GLOBAL RESEARCH

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Public Perceptions

Research Report

Information Commissioner's Office

February 2025

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 January 27 – February 4, 2025.

The results reported are compared to those obtained in March 2016, March 2017, March 2018, February 2019, February 2020, February 2021, February 2022 and February 2024.

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 (ICO).
- 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 ICO 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 held (vs. 21% in 2024).
- Residents were more likely to recall requesting information from the Bermuda Police Service, Registrar General, Bermuda Hospitals Board, Department of Immigration and Bermuda Archives.
- 81% were satisfied with the response they had received from a public authority (vs. 84% in 2024).
- Residents were most satisfied with the response received from the Courts/Justice/Supreme Court. They were least satisfied with the response received from the Ministry of Education.
- 12% were likely to request information from a Bermuda public authority next year (vs. 13% in 2024).

Public Awareness

- 83% had heard of the PATI Act (vs. 82% in 2024).
    - Younger residents aged 18-34 years were less likely to have heard of the PATI Act.
- Consistent with 2024, 59% had heard of the ICO for Bermuda.
    - Younger residents aged 18-34 years were less likely to have heard of the ICO for Bermuda.
- The News/Newspapers/Press Articles and The Royal Gazette were the most popular places that residents recalled hearing about the ICO for Bermuda.

Function of ICO of Bermuda

Compared to 2024, respondents were more likely to believe that the ICO was responsible for:

- Making sure that public authorities comply with the PATI Act (45% vs. 40% in 2024).
- Telling people about their right to get copies of information held by Bermuda public authorities (44% vs. 39% in 2024).
- Investigating complaints when people don't get the information they request from public authorities (42% vs. 38% in 2024).
- Issuing legally binding decisions to public authorities concerning the release of information (39% vs. 33% in 2024).
- Providing information about public services (37% vs. 32% in 2024).
- Hearing appeals when people do not receive requested information from public authorities (34% vs. 32% in 2024).
- Dealing with requests to amend a personal record held by public authorities (26% vs. 21% in 2024).

Confidence in PATI

- 87% believed that the PATI Act was important to them (vs. 86% in 2024).
- Consistent with 2024, 77% believed that creating and enforcing the PATI Act was a very important public investment.

Consistent with 2024, respondents were most 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%).

Compared to 2024, respondents were more likely to believe that:

- The Act would be useful to them (58% vs. 50% in 2024).
- Members of the public will have more confidence in the decisions made by public authorities (57% vs. 42% in 2024).
- Public authorities will become more open and accountable (54% vs. 50% in 2024).
- No one will bother to use the rights provided by the Act (24% vs. 20% in 2024).

76% believed that it was important for the Government to engage in public consultation when considering changes to the PATI Act.

Recommendations

- ❖ *The ICO for Bermuda should aim to increase public awareness of the ICO, highlighting its remit, processes, and activities.*
- ❖ *The ICO should aim to increase awareness of the PATI Act and the ICO 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 ensure that Government engages in public consultation when considering changes to the PATI Act.*
- ❖ *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 (87% vs. 88% in 2024), followed by H.M. Customs (75% vs. 73% in 2024) and the Ministry of Education Headquarters (62% vs. 56% in 2024).

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2024	2025
Sample	*400*	*401*	*400*	*405*	*402*	*411*	*401*	*400*	*400*
Bermuda Police Service	90%	86%	88%	89%	87%	84%	83%	88%	87%
H.M. Customs	74%	78%	77%	77%	75%	73%	58%	73%	75%
Ministry of Education Headquarters	64%	60%	57%	60%	57%	52%	46%	56%	62%
Corporation of Hamilton	56%	46%	46%	48%	50%	45%	47%	48%	50%
The Bermuda Archives	41%	44%	37%	32%	31%	31%	33%	37%	42%
West End Development Corporation	41%	31%	30%	34%	31%	29%	30%	34%	35%
Devonshire Parish Council	37%	27%	27%	29%	33%	25%	27%	30%	34%
Bermuda National Trust	20%	20%	23%	22%	23%	17%	17%	19%	20%
BELCO	14%	8%	10%	8%	12%	16%	12%	9%	15%
Bermuda Red Cross	13%	8%	15%	16%	19%	18%	14%	12%	14%
None of the above	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	4%	4%	3%	5%

