Gardens & Museums IT

Issue 26
Summer 2026

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If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact us via it@museums.ox.ac.uk

Welcome

Welcome to the latest edition of the Gardens & Museums IT Newsletter. And wow! The last few months have certainly been interesting.

We've seen a significant cyber security incident affect the wider higher education sector and, at the time of writing, we're also navigating the ongoing Service Operations Major Incident.

Thankfully, neither has had a severe impact on our own services or the way we work, but both have provided valuable opportunities to reflect on how we prepare for, respond to, and recover from these types of events. They've also, inevitably, resulted in a few more meetings finding their way into already packed calendars!

Alongside this, and as is often the case at this time of year, procurement activities have gathered pace, summer projects have started to come to fruition, and "business as usual" continues unabated.

Particular highlights include the Teams Phone Project, which is slowly but surely moving towards completion, and a variety of office renovations, improvements, and moves across the Gardens & Museums. These projects have provided the perfect excuse for me to get the cable ties out and indulge my slightly obsessive interest in neat cabling.

We're doing our best to keep pace with current demand while also taking the opportunity to plan for the next academic year - a task that is always interesting given the inevitable shifting priorities and emerging requirements that come our way.

You'll find more information on these topics, and plenty more besides, in the pages that follow, so please do read on.

All the best

Carl

What's been going on? And what's coming?

Microsoft Teams Phone Implementation

The change from the Chorus Telephony System to Microsoft Teams Phone is progressing well, and we're on course to meet the deadline of the end of July.

The Pitt Rivers Museum, History of Science Museum and Museum of Natural History have been successfully migrated with work underway at the Ashmolean Museum, Botanic Gardens and Harcourt Arboretum (despite problems with new phone availability).

I'd like to take this moment to acknowledge Aidan's massive contribution to this. He's been diligently configuring and installing the new phones for a while now. And anyone who has carried out a wide and large installation will empathise with how challenging it can be to do a similar exercise repeatedly and for a significant period of time. We're incredibly grateful for his efforts, patience and continued excellence.

Team Update - Summer to Autumn 2026

As is the case each summer (and throughout the year) members of the GMIT Team will take holiday. This year Adrian and myself will also be taking some extended time off for personal and family reasons. With this in mind Adrian will be away throughout August, and I will away throughout September.

We are currently making provisions for some temporary coverage during this 2-month period, but I wanted to share the information for awareness and so that if you have activities which you anticipate will require either of our direct attention or involvement that they can be highlighted and discussed in advance of our extended leave.

Oxford Service Manager - University Major Incident

Many of you will have received the varied messages either from myself or the University communications team on the status of the Oxford Service Manager service desk system which is utilized throughout the University of Oxford, including many centralised support teams.

This is also the system which we (Gardens & Museums IT) use to manage our IT requests, but fortunately due to the manner in which we use the system we're not as heavily impacted as others. It has increased our workload and the complexity of certain aspects, so things are taking a bit longer right now, and will do so until a fix is in place.

Please look out for further communications on this, and continue to report your IT problems, requests and access needs to it@museums.ox.ac.uk .

What's been going on? And what's coming?

Adobe Renewal 2026/2027

The second phase of the Adobe Renewal is about to take place, with those licences within the IT Services, and therefore CONNECT estate, impacted this time around.

As mentioned previously, although the process is relatively straightforward there are a number of teams involved, and it does require a fair amount of administrative oversight.

Despite this we're hopeful that the renewal will go well, and we'll update with any news we have on this as soon as its available.

Loan Computers

We're currently experiencing a high level of demand for temporary computers. Many of these requests relate to short-term recruitments ranging from 6 weeks to 6 months. For context, we're currently reviewing requests for 12 loan computers for use over the summer.

And although we're trying our best to fulfil these needs, we we do have a limited supply of computers are are therefore currently having to beg, borrow and steel to facilitate.

Therefore, if you are planning a piece of work, either short or long-term that has a computer requirement and you don't have the computer in your department can you please check in with us as you may need to consider purchasing equipment.

