



**Public Perceptions
Research Report**



February 2022

METHOD

Global Research & Strategy Group Ltd. used Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) to interview a representative sample of 401 Bermuda residents aged 18 years and over.

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

Based on the sample size of 401, the margin of error for the study is +/- 5% at the 95% confidence level.

All interviews were conducted from February 14th – 21st 2022.

The results reported are compared to those obtained in March 2016, March 2017, March 2018, February 2019, February 2020, and February 2021.

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 public 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

- 25% had asked for a copy of recorded information that a public authority holds (vs. 23% in 2021).
- Residents were more likely to recall requesting information from the Registrar General and the Bermuda Police Service.
- 81% were satisfied with the response received from a public authority, a 6-point decline from 2021.
- 10% were likely to ask for information from a public authority next year (vs. 11% in 2020).

Public Awareness

- Consistent with 2021, eighty-two percent (82%) had heard of the PATI Act.
 - Younger residents aged 25-34 years were less likely to have heard of the PATI Act.
- 42% had heard of the Information Commissioner's Office for Bermuda (vs. 41% in 2021).
- News/Newspapers and Royal Gazette were the most popular places that residents recall hearing about the Information Commissioner's Office for Bermuda.

Function of Information Commissioner's Office of Bermuda

- Compared to 2021, awareness of the responsibilities of the Bermuda Information Commissioner's Office improved marginally.
- Residents were most likely to believe that the ICO was responsible for "making sure that public authorities comply with the PATI Act" (39% vs. 35% in 2021) and for "investigating complaints when people don't get the information they requested from public authorities" (38% vs. 35% in 2021).
- Residents were least likely to believe that the ICO was responsible for "providing information about public services" (31% vs. 30% in 2021) and "dealing with requests to amend a personal record held by public authorities" (20% vs. 16% in 2021).

Confidence in PATI

- Eighty percent (80%) of residents believed that the PATI Act was important to them (vs. 81% in 2021).
- Consistent with 2021, 80% of residents believed that creating and enforcing the PATI Act was a very important public investment.
- Fifty-six percent (56%) believed that the PATI Act would be useful to them (vs. 57% in 2021).
- Confidence in the enforcement of the PATI Act declined.
 - Residents were increasingly more likely to believe that "public authorities will find a way round the Act and won't provide any information they don't want to" (65% vs. 62% in 2021 and 58% in 2000).
 - Residents were also less likely to believe that "public authorities will become more open and accountable" (59% vs. 64% in 2021) and that "members of the public will have more confidence in the decisions made by public authorities" (54% vs. 59% in 2021).

- Additionally, only thirty-one percent (31%) of residents were confident that if they made a PATI request, the public authority would protect their identity. Residents aged 18-24 years were less likely to be confident that their identity would be protected.

Conclusions/Next Steps

- The majority of residents (82%) were aware of the PATI Act, but less than half (42%) were aware of the Information Commissioner's Office for Bermuda.
 - Younger residents aged 25-34 years were less likely to be aware of the PATI Act.
 - Satisfaction with the response received from public authorities declined by 6 points.
 - Compared to 2021, confidence in the PATI Act declined. Residents were less likely to believe that public authorities would become more open and accountable, and, that members of the public would have more confidence in the decisions made by public authorities.
 - Residents were also more likely to believe that public authorities would find a way round the act and not provide any information they do not want to.
 - Just over 3 in 10 residents (31%) believed that their identity would be protected if they made a PATI request.
-
- ❖ *The Information Commissioner's Office for Bermuda should aim to increase public awareness of the ICO, highlighting its remit, processes and activities.*
 - ❖ *The ICO should look at ways to focus on increasing awareness of the PATI Act among younger residents.*
 - ❖ *The ICO should ensure that customer service standards are in place for how public authorities deal with the public when they request information.*
 - ❖ *The ICO should aim to increase public confidence that the Act increases accountability and transparency among public authorities.*
 - ❖ *The ICO should provide confidence that the identity of those who make a PATI request will be protected.*
 - ❖ *By increasing confidence in the PATI Act and providing "real world" examples of how individuals can take advantage of it, the ICO could increase the likelihood that the public will exercise their right to request information from public authorities.*

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 were more likely to believe that the Bermuda Police Service was a public authority (83% vs 84% in 2021), followed by H.M. Customs (58% vs. 73% in 2020) and the Corporation of Hamilton (47% vs. 45% in 2021).

Compared to 2021, residents were significantly less likely to believe that H.M. Customs and the Ministry of Education Headquarters were public authorities.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>Sample</i>	400	401	400	405	402	411	401
Bermuda Police Service	90%	86%	88%	89%	87%	84%	83%
H.M. Customs	74%	78%	77%	77%	75%	73%	58%
Corporation of Hamilton	56%	46%	46%	48%	50%	45%	47%
Ministry of Education Headquarters	64%	60%	57%	60%	57%	52%	46%
The Bermuda Archives	41%	44%	37%	32%	31%	31%	33%
West End Development Corporation	41%	31%	30%	34%	31%	29%	30%
Devonshire Parish Council	37%	27%	27%	29%	33%	25%	27%
Bermuda National Trust	20%	20%	23%	22%	23%	17%	17%
Bermuda Red Cross	13%	8%	15%	16%	19%	18%	14%
BELCO	14%	8%	10%	8%	12%	16%	12%
None of the above	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	4%	4%

Q2: 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 five percent (25%) had asked for a copy of recorded information that a public authority held.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>Sample</i>	400	401	400	405	402	411	401
Yes	10%	22%	19%	21%	24%	23%	25%
No	88%	77%	78%	77%	74%	70%	70%
Don't Know	2%	1%	4%	2%	1%	7%	6%

- Residents aged 55 years and over were less likely to have requested information from a public authority.

