Mr John Gilchrist
Freedom of Information Officer

1 April 2019

Ref: FOI/March 2019/ Cristina Criddle

By email to cristina.criddle@bbc.co.uk

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Dear Ms Criddle

Your request for information received on 10 March 2019 has been dealt with under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

You asked:

I am writing under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request information about cyberattacks and cyber security incidents affecting your university.

For each year since 2013:

1.Please provide details of how many attempted cyber-attacks to computer systems, networks or devices have taken place

2. Please provide details of how many cyber security incidents caused internal systems or devices to be infected or for services to be affected

3. How many cyber security incidents have caused the loss/breach of data?

4. If permissible within the confidentiality limits of the FOIA please provide detail of what type information was obtained eg. email addresses, student data or academic data/research

5. Where possible please provide information as to which country each breach originated from

If possible within the cost limits of the FOIA:

6. Please detail what percentage of the annual budget has been allocated towards:
        a) securing IT-systems and networks against cyber-attacks
b) training staff in cyber security awareness

University Response

1. This information is not available. We only know the number of incidents we have recorded, which is not the same thing.

2. Please note that the University considers the information to be exempt from disclosure under s31(1)(a)(b) where the release of information would, or would be likely to, prejudice the prevention and detection of crime and/or the apprehension or prosecution of offenders. This exemption is qualified and prejudice-based and, as such, I am required to apply the public interest test.

Public Interest Test

Favouring disclosure
Transparency and accountability would be increased.

Favouring non-disclosure
The University's vulnerability or otherwise for being subject cyber-attacks would be revealed, illustrating when resources to combat these attacks are most in use, therefore the prevention and detection of crime would be hindered.

Balancing Test
Whilst disclosure of this information may improve accountability, it would also indicate the University resource-intensive periods in dealing with cyber-attacks that may subsequently be exploited as a result. As such, it is my decision that the public interest lies in the non-disclosure of the exempted information in this case.

3. This information is not available.

4. This information is not available.

5. This information is not available.

6a. Our central IT Services have a £3.3m pay budget – all staff now support our efforts to secure, patch and upgrade our systems. Excluding telephony, and academic software, we spend £3.2m on non-pay costs, these costs provide us services (such as our external service provider who patch, monitor and secure our systems) as well as systems maintenance and support, essential to the securing of our environment.

6b. Staff use a free training resource, from UCISA (Universities and Colleges Information Systems Association). Our Central IT Service provide specialist training for its staff where required.

I trust this satisfies your request sufficiently. Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, you have the right to complain about the University's response to your request for information. If you have such a complaint, you may contact Mr David Maplas, Director of Student Affairs, Middlesex University, Hendon campus, London NW4 4BT, tel: 020 8411 5830, d.malpas@mdx.ac.uk within 40 days of the date of this letter for a review of the University's decision. If you remain unsatisfied with the outcome of that complaint, you may seek further recourse by lodging an appeal with the Information Commissioner.

Yours sincerely

John Gilchrist
Freedom of Information Officer