Computer Replacements - Apple and Windows

Although we've already replaced around 50 machines this year, we are currently in the midst of taking delivery and configuring machines in preparations for further replacements during the summer and autumn months.

We're also currently working with Central IT Services on the feasibility and practicalities of bringing forward the 2027 computer replacements to later this year. Thus far our requirements have been captured and shared, with the machines likely being ordered in this financial year.

Those due to receive a new machine will be contacted directly when the device is ready.

An update on IT Procurement...

In the last issue, we provided an update on the increasingly challenging market conditions affecting the procurement of technology equipment.

These challenges stem from ongoing supply and demand imbalances, combined with the volatility of technology pricing. High-demand products such as laptops, desktops, and smartphones have been particularly affected.

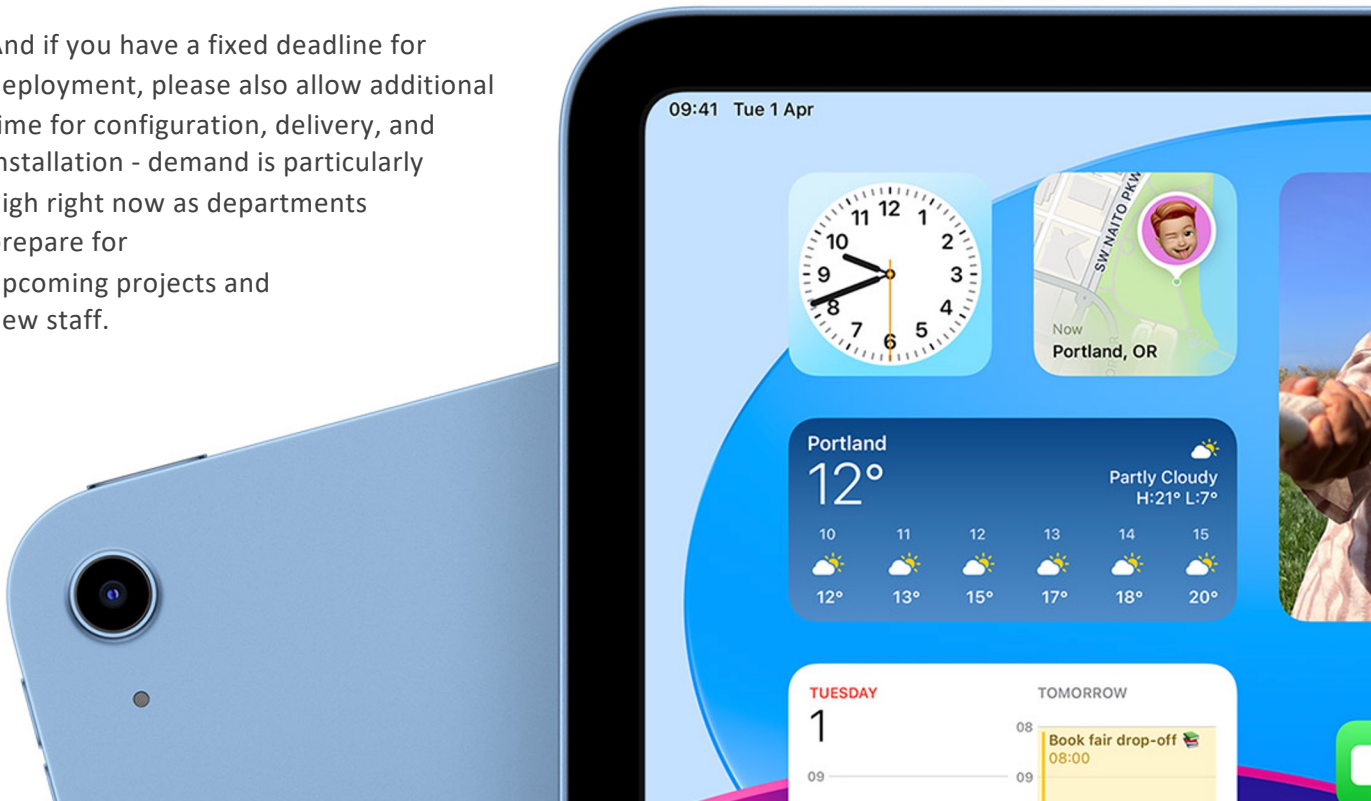
Unfortunately, the situation has shown little sign of improvement and is expected to remain a significant challenge throughout 2026. Since our previous update, prices for some items have increased by as much as 20%, and suppliers are forecasting further rises over the coming months and beyond.