Q3: 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, Bermuda Police Service, Bermuda Government, and Bermuda Hospitals Board.

	Base
Unweighted (Total responses)	98
Registrar General	28
Bermuda Police Service	23
Bermuda Government	9
KEMH/Urgent Care/Bermuda Hospitals Board	7
City of Hamilton/Corporation of Hamilton	4
Courts/Justice/Supreme Courts	4
Registrar of Companies	4
Bermuda Archives	3
Department of Immigration	3
Department of Planning	3
Social Insurance	3
Belco	2
Dept. of Public Transportation	2
Land Registry/Land Tax	2
Library	1

Q4: Thinking about your most recent request, which of the following best describes the response that you received?

Eighty-one percent (81%) were satisfied with the response they had received from a public authority (vs. 87% in 2020).

Residents were least satisfied with the City of Hamilton/Corporation of Hamilton. They were most satisfied with the Registrar General.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>Sample</i>	39	92	75	85	100	95	99
Top 2	79%	90%	87%	86%	82%	87%	81%
Very positive, I got information I asked for promptly	33%	49%	45%	41%	39%	40%	30%
Satisfactory, I was given the information, but it took some time	46%	41%	42%	45%	44%	47%	51%
Unsatisfactory, they replied but I didn't get the information I requested	18%	7%	8%	8%	12%	7%	16%
Poor, they didn't reply to my request	3%	2%	%	2%	4%	1%	1%
None of the above	%	1%	5%	4%	2%	4%	2%

	Registrar General	BDA Police Service	BDA Government	Bermuda Hospitals Board	City of Hamilton/ Corporation of Hamilton	Court/Justice /Supreme Court	Other
<i>Sample</i>	28	23	9	7	4	4	22
Top 2	93%	82%	78%	71%	50%	75%	74%
Very positive, I got information I asked for promptly	36%	32%	22%	43%	0%	75%	17%
Satisfactory, I was given the information, but it took some time	57%	50%	56%	29%	50%	0%	57%
Unsatisfactory, they replied but I didn't get the information I requested	4%	9%	22%	29%	50%	25%	26%
Poor, they didn't reply to my request	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
None of the above	4%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

*Note – The Other column includes the combined results of public authorities that were mentioned three times or less.

Q5: Have you ever heard of the PATI Act?

Consistent with 2021, eighty-two percent (82%) had heard of the PATI Act.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>Sample</i>	400	401	400	405	402	411	401
Top 2	71%	80%	77%	82%	81%	81%	82%
Yes, definitely	56%	65%	58%	65%	65%	55%	56%
Yes, I think so	16%	15%	19%	17%	16%	26%	26%
No, don't think so	13%	12%	14%	13%	12%	14%	10%
No definitely not	15%	6%	6%	4%	6%	4%	5%
Unsure	1%	1%	3%	1%	%	1%	3%

- Younger residents aged 25-34 years were less likely to have heard of the PATI Act.

Q6: 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.

	2022
<i>Unweighted (Total responses)</i>	402
Access to any documents of a public nature/public records (information that is not confidential)	202
Allows people to request information/certain documents/public information/government records	72
Freedom of access to information/ freedom of speech	10
Privacy of information	10
Transparency of operations and accountability	8
Provides access to any information in my name	6
The ability to investigate actions of public entities	6
General questions requested about businesses (e.g., financial information, planning)	3
Public records from court cases/legal records	3
Information about how much Govt. is collecting or spending	2
Population statistics/ request general stats pertaining to Bermuda	1
Don't Know/Unsure	79

Q7: How likely are you to ask for information from a Bermuda public authority next year?

Ten percent (10%) were likely to request information from a Bermuda public authority next year (vs. 11% in 2021).

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
	400	401	400	405	402	411	401
Top 2	22%	13%	15%	14%	17%	11%	10%
Very likely	7%	3%	2%	5%	6%	3%	3%
Quite likely	15%	10%	13%	9%	11%	8%	7%
Neither / Nor	12%	22%	22%	22%	22%	21%	16%
Quite unlikely	36%	42%	39%	40%	31%	34%	42%
Definitely unlikely	19%	11%	11%	11%	15%	10%	16%
Unsure	11%	11%	13%	13%	14%	23%	18%

Q8: How confident are you that if you made a PATI request, the public authority will protect your identity (meaning that your identity will remain anonymous)?

Thirty-one percent (31%) were confident that if they made a PATI request, the public authority would protect their identify, compared to 37% who were not confident, and 32% who were unsure.

