



**Public Perceptions
Research Report**



February 2024

METHOD

Global Research & Strategy Group Ltd. interviewed a representative sample of 400 Bermuda residents aged 18 years and over.

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

Based on the sample size of 400, the margin of error for the study is +/- 5% at the 95% confidence level.

All interviews were conducted from February 1-8, 2024.

The results reported are compared to those obtained in March 2016, March 2017, March 2018, February 2019, February 2020, and February 2021 and February 2022.

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

- 21% had asked for a copy of recorded information that a public authority held (vs. 25% in 2022).
- Residents were more likely to recall requesting information from the Registrar General, Bermuda Police Service, Bermuda Archives, and Bermuda Hospitals Board.
- 84% were satisfied with the response they had received from a public authority, a 3-point increase from 2022.
- 13% were likely to request information from a Bermuda public authority next year (vs. 10% in 2022).

Public Awareness

- Consistent with 2022, 82% had heard of the PATI Act.
 - Younger residents aged 18-34 years were less likely to have heard of the PATI Act.
- 59% had heard of the Information Commissioner's Office for Bermuda (vs. 42% in 2022).
- News/Newspapers/The Royal Gazette were the most popular places that residents recalled hearing about the Information Commissioner's Office for Bermuda.

Function of Information Commissioner's Office of Bermuda

- Compared to 2022, residents were equally likely to believe that the ICO was responsible for:
 - Making sure that public authorities comply with the PATI Act (40% vs. 39% in 2022).
 - Investigating complaints when people don't get the information they request from public authorities (38% in 2022 and 2024).
 - Hearing appeals when people do not receive requested information from public authorities (32% in 2022 and 2024).
 - Providing information about public services (32% vs. 31% in 2022).
 - Dealing with requests to amend a personal record held by public authorities (21% vs. 20% in 2022).
- Residents were more likely to believe that the ICO was responsible for "telling people about their right to get copies of information held by Bermuda public authorities" (39% vs. 33% in 2022).
- They were less likely to believe that the ICO was responsible for "issuing legally binding decisions to public authorities concerning the release of information" (33% vs. 35% in 2022).

Confidence in PATI

- 86% believed that the PATI Act was important to them (vs. 80% in 2022).
- 77% (vs. 80% in 2022) believed that creating and enforcing the PATI Act was a very important public investment.
 - Residents aged 18-24 years were less likely to believe that creating and enforcing the PATI Act was a very important public investment.
- Compared to 2022, respondents were less likely 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. 65% in 2022).
 - Public authorities will become more open and accountable (50% vs. 59% in 2022).

- Members of the public will have more confidence in the decisions made by public authorities (42% vs. 54% in 2022).
- No one will bother to use the rights provided by the act (20% vs. 31% in 2022).
- Compared to 2022, residents were also less likely to believe that the act would be useful to them (50% vs. 56% in 2022).

Conclusions/Next Steps

- The majority of residents (82%) were aware of the PATI Act and compared to 2022 there was an increase in the percentage of residents who were aware of the Information Commissioner's Office for Bermuda (59% vs. 42% in 2022).
 - Younger residents aged 18-34 years continued to be less likely to be aware of the PATI Act.
 - Satisfaction with the response received from public authorities improved by three points (84% vs. 81% in 2022).
 - Compared to 2022, confidence in the PATI Act declined. Residents were less likely to believe that public authorities would become more open and accountable, that members of the public will have more confidence in decisions made by public authorities, and that the act would be useful to them.
 - Compared to 2022, residents were more likely to lack confidence that public authorities would protect their identity if they made a PATI request (48% vs. 37% in 2022).
- ❖ *The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) 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 aged 18-34 years.*
 - ❖ *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 PATI 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 can 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 (88% vs. 83% in 2022), followed by H.M. Customs (73% vs. 58% in 2022) and the Ministry of Education Headquarters (56% vs. 46% in 2022).

Compared to 2022, residents were significantly more likely to believe that H.M. Customs and Ministry of Education Headquarters were public authorities.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2024
<i>Sample</i>	400	401	400	405	402	411	401	400
Bermuda Police Service	90%	86%	88%	89%	87%	84%	83%	88%
H.M. Customs	74%	78%	77%	77%	75%	73%	58%	73%
Ministry of Education Headquarters	64%	60%	57%	60%	57%	52%	46%	56%
Corporation of Hamilton	56%	46%	46%	48%	50%	45%	47%	48%
Bermuda Archives	41%	44%	37%	32%	31%	31%	33%	37%
West End Development Corporation	41%	31%	30%	34%	31%	29%	30%	34%
Devonshire Parish Council	37%	27%	27%	29%	33%	25%	27%	30%
Bermuda National Trust	20%	20%	23%	22%	23%	17%	17%	19%
Bermuda Red Cross	13%	8%	15%	16%	19%	18%	14%	12%
BELCO	14%	8%	10%	8%	12%	16%	12%	9%
None of the above	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	4%	4%	3%

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-one percent (21% vs. 25% in 2022) had asked for a copy of recorded information that a public authority held.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2024
Sample	400	401	400	405	402	411	401	400
Yes	10%	22%	19%	21%	24%	23%	25%	21%
No	88%	77%	78%	77%	74%	70%	70%	74%
Don't know	2%	1%	4%	2%	1%	7%	6%	5%

- Residents aged 18-24 years and 65 years and over were more likely to have requested information from a public authority.