The Immediate Concern....

The availability of equipment is currently the most pressing issue, driven by the time of year and the need to utilise budgets before the end of the financial year. In previous years, many suppliers have been able to fulfil orders placed before the end of June. Unfortunately, this isn't the case this year, with many suppliers advising that orders should be placed before mid-June, with customised items such as desktops and laptops requiring orders to be submitted even earlier. This leaves very little time to act!

So, if you need to spend budget on technology equipment within this financial year, please submit your requirements as soon as possible so that we have sufficient time to review options, obtain quotations, and complete the purchasing process.

And if you have a fixed deadline for deployment, please also allow additional time for configuration, delivery, and installation - demand is particularly high right now as departments prepare for upcoming projects and new staff.



An update on IT Procurement...

The Longer-Term View...

At present, there is little indication from suppliers or procurement colleagues across the University that costs will ease or steady in the foreseeable future. And recommendations are to budget at least an additional 5% to accommodate future price increases, with consideration for up to 10% if current trends continue.

While this does not make planning any easier, we are in a strong position. Over the past year, we have successfully deployed more than 250 computers, and therefore, our computer estate is healthy.

Alongside this the University retains benefits from established pricing agreements, and we (Gardens & Museums IT) have a number of strong and mature supplier relationships, helping us to secure competitive pricing and maintain access to equipment where possible.

So, What Can You Do?

The most important step is to engage with us as early as possible once you identify a requirement. Early discussions give us the time needed to provide guidance, explore suitable options, liaise with suppliers, and determine the most effective approach while balancing cost, availability, and delivery times.

And if you'd like to see what equipment is available our Standard Equipment Documents have recently been updated and are available on our website here: https://it.museums.ox.ac.uk/articles/documents with a version with current prices available on request to it@museums.ox.ac.uk .

Printing - balancing the environment, finances, security and service!

Printing is something we've tried to tackle on a number of occasions in an effort to introduce greater standardisation. However, it has always proved challenging due to the variety of suppliers used across our locations, the number of printers in operation, differing business requirements, and, perhaps most importantly, how attached we all are to our printers!

Alongside this, finding a solution that is environmentally focused, cost-effective, secure, and backed by strong service and support has been difficult. Generally, what we've found is that lower-cost solutions often come at the expense of service quality, security, and sustainability. Conversely, options with strong environmental credentials, robust security, and reliable support have typically come with a significantly higher price tag.

As a result, we've focused on identifying opportunities to make improvements where specific requirements allow, while remaining mindful of these competing priorities. At the same time, we've been waiting for the right opportunity to make a more meaningful change.

And that opportunity may now be presenting itself...

So, what are we trying to do?

We are currently exploring options with trusted suppliers to implement a print management solution called PaperCut. This platform would provide enhanced print security while also giving us greater visibility and understanding of our printing environment. It would enable better monitoring and reporting, helping us understand how our printers are being used, including identifying high- and low-demand devices, colour versus black-and-white usage, and overall print volumes.

What is Papercut?:
https://www.papercut.com/

In addition, PaperCut's secure print release functionality would reduce unnecessary printing and help ensure documents are only printed when needed. Combined with the data and insights the platform provides, this would put us in a much stronger position to make informed, environmentally conscious decisions about our printing estate.

Printing - balancing the environment, finances, security and service!

Alongside this, we are reviewing the printers currently in use. Where devices are performing well and continue to provide reliable service and support, we are exploring opportunities to extend the life of existing hardware and renegotiate agreements to deliver better value. This approach not only reduces costs but also helps minimise waste by making the most of equipment that is still fit for purpose.

