

## Aspire – data breach – FAQs

### **Why was a breach possible? Were Aspire's systems less than secure?**

Aspire has multiple levels of security on our systems which were regularly updated when security updates were released so at least monthly.

### **What steps have you taken to prevent further breaches?**

We have taken multiple steps to protect the system, initiated at the time of the initial attack on 2 April. We have taken expert advice from multiple sources who have supported us in our actions. We have implemented all advice offered.

### **What sort of data was taken?**

We do not currently know what data has been taken as we have not seen it to verify or identify the contents of the files. However, we hope to receive this information shortly so that we can begin our analysis. There are 19,751 files to be examined. We have recruited additional staff to support us in this task but it is likely to take several months.

### **What assurances can you give supported individuals for whom you hold sensitive information?**

Until we can examine the content of the data that has been taken, you will appreciate that we cannot offer assurances.

We have created a risk review system which has identified high risk data possibilities. We will work through our search parameters based on what appears to be the highest risk data first and quickly contact individuals if and when a clearer picture comes to light.

This task may take some time because we do not know if the data has been manipulated. In addition, we have been advised that it may be difficult to give complete assurance that high risk data has not been moved into an innocuous-looking file name.

We have contacted current supported individuals with information on how to review the security of their data. Staff at all levels within Aspire will provide help to all supported individuals who may wish to discuss the matter with us. We will set up meetings with people to meet with us to raise any questions or concerns and have created an e-mail address to capture any questions or concerns also.

We have also advised all councils we currently work with and those we have worked with in the past.

### **Did you get a ransom demand? What channels did they use to make their approach?**

Yes, we received a demand for 2 bitcoins via e-mail.

### **Did you have cyber insurance?**

Yes. When we renewed our insurance cover in the summer of 2020, we added cyber insurance to our cover. I had just taken over as Chief Executive and I believed this to be good governance.

### **What feedback or concerns are you receiving from client organisations and individuals?**

We have held a number of open staff meetings and contacted multiple councils and other relevant organisations. We have received a lot of support and sympathy from organisations and staff alike. They appreciate that we have been transparent and upfront about the situation and the actions we have taken to recover. Understandably, people are concerned at what information may have been stolen. We will work with all parties to keep people up to date on what is happening.

### **How long will it before Aspire is back to normal?**

Thankfully, we have been able to provide support as normal throughout this episode because of the systems we already had in place. We did have to rebuild our payroll system and this work has already been completed thanks to the sterling efforts of our finance team. As a result, all staff have been paid as normal.

It will take Aspire many months to work through the problems created from this crime. We are focussed on filling data gaps and logically working through the stolen information based on robust risk management systems. But it is likely to take many months.

We have increased capacity to accelerate this work as much as possible but you will appreciate it has and will continue to put a strain on Aspire across the organisation. Encouragingly, we have fantastic staff who are all pulling together to protect the people we support and help recover the organisation. We have no doubt that we will come out of this in a better, stronger space.

### **Do the police know why Aspire was targeted in particular?**

Our understanding is that this was a random attack that could befall any organisation. Police Scotland have been phenomenal in their interactions with us, from the initial call to advise them of the crime and at every point since.