Q3: Can you please name the public authority/authorities that you requested information from?

The most popular places that residents recalled requesting information from were: Registrar General, Bermuda Police Service, Bermuda Archives, and Bermuda Hospitals Board.

	Base
Unweighted (Total responses)	92
Registrar General	20
Bermuda Police Service	19
Bermuda Archives	8
Bermuda Hospitals Board	6
Courts/Justice/Supreme Court	5
Land Registry/Land Tax	5
Bermuda Government	4
Department of Immigration	4
Library	4
BELCO	3
Department of Planning	3
Ministry of Education	3
Registrar of Companies	2
Tax Commissioner	2
Bermuda Probate Records	2
Department of Environment and Natural Resources	2

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

Eighty-four percent (84%) were satisfied with the response they had received from a public authority (vs. 81% in 2022).

Residents were most satisfied with the response received from Courts/Justice/Supreme Court. They were least satisfied with the response received from the Bermuda Government.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2024
<i>Sample</i>	39	92	75	85	100	95	99	83
Top 2	79%	90%	87%	86%	83%	87%	81%	84%
Very positive, I got information I asked for promptly	33%	49%	45%	41%	39%	40%	30%	35%
Satisfactory, I was given the information but it took some time	46%	41%	42%	45%	44%	47%	51%	49%
Unsatisfactory, they replied but I didn't get the information I requested	18%	7%	8%	8%	12%	7%	16%	10%
Poor, they didn't reply to my request	3%	2%	0%	2%	4%	1%	1%	5%
None of the above	0%	1%	5%	4%	2%	4%	2%	2%

	Registrar General	Bermuda Police	Bermuda Archives	Bermuda Hospitals Board	Courts/ Justice/ Supreme Court	Bermuda Government	Other
<i>Sample</i>	20	19	8	6	5	18	7
Top 2	83%	77%	72%	100%	59%	94%	88%
Very positive, I got information I asked for promptly	41%	33%	44%	29%	67%	17%	29%
Satisfactory, I was given the information but it took some time	47%	50%	33%	43%	33%	42%	65%
Unsatisfactory, they replied but I didn't get the information I requested	6%	11%	11%	14%	0%	25%	6%
Poor, they didn't reply to my request	0%	6%	0%	14%	0%	17%	0%
None of the above	6%	0%	11%	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 2022, eighty-two percent (82%) had heard of the PATI Act.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2024
Sample	400	401	400	405	402	411	401	400
Top 2	72%	80%	77%	82%	81%	81%	82%	82%
Yes, definitely	56%	65%	58%	65%	65%	55%	56%	64%
Yes, I think so	16%	15%	19%	17%	16%	26%	26%	18%
No, don't think so	13%	12%	14%	13%	12%	14%	10%	9%
No, definitely not	15%	6%	6%	4%	6%	4%	5%	6%
Unsure	1%	1%	3%	1%	0%	1%	3%	3%

- Younger residents aged 18-34 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.

	2024
<i>Unweighted (Total responses)</i>	402
Access to any documents of a public nature/public records	204
Allows people to request information/certain documents/public information	88
Provides access to any information in my name/personal matters/personal records	26
The ability to investigate actions of public entities/the ability to view info on public records	13
Privacy of information/protection of data	8
General questions requested about businesses (financial information, planning)	6
Transparency of operations and accountability	2
Public records from court cases/legal records	2
Human Rights complaints	1
Background checks	1
Don't know/unsure	65

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

Thirteen percent (13%) were likely to request information from a Bermuda public authority next year (vs. 10% in 2022).

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2024
	400	401	400	405	402	411	401	400
Top 2	22%	13%	15%	14%	17%	11%	10%	13%
Very likely	7%	3%	2%	5%	6%	3%	3%	4%
Quite likely	15%	10%	13%	9%	11%	8%	7%	9%
Neither/Nor	12%	22%	22%	22%	22%	21%	16%	24%
Quite unlikely	36%	42%	39%	40%	31%	34%	42%	38%
Definitely unlikely	19%	11%	11%	11%	15%	10%	16%	12%
Unsure	11%	11%	13%	13%	14%	23%	18%	13%

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)?

Twenty-nine percent (29%) were confident that if they made a PATI request, the public authority would protect their identity, compared to 48% who were not confident, and 24% who were unsure.

Compared to 2022, residents were more likely to lack confidence that public authorities would protect their identity if they made a PATI request (48% vs. 37% in 2022).

