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30 Sept 2026

Dear [redacted]

Ref: BGS IDA 311107, UKRI 2026/00809

Thank you for your request made under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. Please find the answers to your questions below:

1. **Please tell me which fields the notification index holds for each entry, and in particular whether the purpose or intended use of the borehole is recorded as a structured field or a coded value, and if so, what values that field can take.**

The fields in the notification index are provided below. The 'purpose of drilling' field is a free text field.

Notification ID number	Notification number	Name of site
Notifying organisation	Act notified under	Purpose of drilling
Received date	Grid reference of borehole	Locality of borehole
Target lithology	Geophysical log Y/N	Specs Y/N
Comments	Lithological log Y/N	Other log Y/N
Core Y/N	Cuttings Y/N	Type of drill
Contact name	Contact phone number	Contact address field 1
Contact address field 2	Contact address field 3	Contact address field 4
Contact address field 5	Contact address postcode	Contact email address
Logging company	BGS project code	NRA licence number
Environment Agency region	BGS Wallingford reference number	Proposed drilling start date
Depth original units code	Depth in metres	Other drill type
Entered by	Date entered	Updated by
Date updated	Date notification chased	Borehole index ID
Reason for no borehole index ID	Place name	Easting
Accuracy of Easting	Northing	Accuracy of Northing
UK Grid square	National Grid reference north	National Grid reference north
Latitude	Longitude	Received date

2. If a purpose field exists, please supply the count of boreholes notified per year with the purpose recorded as ground source heating, ground source cooling, geothermal, heat pump, or any equivalent value, for each year from 2015 to 2025 inclusive.

The numbers recorded are given below. The field is free text so in order to answer your enquiry, we have manually looked for terms relating to geothermal activity, e.g. ground source, geothermal, G.S and GSHP in the 'purpose of drilling' field (see the accompanying spreadsheet).

Please note that the only reasons that drillers need to notify BGS of drilling under the legislation are for water abstraction (if over 15m depth) and for minerals extraction (if over 30m depth). The Acts do not require drillers to notify BGS of ground source heating boreholes unless it includes water abstraction (e.g. for an open loop system).

BGS also does not receive a notification for all boreholes drilled (even if a notification is required under the legislation) so these numbers are unlikely to represent the total number of boreholes drilled for ground source heating each year. Please see our website for more information about what is required under the legislation.

2015	5	2021	135
2016	9	2022	80
2017	17	2023	67
2018	30	2024	44
2019	43	2025	85
2020	55		

3. For the same entries, in electronic format (CSV or XLSX), and with no owner names and no street addresses:

   a. notification index number, and the municipality, local authority area or postcode district; See spreadsheet. The postcode district is provided in the Locality column.

   b. the purpose or use value as recorded;
   See spreadsheet

   c. the notification date, and the intended or actual start of drilling date where held;
   See spreadsheet

   d. the notified or recorded depth, and the number of boreholes covered by the notification;
   See spreadsheet for depth notified.
   The number of boreholes covered by the notification is not a field in the index. However, in the spreadsheet this may be made apparent in the 'purpose' field for Ground source heat wells if they are an array with several boreholes in a small area.

   e. the notifying party or drilling contractor where held;
   See spreadsheet

   f. whether a completion record or log was subsequently deposited against the notification.
   If the notification has been linked to a record there will be an entry in the Borehole record Y/N field. This is a detail that used to be recorded in the past by one project but that is no longer entered in the database so the absence of a 'Y' does not necessarily mean that BGS does not hold a record of the log, only that it has not been recorded here.

4. Please also give the number of notifications recorded per year from 2015 to 2025 in total, so that the geothermal count can be read against the whole, and any figure you hold on the rate at which notifications are matched to a deposited borehole record.

2015	364	2021	511
2016	212	2022	408
2017	312	2023	429
2018	412	2024	362
2019	474	2025	461
2020	351		

5. If the index carries no purpose field, please say so expressly. That answer is complete and useful in itself: it establishes that the statutory notification stream cannot be used to count ground source heat pump boreholes, and I will not press further.

Although the index carries a purpose field, BGS does not receive notifications for all drilling (as explained under question 2), therefore it is unlikely that the statutory notification stream is reliable as a count ground source heat pump boreholes.

In that case I would be grateful if you would tell me whether any other BGS holding, for example the National Well Record Archive or the onshore borehole records in GeoIndex, carries a usable purpose classification.

The Single Onshore Borehole index (of borehole records deposited with BGS) includes a purpose field. It is possible that some borehole records are submitted where BGS has received no notification and vice versa.

Include, if held, any field indicating whether the borehole replaced, re-drilled or reused an existing borehole at the same address, and any abandonment or decommissioning record for a previous borehole at that address.

The database and index does not record whether the borehole was replaced or re-drilled or reused an existing borehole and it does not record abandonment or decommissioning, although if BGS was made aware of this it is possible that we would add a comment to the record.

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

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