For locations where performance, service, or support fall short of expectations, we are looking at heat-free printing technology from Epson. We already have a small number of these devices in operation, and the feedback has been extremely positive. While this technology was previously prohibitively expensive due to its relative novelty and advanced capabilities, costs have reduced considerably over the last year. And in many cases, contract pricing is now comparable with traditional laser printing solutions.

Heat-free printing is something I've been following for some time, but until now the costs have been challenging. It's encouraging to see this technology move to a place where it's finally financially viable.

What is Heat-Free Printing:
https://www.epson.co.uk/en_GB/heat-free-technology

This means we are getting to a position to take a more strategic approach to printing - one that puts sustainability at the forefront, without increasing costs, while also improving security, support, and the overall user experience.

GMIT Open Sessions – Summer 2026

The Gardens & Museums IT Open Sessions for the summer months have been arranged with the details available below. And excitingly Caroline Lecointe, Information Compliance Engagement Officer for Humanities and GLAM will be joining us for the July and September sessions.

So, if you're new to the Gardens & Museums and would like to meet us, or have an IT, Audio Visual or Information Security (and data compliance) question or matter to discuss, then please do come along.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Date	Location	Time
Wednesday 8th July	Director's Boardroom Ashmolean Museum	2.30PM – 4.00PM
Wednesday 5th August	Westwood Room Museum of Natural History	11.00AM – 12.30PM
Wednesday 2nd September	Seminar Room History of Science Museum	11.00AM – 12.30PM

The sessions will offer an opportunity….

- **To meet us face-to-face in an open forum to discuss any matter.**
- **To discuss or get advice on any IT issues or problems which you may have, whether big or small.**
- **To discuss any upcoming projects or innovations within your respective departments and location.**
- **For new members of staff to meet with us and receive an overview of IT within the University and the Gardens & Museums.**

Information & Cyber Security Update

Cyber security continues to be a regular topic of conversation across the University. With device updates, changes to working practices, and a steady flow of communications, it can sometimes feel like there's always something new to keep up with. While that may be true, these changes are all aimed at helping to protect both individuals and the wider University community as cyber threats continue to evolve.

With that in mind, here are a few updates and reminders that may be useful.

Changes to Information Security and Data Protection Training Renewal

As outlined on the University website, a change to the way Information Security and Data Protection Training is managed will come into effect from 1 June 2026. The intention behind this change is to ensure that all University staff refresh their knowledge on an annual basis, helping us all stay up to date with good information security and data protection practices.

If your training is approaching its renewal date, you'll begin to receive reminder emails prompting you to complete the course. These reminders will become more frequent as the deadline approaches, and access to University email will be suspended if the training is not completed within the required timeframe. Where this happens, the relevant Senior Administrator will also be notified so they can help support completion of the training.

You can read more about the changes here: https://www.infosec.ox.ac.uk/article/information-security-and-data-protection-training-renew

Typosquatting

I recently came across a BBC video explaining a cyber security threat known as typosquatting and thought it was worth sharing.

Although the concept isn't new, the techniques used have become increasingly sophisticated. It is now much easier for malicious actors to create websites that closely resemble legitimate services, making them harder to spot at first glance.

Typosquatting works by taking advantage of small typing mistakes when entering web addresses. A website may look exactly like the one you intended to visit, but actually be designed to collect login details, personal information, or payment information. For example, a user intending to visit *amazon.com* could accidentally visit *amaz0n.com* instead.

The BBC video provides a helpful explanation of how typosquatting works, along with some practical advice on what to look out for:
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0n8xtnt

Microsoft has also published some useful guidance on this:
https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/security/what-is-typosquatting

Information & Cyber Security Update

New AI-Driven Phishing Threat Targeting Universities

Chris Mortlock, the University's Interim Chief Information Security Officer, recently shared an article on OxIntranet highlighting a sophisticated AI-driven phishing campaign currently targeting universities and research organisations.