	2022
	401
Top 2	31%
Very confident	4%
Confident	27%
Not very confident	31%
Not at all confident	6%
Not sure	32%

- While residents aged 65 years and over were more likely to be confident that their identity would be protected, younger residents aged 18-24 years were less likely to be confident that their identity would be protected.

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

Forty two percent (42% vs. 41% in 2021) had heard of the Information Commissioner's Office for Bermuda.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
	400	401	400	405	402	411	401
Top 2	37%	42%	38%	44%	46%	41%	42%
Yes, definitely	24%	22%	18%	26%	27%	22%	21%
Yes, I think so	13%	20%	19%	18%	19%	19%	21%
No, I don't think so	34%	36%	43%	39%	37%	42%	39%
No, definitely not	27%	20%	16%	15%	15%	12%	13%
Unsure	2%	2%	3%	3%	2%	4%	5%

- Residents aged 35-44 years were less likely to have heard about the Information Commissioner's Office for Bermuda.

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.

	2022
<i>Unweighted (Total responses)</i>	<i>183</i>
News/Newspapers	76
The Royal Gazette	33
At work	15
Online/social media	13
Word of mouth/ public knowledge/ family	9
Television	7
Government/gov.bm	6
PATI website/PATI Act/Presentation	5
Radio	5
Brochures/newsletters	3
Media (did not specify)	2
Email (from ICO or Bermuda Government)	2
Office overseas that helps if a request is denied	2
Bernews	1
Walking by Reid Street	1
At an ISACA event	1
BBC News	1
Advertising	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 2021, awareness of the responsibilities of the Bermuda Information Commissioner's Office improved marginally.

Residents were most likely to believe that the ICO was responsible for "making sure that public authorities comply with the PATI Act" (39% vs. 35% in 2021) and "investigating complaints when people don't get the information they requested from public authorities" (38% vs. 35% in 2021).

They were least likely to believe that the ICO was responsible for "providing information about public services" (31% vs. 30% in 2021) and "dealing with requests to amend a personal record held by public authorities" (20% vs. 16% in 2021).

Compared to 2021, residents had increased awareness of the ICO "issuing legally binding decisions to public authorities concerning the release of information" (35% vs. 28% in 2021).

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
	400	401	400	405	402	411	401
Making sure that public authorities comply with the PATI Act.	46%	41%	34%	42%	42%	35%	39%
Investigating complaints when people don't get the information they request from public authorities.	43%	37%	32%	40%	38%	35%	38%
Issuing legally binding decisions to public authorities concerning the release of information.	28%	30%	24%	29%	30%	28%	35%
Telling people about their right to get copies of information held by Bermuda public authorities.	50%	36%	33%	43%	36%	33%	33%
Hearing appeals when people do not receive requested information from public authorities.	32%	29%	27%	34%	32%	31%	32%
Providing information about public services.	38%	35%	33%	37%	35%	30%	31%
Dealing with requests to amend a personal record held by public authorities.	21%	15%	15%	19%	18%	16%	20%

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...?

Over the past three years, residents became increasingly more likely to believe that “public authorities will find a way round the Act and won't provide any information they don't want to” (65% vs. 62% in 2021 and 58% in 2000).

Compared to 2021, residents were less likely to believe that “public authorities will become more open and accountable” (59% vs. 64% in 2021) and that “members of the public will have more confidence in the decisions made by public authorities” (54% vs. 59% in 2021).

Consistent with 2021, 56% believed that the Act would be useful to them.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>Sample</i>	400	401	400	405	402	411	401
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%	62%	65%
Public authorities will become more open and accountable.	76%	59%	67%	66%	55%	64%	59%
This act will be useful to me.	53%	54%	57%	59%	57%	57%	56%
Members of the public will have more confidence in the decisions made by public authorities.	62%	54%	60%	59%	49%	59%	54%
No one will bother to use the rights provided by the act.	25%	21%	20%	18%	16%	29%	31%

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?

Eighty percent (80%) of residents (vs. 81% in 2021) believed that the PATI Act was important to them.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Sample	400	401	400	405	402	411	401
Top 2	79%	87%	86%	87%	88%	81%	80%
Very important	48%	48%	51%	55%	55%	46%	44%
Somewhat important	31%	38%	36%	33%	32%	35%	36%
Neither / nor	9%	7%	7%	7%	7%	12%	7%
Somewhat unimportant	4%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%
Not at all important	5%	3%	1%	1%	1%	1%	5%
Don't Know	4%	2%	4%	2%	1%	3%	4%

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

Consistent with 2021, 80% of residents believed that creating and enforcing the PATI Act was a very important public investment.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
	400	401	400	405	402	411	401
I believe that creating and enforcing the PATI Act is a very important public investment.	77%	80%	75%	80%	79%	80%	80%
The PATI Act is not important, and the public funds required for creating and enforcing PATI should be spent elsewhere.	5%	3%	4%	4%	5%	2%	3%
Don't Know	19%	17%	21%	16%	16%	17%	17%

- Residents aged 18-24 years were less likely to believe that creating and enforcing the PATI Act was a very important public investment.