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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Government Procurement Policy may be contributing to increased risk of Data Breaches

It has emerged that the recent Data breach from the health sector in the north-east of the country may have involved the placing of confidential paper documentation into waste bins, which overflowed and spilled onto a public walkway.

Such a lapse was extremely unfortunate and has led to reputational loss for the hospital and the broader medical sector.

It is the Irish Security Industry Association's belief that the basis of this and other data breaches is a misconception that goes to the core of the Government's public procurement policy. At present, most tenders or frameworks for the confidential destruction of sensitive material are considered under the extremely broad "Waste Management" heading. In fact, the Office of Government Procurement has confidential document destruction as a bolt-on to the National Waste Framework. It is therefore not surprising that some individuals working within Government do not consider the implications of neglecting to handle confidential waste in an appropriately secure manner.

The Irish Security Industry Association Secure Data Destruction division has repeatedly brought this matter to the attention of the OGP and Minister Simon Harris TD, under whose remit the OGP procurement process falls. We have clearly outlined that the State's confidential material is not general waste and should not be treated as such. The handling of this material is a serious security matter which requires a specialist approach coupled with the highest national and international standards of operation.

To assist in avoiding future data breaches, the ISIA recommends the removal of confidential document handling from the tenders and frameworks in the waste management sector; the continuing education of staff as to the importance of data protection and securely destroying sensitive information.

The ISIA stands ready to assist Government in any way we can.

About the Irish Security Industry Association (ISIA)

The ISIA was established in 1972 and represents security companies across eight divisions of private security: guarding services, electronic security, event and entertainment security, monitoring centres, transport/cash-in-transit, physical security, security consultants and secure data destruction.

The ISIA has a long tradition of driving standards in security and has set requirements for membership that go beyond regulatory requirements. The members of the ISIA are representative of approximately 70% of both the turnover and the employees in the industry.

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