

Information Governance Team

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Dear Sir/Madam.

**Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)
Request ID: REQ07717**

Thank you for your request for information relating to welfare systems.

You have requested the following information:

1. Does any stage of decision making across benefits and welfare (defined as including but not limited to allocation of social housing, personal social care budgets, council tax support and the assessment of fraud within) presently involve automation, AI or algorithms at your Council?

Yes.

a. For clarity, automation may include (non-exhaustively), predictive analytics (ie to assess rent arrears or child welfare risks), risk assessment of claims (commonly known as risk based verification), the use of computer programs or algorithms to guide resource allocation, the use of datasets to guide how benefits are processed and disbursed.

2. If Yes, please provide details:

- a. Of the algorithms or automated decision-making programs you use;**
- b. If you use a commercial product or whether you have developed your own system;**
- c. Of the purpose for which the algorithm or automated decision-making system operates;**
- d. Of the decisions the algorithm or automated decision-making system is asked to make;**

e. Of the type, classification and amount of data that the algorithm or automated decision-making system uses to make its decision;

f. If a commercial product, how much has it cost the Council over the past three years.

Coventry City Council has been using risk-based verification software since 2012 for processing new housing benefit claims. The company that provides this service is Xantura.

Regarding costs, these are part of a larger contract which following careful consideration, the information you requested falls under the exemption(s) in Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which relates to 'information reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means.'

The exemption applies as the information is published and publicly available to view by accessing the Council website, please use the following link:

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/contractsregister>

3. If no, has your council stopped using this kind of automation in the last three years and what automation/algorithms were previously used?

N/A

4. Does your Council use Amazon Rekognition software, and if yes, what for?

No.

The supply of information in response to a freedom of information request does not confer an automatic right to re-use the information. You can use any information supplied for the purposes of private study and non-commercial research without requiring further permission. Similarly, information supplied can also be re-used for the purposes of news reporting. An exception to this is photographs. Please contact us if you wish to use the information for any other purpose.

If you are unhappy with the handling of your request, you can ask us to review our response. Requests for reviews should be submitted within 40 days of the date of receipt of our response to your original request – email: infogov@coventry.gov.uk

If you are unhappy with the outcome of our review, you can write to the Information Commissioner, who can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or email casework@ico.org.uk.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in your response.

Yours faithfully

Information Governance