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-four percent (24% vs. 21% in 2024) had asked for a copy of recorded information that a public authority held.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2024	2025
Sample	*400*	*401*	*400*	*405*	*402*	*411*	*401*	*400*	*400*
Yes	10%	22%	19%	21%	24%	23%	25%	21%	24%
No	88%	77%	78%	77%	74%	70%	70%	75%	71%
Don't Know	2%	1%	4%	2%	1%	7%	6%	5%	5%

- Residents aged 55-64 years 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 where residents recalled requesting information from included: Bermuda Police Service, Registrar General, Bermuda Hospitals Board, Department of Immigration and Bermuda Archives.

	2025
Unweighted (Total Responses)	97
Bermuda Police Service	25
Registrar General	18
Bermuda Hospitals Board	13
Department of Immigration	7
Bermuda Archives	5
Courts/Justice/Supreme Court	3
Ministry of Education	3
Bermuda Government	2
Bermuda Library	2
Department of Planning	2
Land Registry/Land Tax	2
Ministry of Health	2
Other	13

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. 84% in 2024).

Residents were most satisfied with the response received from the Courts/Justice/Supreme Court. They were least satisfied with the response received from the Ministry of Education.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2024	2025
Sample	*39*	*92*	*75*	*85*	*100*	*95*	*99*	*83*	*97*
Top 2	**79%**	**90%**	**87%**	**86%**	**82%**	**87%**	**80%**	**84%**	**81%**
Very positive, I got information I asked for promptly	33%	49%	45%	41%	39%	40%	30%	35%	42%
Satisfactory, I was given the information, but it took some time	46%	41%	42%	45%	44%	47%	51%	49%	39%
Unsatisfactory, they replied but I didn't get the information I requested	18%	7%	8%	8%	12%	7%	16%	10%	9%
Poor, they didn't reply to my request	3%	2%	0%	2%	4%	1%	1%	5%	5%
None of the above	0%	1%	5%	4%	2%	4%	2%	2%	4%

	Bermuda Police Service	Registrar General	Bermuda Hospitals Board	Bermuda Archives	Department of Immigration	Courts/ Justice/ Supreme Court	Ministry of Education	Other
Sample	*25*	*18*	*13*	*5*	*7*	*3*	*3*	23
Top 2	**80%**	**94%**	**77%**	**80%**	**86%**	**100%**	**67%**	**74%**
Very positive, I got information I asked for promptly	36%	61%	15%	40%	71%	67%	33%	39%
Satisfactory, I was given the information, but it took some time	44%	33%	62%	40%	14%	33%	33%	35%
Unsatisfactory, they replied but I didn't get the information I requested	8%	0%	23%	20%	0%	0%	0%	13%
Poor, they didn't reply to my request	8%	0%	0%	0%	14%	0%	33%	4%
None of the above	4%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	9%

*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?

Eighty-three percent (83% vs. 82% in 2024) had heard of the PATI Act.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2024	2025
Sample	*400*	*401*	*400*	*405*	*402*	*411*	*401*	*400*	*400*
Top 2	**71%**	**80%**	**77%**	**82%**	**81%**	**81%**	**82%**	**82%**	**83%**
Yes, definitely	56%	65%	58%	65%	65%	55%	56%	64%	65%
Yes, I think so	16%	15%	19%	17%	16%	26%	26%	18%	18%
No, don't think so	13%	12%	14%	13%	12%	14%	10%	9%	10%
No, definitely not	15%	6%	6%	4%	6%	4%	5%	6%	5%
Unsure	1%	1%	3%	1%	0%	1%	3%	3%	2%

- 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 record.

