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13th August 2026

Dear 

Our Ref: EIR2026/00604 (IDA_310328)

Thank you for your request, submitted under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Since your request concerns environmental information, we have considered it under the terms of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

Your request is for:

1) Details of any archive collections, datasets or records transferred to BGS from the Oil and Gas Authority (OGA), North Sea Transition Authority (NSTA), Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), or former Data Release Agents relating to UK onshore oil and gas wells.

2) Confirmation on whether these libraries include any of the following:

- well reports;*
- hydraulic fracturing records;*
- Field Development Plans;*
- microfiche archives;*
- and any catalogues, indices or metadata relating to these records.*

3) The approximate dates on which any such records were transferred to BGS and, where available, from which organisation.

4) Confirmation whether these records remain available for public inspection or access, and if so, how they may be searched or accessed.

5) And finally, confirmation whether BGS holds any catalogue, index or database identifying wells that underwent hydraulic fracturing or other well stimulation operations.

In answer to your questions:

1) Details of any archive collections, datasets or records transferred to BGS from the Oil and Gas Authority (OGA), North Sea Transition Authority (NSTA), Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), or former Data Release Agents relating to UK onshore oil and gas wells.

Please note that in the following cases 'transferred' means that they were physically moved to be located at BGS but the ownership of them has not been transferred to BGS. BGS is the custodian, not the owner. The following were previously held by the release agents but transferred to BGS by Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC):

- Onshore geophysical logs, both regulated (i.e. licensed by the regulator) and non-regulated (pre 1960s).
- NSTA licensed onshore composite logs (are a subset of the onshore geophysical logs)
- Physical archive (by which we mean rock core, rock cuttings and samples) and associated records (digital and hard copy).
- Onshore seismic records – hardcopy images of seismic lines

Each of the above collections can include a mix of paper archives, scans of paper archives and 'born digital' data. BGS has on occasion received data from former Data Release Agents; the transferred records were restricted to data the release agents themselves received from licensed onshore oil and gas operators.

None of the other entities: the Oil and Gas Authority (OGA) or North Sea Transition Authority (NSTA) transferred any relevant collections, datasets or records to BGS.

2) Confirmation on whether these libraries include any of the following:

- *well reports;*
- *hydraulic fracturing records;*
- *Field Development Plans;*
- *microfiche archives;*
- *and any catalogues, indices or metadata relating to these records.*

- Well reports – there are well reports in the 'Geophysical logs' collection.
- Hydraulic fracturing records – this could mean one of three things:
 - Test to determine stress magnitudes – hydraulic fracturing is a test used in the subsurface for the planning of well operations and the wider stress field. It is possible that we have some records that include test results of hydraulic fracturing, but it is not recorded in the metadata as a test so we would be unable to locate which wells have these test results. Some of this information was compiled by a previous study and is available [here](https://www2.bgs.ac.uk/nationalgeosciencedatacentre/citeddata/catalogue/d3454827-1fe5-4a8d-9d9e-1cf5e4c97886.html)¹ with descriptions available [here](https://nora.nerc.ac.uk/id/eprint/517414/)².
 - Process for enhancing reservoir permeability for subsurface resource extraction - this has been used in hydrocarbon industries in the UK with a particular focus on shale gas and is sometimes referred to as 'Fracking'. BGS does not hold records of which wells in the UK have been hydraulically fractured, but this list could be compiled from news articles or screening of wells drilled for the purposes of shale gas extraction.

¹ <https://www2.bgs.ac.uk/nationalgeosciencedatacentre/citeddata/catalogue/d3454827-1fe5-4a8d-9d9e-1cf5e4c97886.html>

² <https://nora.nerc.ac.uk/id/eprint/517414/>

- Process of stimulating permeability in deep crystalline rocks for geothermal energy known as enhanced geothermal systems or engineered geothermal systems. BGS does not hold any records of which wells may or may not have undergone this process in the UK. More information on these systems is available [here](#) ³
- Field development plans – BGS does hold a number of field development plans as part of our hardcopy archive.
- Microfiche archives – BGS holds a microfiche copy of the data in the composite log collection and this data is published online and available via the National Data Repository (NDR). Users need to register for access and can do so [here](#) ⁴
- Catalogues, indices or metadata – [GeoIndex](#), [Metadata catalogue](#), [UK Onshore Geophysical Library \(UKOGL\)](#), [UK National Data Repository \(NDR\)](#)

3) The approximate dates on which any such records were transferred to BGS and, where available, from which organisation.

Most of the hard-copy data was transferred to BGS in the early 1980s with subsequent transfers of data occurring on an ad hoc basis up to the present. Sometimes hydrocarbon operators send data to BGS as and when it is collected and sometimes it arrives as a larger collection of thousands of documents they have collected over time. The metadata is not kept in such a way that dates of transfer can be easily retrieved or summarised. If there is a particular operator's data, or a particular well that you are interested in, then we may be able to provide a more specific answer.

4) Confirmation whether these records remain available for public inspection or access, and if so, how they may be searched or accessed.

Yes the records are accessible.

- NSTA composite logs – see the [BGS GeoIndex](#) and add the 'Onshore UK Hydrocarbon Well' layer under the 'Boreholes' group.
- Geophysical logs – details can be found via our [Metadata catalogue](#). Any paper records that relate to the DECC collections are represented by the metadata entries for geophysical logs.
- Geophysical logs can be viewed online via the [UKOGL](#) site, and from here you can open digital copies of the records and download them.

You can arrange to visit and view paper records, or you can request a scan on demand service. Visiting is free of charge although there is a limit to the amount of data we can retrieve during a visit. The scanning service is charged to recover the costs of providing it. Both are accessible through emailing enquiries@bgs.ac.uk

The onshore seismic data that were transferred to BGS by DECC are very large paper documents and the digital format (scan) can only be supplied by UKOGL who are licensed by the NSTA to supply them. BGS does not hold the IPR in these records and is not licensed to supply them.

5) And finally, confirmation whether BGS holds any catalogue, index or database identifying wells that underwent hydraulic fracturing or other well stimulation operations.

The metadata that BGS holds on the wells does not identify specific operations that wells have undergone or the type of commodity that they were drilled for, however the UKOGL interactive web viewer does group geophysical logs by commodity and provides links to them [here](#) ⁵.

³ <https://www.energy.gov/hgeo/geothermal/enhanced-geothermal-systems#:~:text=The%20Geothermal%20Technologies%20Office%20GTO,geothermal%20technologies%20towards%20commercial%20viability>

⁴ <https://ndr.nstaauthority.co.uk/>

⁵ <https://ukogl.org.uk/>

If you have any queries regarding our response or you are unhappy with the outcome of your request and wish to seek an internal review of the decision, please contact:

Head of Information Governance

Email: foi@ukri.org

Please quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are still not content with the outcome of the internal review, you may apply to refer the matter to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the review procedure provided by UKRI. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

<https://ico.org.uk/>

If you wish to raise a complaint regarding the service you have received or the conduct of any UKRI staff in relation to your request, please see UKRI's complaints policy: <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/contact-us/make-a-complaint/>

Kind regards

The BGS Enquiries Service