BARNSLEY
Metropolitan Borough Council

My Ref: FOI/5683
Enquiries to: Information Requests
E-Mail: informationrequests@barnsley.gov.uk

Dear Requester,

Re: Request for Information – Freedom of Information Act 2000

I wish to confirm that the council has completed its search for the information which you requested.

The information requested and our findings are as follows: -

1. **Use of AI Recording Tools Does your local authority currently use AI-powered recording, transcription, or note-taking tools in social services? If yes, please name the tool(s) and supplier(s).**

   We make use of two AI recording tools within Social Services, the first is called Sonic Brief, this was developed collaboratively within Local government and Microsoft. The second is Copilot which is a Microsoft product.

2. **Data Storage and Processing For any such AI recording tools in use, please provide details on: • how and where are the data stored (e.g. on local servers, cloud-based systems)? • what AI system or platform processes the data?**

   The Council considers that the release of information detailing how or where it stores information would increase the risk of being targeted by cyber criminals and as such applies Section 31(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to this aspect of the request.

   The council acknowledges that there is public interest in knowing that the way data is processed and stored is done so in a secure manner and using trusted platforms and providers however it can be argued that there is greater public interest in ensuring that information is safeguarded against criminal activity. As FOI responses are published in the public domain it would mean information would easily be accessible to anyone, including cyber criminals, and as such the council considers the public interest in withholding information outweighs that of disclosure for this reason.

3. **Timeline When did the local authority begin using AI recording tools in social services?**

   Sonic Brief - April 2025
   Copilot was released to all BMBC Staff in January 2024 and has been used throughout our services.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact Information Requests Via email.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are unhappy with the way the Directorate has handled your request, you may ask for an internal review. Please clearly mark your correspondence ‘Complaint’ and address it to:

Barnsley MBC
Information Requests Team
PO Box 634
Barnsley
S70 9GG
email: informationrequests@barnsley.gov.uk

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: -

Customer Services Team
Information Commissioner’s Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Email: http://www.ico.org.uk/foicomplaints

Kind regards,

Information Requests Team, Barnsley MBC

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