	2025
Unweighted (Total Responses)	*434*
Access to any documents of a public nature/public records (information that is not confidential)/right to information	212
Allows people to request information/certain documents/public information/Government records	75
Provides access to any information in my name	33
Privacy of information	20
To see how much public funds are being collected and spent/to view public minutes of meetings	13
Public records from court cases/legal records	8
General questions requested about businesses (financial information, planning)	7
Transparency of operations and accountability	7
Ability to ask for information to be deleted/amended about you	4
Freedom of access to information/freedom of speech	3
Population statistics/request general statistics pertaining to Bermuda	2
The ability to investigate actions of public entities	1
Human Rights	1
Don't Know/Unsure	48

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

Twelve percent (12%) were likely to request information from a Bermuda public authority next year (vs. 13% in 2024).

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2024	2025
	400	*401*	*400*	*405*	*402*	*411*	*401*	*400*	*400*
Top 2	**22%**	**13%**	**15%**	**14%**	**17%**	**11%**	**9%**	**13%**	**12%**
Very likely	7%	3%	2%	5%	6%	3%	3%	4%	4%
Quite likely	15%	10%	13%	9%	11%	8%	7%	9%	8%
Neither/Nor	12%	22%	22%	22%	22%	21%	16%	24%	19%
Quite unlikely	36%	42%	39%	40%	31%	34%	42%	38%	40%
Definitely unlikely	19%	11%	11%	11%	15%	10%	16%	12%	11%
Unsure	11%	11%	13%	13%	14%	23%	18%	13%	17%

- Younger residents aged 18-34 years were less likely to say that they would ask for information from a Bermuda public authority next year.

Q8: How important is it to you that the Government engage in public consultation when considering changes to the PATI Act?

Seventy-six percent (76%) believed that it was important for the Government to engage in public consultation when considering changes to the PATI Act.

	2025
	400
Top 2	**76%**
5 - Very Important	47%
4 - Important	28%
3 - Somewhat important, somewhat unimportant	17%
2 - Unimportant	2%
1 - Not at all important	1%
Unsure	4%

Q9: Have you ever heard of the ICO for Bermuda?

Consistent with 2024, fifty-nine percent (59%) had heard of the ICO for Bermuda.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2024	2025
	400	*401*	*400*	*405*	*402*	*411*	*401*	*400*	*400*
Top 2	**37%**	**42%**	**38%**	**44%**	**46%**	**41%**	**42%**	**59%**	**59%**
Yes, definitely	24%	22%	18%	26%	27%	22%	21%	37%	37%
Yes, I think so	13%	20%	19%	18%	19%	19%	21%	22%	22%
No, I don't think so	34%	36%	43%	39%	37%	42%	39%	26%	26%
No, definitely not	27%	20%	16%	15%	15%	12%	13%	12%	13%
Unsure	2%	2%	3%	3%	2%	4%	5%	3%	2%

- Residents aged 18-34 years were less likely to have heard about the ICO for Bermuda.

Q10: Where do you recall seeing/hearing about the ICO for Bermuda?

The News/Newspapers/Press Articles and The Royal Gazette were the most popular places that residents recalled hearing about the ICO for Bermuda.