The article, **"Cyber Security: Stay Alert to New Phishing Threat"**, can be found in the News & Events section of OxIntranet: https://unioxfordnexus.sharepoint.com/sites/OxIntranet-NewsandEvents

And If you're short on time, the key takeaways are:

- **Take a moment to consider unexpected emails, particularly those asking you to click links or log in.**
- **Check the sender's email address carefully, even if the message appears familiar.**
- **Where possible, navigate directly to trusted websites rather than following links in emails.**
- **Continue to make use of Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) wherever it is available.**
- **Be cautious of requests that feel unusual, urgent, or out of character.**
- **If something doesn't look quite right, please let us know (it@museums.ox.ac.uk).**

Improving your Multi-Factor Authentication

In the previous section, one of the key recommendations was to use Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) wherever it is available. However, there is currently a great deal of discussion, both within the University and across the wider cyber security community, about the effectiveness of different MFA methods. The general consensus is that SMS text message and telephone call-based authentication no longer provide the same level of protection they once did and should be considered less secure than other options.

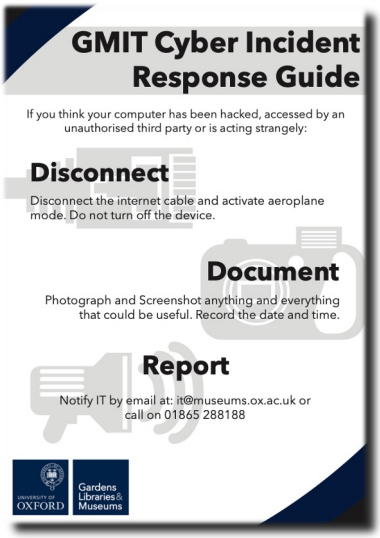
As a result, the recommended minimum standard is now to use either the Microsoft Authenticator app on a trusted smart device, or a USB security key. The University began introducing measures to encourage the use of these stronger authentication methods last October, and we are currently working with the Ashmolean Museum to support their implementation locally.

If you are currently using text message or phone call-based MFA, please don't worry - we'd be very happy to help you move to one of the recommended alternatives. So please get in touch so we can support you through the process (it@museums.ox.ac.uk) .

Gardens & Museums IT Cyber Incident Response Guide

As mentioned in the last newsletter, we've been working on a Cyber Incident Response Guide Poster. We're pleased to say that it's now finished and available for download from here: https://it.museums.ox.ac.uk/articles/documents

The poster provides a simple, easy-to-follow overview of the actions to take if you encounter or suspect a cyber security incident. We'd really appreciate if you download could place in a suitable spot in your office.



Room Moves & Cabling Fun Times!

This spring and summer, the Ashmolean Museum is embarking on a significant programme of space improvements. The project has a number of different elements and moving parts, but the end result will be refreshed, revitalised, and in some cases entirely new working spaces for colleagues across the museum.

Projects like this inevitably involve people moving into temporary locations while improvement works take place, before moving back into their newly improved spaces once completed. From an IT perspective, this creates a fair amount of work to ensure the right infrastructure is in place, including power, networking, and equipment setup, so that colleagues can continue working with minimal disruption. However, these projects also provide us with an opportunity to do something else: tidy up the cabling!

Now, I should probably admit that I have a slight enthusiasm (some might say compulsion) for neat cabling. If you've ever seen the back of a desk where cables have accumulated over several years, you'll know how quickly things can become untidy. While you might not guess it from looking at my own desk, I take great satisfaction in turning a tangled collection of wires into something organised, tidy, and easy to maintain.

Where possible, this often means removing old or redundant cabling and starting afresh. That's not something we can do every day, but office moves and improvement projects provide the perfect moment..

We recently had the chance to do exactly that in the Ashmolean Museum's Heberden Coin Room. The space had accumulated a considerable amount of cabling over time, with cables running in all directions and requiring a fair bit of attention. Over the course of two mornings, we were able to completely refresh the cabling throughout the room, improving not only the appearance of the space but also its safety and maintainability.

