57%) believed that the Act would be useful to them (vs. 59% in 2019).

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Sample	*400*	*401*	*400*	*405*	*402*
Public authorities will find a way round the Act and won't provide any information they don't want to.	52%	54%	55%	57%	58%
This act will be useful to me.	53%	54%	57%	59%	57%
Public authorities will become more open and accountable.	76%	59%	67%	66%	55%
Members of the public will have more confidence in the decisions made by public authorities.	62%	54%	60%	59%	49%
No one will bother to use the rights provided by the act.	25%	21%	20%	18%	16%

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 the PATI Act was important to them (88% vs. 87% in 2019).

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Sample	*400*	*401*	*400*	*405*	*402*
Top 2	79%	87%	86%	87%	88%
Very important	48%	48%	51%	55%	55%
Somewhat important	31%	38%	36%	33%	32%
Neither / nor	9%	7%	7%	7%	7%
Somewhat unimportant	4%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Not at all important	5%	3%	1%	1%	1%
Don't Know	4%	2%	4%	2%	1%

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

Close to 8 in 10 (79%) believed that creating and enforcing the PATI Act was a very important public investment (vs. 80% in 2019).

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Sample	*400*	*401*	*400*	*405*	*402*
I believe that creating and enforcing the PATI Act is a very important public investment.	77%	80%	76%	80%	79%
The PATI Act is not important and the public funds required for creating and enforcing PATI should be spent elsewhere.	5%	3%	5%	4%	5%
Don't Know	19%	17%	19%	16%	16%

- Residents aged 65 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.