

23 October 2024

Case reference: IC-334748-B1F8

We are now in a position to respond to your information request of 27 September.

Request

You asked the following:

"...Can you please supply to me details of how many complaints there are of this nature each year to the ICO and Parliament."

We have handled your request for recorded information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Our response

You have asked how many complaints we receive each year about the topic area you have discussed. We understand this to be data protection complaints from individuals who have lost access to their accounts on social media platforms due to 'hacking'. An individual who has concerns about how their personal information has been handled by an organisation can make a complaint to the ICO as regulator.

Please note, we are only able to respond about information held by the ICO. You will need to contact the UK Parliament for information they may hold in this area.

We have considered the cost of complying with your information request and unfortunately it exceeds the 'appropriate limit' as set out in section 12 of the FOIA. Further details on this are provided below.

Section 12 of the FOIA makes clear that a public authority is not obliged to comply with an FOIA request if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the 'appropriate limit'. The 'appropriate limit' for the ICO, as determined in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 is £450. We have determined that £450 would equate to 18 hours work.

We receive a large number of data protection complaints each financial year. For example, in 2023/24 we received 39,721 and in 2022/23 we received 33,753. Our [annual reports](#) provide further detail on our yearly casework.

Having searched our records, we hold 1,747 data protection complaints about organisations in the subsector of 'social media'. 1,166 of these were for Facebook (Meta Platforms Technologies UK Ltd, Meta Platforms Inc and Meta Platforms Ireland Ltd). Our casework records are held for two years in line with our retention schedule.

We are not able to filter these cases further as we do not hold a category for complaints about 'hacking' or 'hacked accounts'. We are not able to search for key words within the records held on these cases. The only way we could identify if any of these complaints were about hacked accounts would be to manually search the records held on each case. The time it would take to search these 1,747 cases would well exceed the appropriate limit at section 12 of the FOIA.

Advice and assistance

You could consider narrowing the scope of your request to bring it within the appropriate limit, such as a shorter timeframe and/or a specific organisation. Please note that FOIA exemptions may apply to the information within scope of a refined request.

We publish details of our completed complaints casework on our website [here](#). We also publish information on data security incident trends [here](#).

Complaints are logged against the relevant aspect of the legislation which forms the main focus of the concerns raised (see decision primary reason in the datasets).

We have been advised by our complaints team that cases where hacked accounts form the only focus will most likely be logged under the following categories: 'Article 32 – Security of processing' (decision primary reason), 'No further action' (decision), 'No action' (decision detail 1), 'Insufficient information to proceed' (decision detail 2).

However, those that include other data protection concerns will be logged under a different category. For example, where an individual has made a subject access request to the social media company (Article 15). For clarity, we are unable to identify those complaint cases that include concerns about a hacked social media account within the appropriate limit.

This concludes our response to your request. We hope you found the above information helpful.

Next steps

You can ask us to review our response. Please let us know in writing if you want us to carry out a review. Please do so within 40 working days. You can read a copy of our full [review procedure](#) on our website.

If we perform a review but you are still dissatisfied, you can complain to the ICO as regulator of the FOIA. This complaint will be handled just like a complaint made to the ICO about any other public authority. You can [raise a complaint](#) through our website.

Your information

Our [privacy notice](#) explains what we do with the personal data you provide to us, and sets out [your rights](#). Our [Retention and disposal policy](#) details how long we keep information.

Yours sincerely



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For information about what we do with personal data see our [privacy notice](#)