	2022	2024
	401	400
Top 2	31%	29%
Very confident	4%	6%
Confident	27%	23%
Not very confident	31%	34%
Not at all confident	6%	14%
Not sure	32%	24%

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

Fifty-nine percent (59% vs. 42% in 2022) had heard of the Information Commissioner’s Office for Bermuda.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2024
	400	401	400	405	402	411	401	400
Top 2	37%	42%	37%	44%	46%	41%	42%	59%
Yes, definitely	24%	22%	18%	26%	27%	22%	21%	37%
Yes, I think so	13%	20%	19%	18%	19%	19%	21%	22%
No, I don't think so	34%	36%	43%	39%	37%	42%	39%	26%
No, definitely not	27%	20%	16%	15%	15%	12%	13%	12%
Unsure	2%	2%	3%	3%	2%	4%	5%	3%

- Residents aged 18-34 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 were the most popular places that residents recalled hearing about the Information Commissioner's Office for Bermuda.

	2024
<i>Unweighted (Total responses)</i>	<i>261</i>
News/Newspapers/The Royal Gazette	140
Online/Social media	20
At work	18
Ads/Press/Media	14
PATI website/PATI Act	10
Television	10
Word of mouth/Public knowledge/Family	8
Bernews	7
Government/Gov.bm	7
Radio	5
Messaging about enforcing the PATI Act/PATI requests	5
Brochures/Posters	3
When the Commission was named	3
Email (from ICO or Bermuda Government)	2
Bermuda Broadcasting Company	2
On the Government van	1
Information stand in the Washington Mall	1
In legal documents	1
The Daily Hour	1
YouTube	1
The Registrar's Office	1
Bermuda job board	1

Q11: I am going to read out a list of duties that may be carried out by the Bermuda Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). 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 2022, respondents were equally likely to believe that the ICO was responsible for:

- Making sure that public authorities comply with the PATI Act (40% vs. 39% in 2022).
- Investigating complaints when people don't get the information they request from public authorities (38% in 2022 and 2024).
- Hearing appeals when people do not receive requested information from public authorities (32% in 2022 and 2024).
- Providing information about public services (32% vs. 31% in 2022).
- Dealing with requests to amend a personal record held by public authorities (21% vs. 20% in 2022).

Respondents were more likely to believe that the ICO was responsible for "telling people about their right to get copies of information held by Bermuda public authorities" (39% vs. 33% in 2022).

They were less likely to believe that the ICO was responsible for "issuing legally binding decisions to public authorities concerning the release of information" (33% vs. 35% in 2022).

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2024
	400	401	400	405	402	411	401	400
Making sure that public authorities comply with the PATI Act.	46%	41%	34%	42%	42%	35%	39%	40%
Telling people about their right to get copies of information held by Bermuda public authorities.	50%	36%	33%	43%	36%	33%	33%	39%
Investigating complaints when people don't get the information they request from public authorities.	43%	37%	32%	40%	38%	35%	38%	38%
Issuing legally binding decisions to public authorities concerning the release of information.	28%	30%	24%	29%	30%	28%	35%	33%
Hearing appeals when people do not receive requested information from public authorities.	32%	29%	27%	34%	32%	31%	32%	32%
Providing information about public services.	38%	35%	33%	37%	35%	30%	31%	32%
Dealing with requests to amend a personal record held by public authorities.	21%	15%	15%	19%	18%	16%	20%	21%

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 2022, respondents were less likely 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. 65% in 2022).
- Public authorities will become more open and accountable (50% vs. 59% in 2022).
- Members of the public will have more confidence in the decisions made by public authorities (42% vs. 54% in 2022).
- No one will bother to use the rights provided by the Act (20% vs. 31% in 2022).

Compared to 2022, respondents were also less likely to believe that the Act would be useful to them (50% vs. 56% in 2022).

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2024
<i>Sample</i>	400	401	400	405	402	411	401	400
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%	58%
Public authorities will become more open and accountable.	76%	59%	67%	66%	55%	64%	59%	50%
This Act will be useful to me.	53%	54%	57%	59%	57%	57%	56%	50%
Members of the public will have more confidence in the decisions made by public authorities.	62%	54%	60%	59%	49%	59%	54%	42%
No one will bother to use the rights provided by the Act.	25%	21%	20%	18%	16%	29%	31%	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?

Eighty-six percent (86% vs. 80% in 2022) believed that the PATI Act was important to them.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2024
Sample	400	401	400	405	402	411	401	400
Top 2	79%	86%	87%	88%	87%	81%	80%	86%
Very important	48%	48%	51%	55%	55%	46%	44%	55%
Somewhat important	31%	38%	36%	33%	32%	35%	36%	31%
Neither/nor	9%	7%	7%	7%	7%	12%	7%	8%
Somewhat unimportant	4%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%
Not at all important	5%	3%	1%	1%	1%	1%	5%	1%
Don't know	4%	2%	4%	2%	1%	3%	4%	4%

- Residents aged 18-24 years were less likely to believe that the PATI act was important to them.

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

Seventy-seven percent (77% vs. 80% in 2022) believed that creating and enforcing the PATI Act was a very important public investment.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2024
	400	401	400	405	402	411	401	400
I believe that creating and enforcing the PATI Act is a very important public investment.	77%	80%	75%	80%	79%	80%	80%	77%
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%	4%
Don't know	19%	17%	21%	16%	16%	17%	17%	19%

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