	2025
Unweighted (Total Responses)	*262*
News/Newspapers/Press Articles	93
The Royal Gazette	29
Online/Social media	26
At work	25
Television	13
Word-of-mouth/Public knowledge/Family	12
PATI website/PATI Act/Presentation/Training	12
Media (did not specify)	10
Government/gov.bm	10
Radio	10
Advertising/Advertisement (did not specify)	6
BBC News	3
Hiring announcement/Bermuda job board	3
Bernews	2
City of Hamilton	2
On the Government van	1
Email from ICO	1
At a public school	1
Public Awareness Day outside City Hall	1
PIPA implementation	1
Bermuda Broadcasting	1

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

Compared to 2024, respondents were more likely to believe that the ICO was responsible for:

- Making sure that public authorities comply with the PATI Act (45% vs. 40% in 2024).
- Telling people about their right to get copies of information held by Bermuda public authorities (44% vs. 39% in 2024).
- Investigating complaints when people don't get the information they request from public authorities (42% vs. 38% in 2024).
- Issuing legally binding decisions to public authorities concerning the release of information (39% vs. 33% in 2024).
- Providing information about public services (37% vs. 32% in 2024).
- Hearing appeals when people do not receive requested information from public authorities (34% vs. 32% in 2024)
- Dealing with requests to amend a personal record held by public authorities (26% vs. 21% in 2024).

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2024	2025
	400	*401*	*400*	*405*	*402*	*411*	*401*	*400*	*400*
Making sure that public authorities comply with the PATI Act.	46%	41%	34%	42%	42%	35%	39%	40%	45%
Telling people about their right to get copies of information held by Bermuda public authorities.	50%	36%	33%	43%	36%	33%	33%	39%	44%
Investigating complaints when people don't get the information they request from public authorities.	43%	37%	32%	40%	38%	35%	38%	38%	42%
Issuing legally binding decisions to public authorities concerning the release of information.	28%	30%	24%	29%	30%	28%	35%	33%	39%
Providing information about public services.	38%	35%	33%	37%	35%	30%	31%	32%	37%
Hearing appeals when people do not receive requested information from public authorities.	32%	29%	27%	34%	32%	31%	32%	32%	34%
Dealing with requests to amend a personal record held by public authorities.	21%	15%	15%	19%	18%	16%	20%	21%	26%

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…?

Consistent with 2024, respondents were most 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%).

Compared to 2024, respondents were more likely to believe that:

- The Act would be useful to them (58% vs. 50% in 2024).
- Members of the public will have more confidence in the decisions made by public authorities (57% vs. 42% in 2024).
- Public authorities will become more open and accountable (54% vs. 50% in 2024).
- No one will bother to use the rights provided by the Act (24% vs. 20% in 2024).

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2024	2025
Sample	*400*	*401*	*400*	*405*	*402*	*411*	*401*	*400*	*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%	58%
This Act will be useful to me.	53%	54%	57%	59%	57%	57%	56%	50%	57%
Members of the public will have more confidence in the decisions made by public authorities.	62%	54%	60%	59%	49%	59%	54%	42%	57%
Public authorities will become more open and accountable.	76%	59%	67%	66%	55%	64%	59%	50%	54%
No one will bother to use the rights provided by the Act.	25%	21%	20%	18%	16%	29%	31%	20%	24%

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-seven percent (87% vs. 86% in 2024) believed that the PATI Act was important to them.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2024	2025
Sample	*400*	*401*	*400*	*405*	*402*	*411*	*401*	*400*	*400*
Top 2	79%	87%	86%	87%	88%	81%	80%	86%	87%
Very important	48%	48%	51%	55%	55%	46%	44%	55%	56%
Somewhat important	31%	38%	36%	33%	32%	35%	36%	31%	31%
Neither/nor	9%	7%	7%	7%	7%	12%	7%	8%	7%
Somewhat unimportant	4%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%
Not at all important	5%	3%	1%	1%	1%	1%	5%	1%	1%
Don't Know	4%	2%	4%	2%	1%	3%	4%	4%	2%

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

Consistent with 2024, seventy-seven percent (77%) believed that creating and enforcing the PATI Act was a very important public investment.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2024	2025
	400	401	400	405	402	411	401	400	400
I believe that creating and enforcing the PATI Act is a very important public investment.	77%	80%	75%	80%	79%	80%	80%	77%	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%	5%
Don't Know	19%	17%	21%	16%	16%	17%	17%	19%	18%