So, where am I going with this? If you're planning an office move, refreshing a workspace, or simply have a collection of cables that has grown a little out of control, please get in touch. We'd be happy to help improve the setup, make things a little tidier, and ensure everything is working as it should (and I get to scratch my cabling itch!) .

Service & Support Statistics – 1st February to 30th April 2026

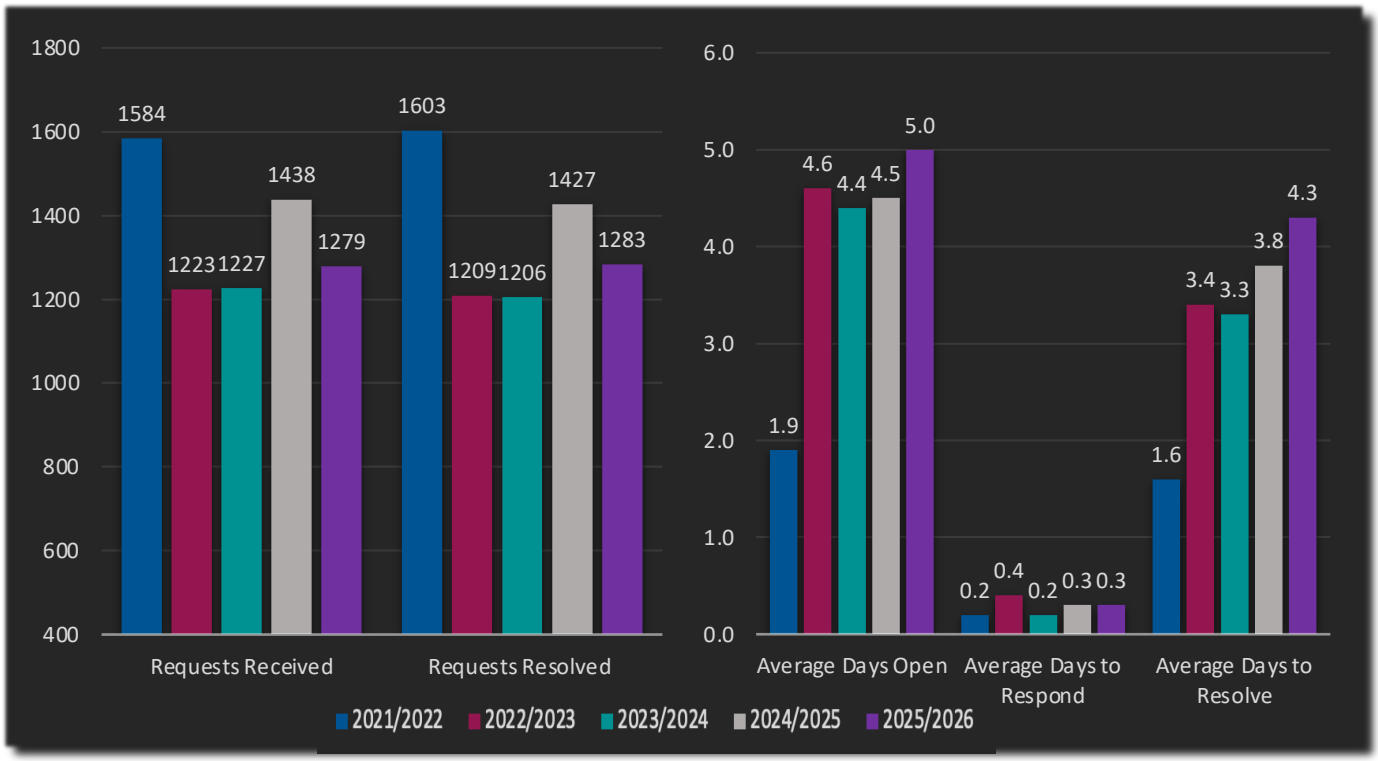
Quarter 3 of the 2025/26 University Year, although being quieter than the same period in 2024/25, has still been a busy time. Response times remain impressive, though resolution times have increased slightly. We continue to monitor this, whilst being mindful of balancing our commitment to providing a responsive and user focused service against reasonable expectations on ourselves.

Requests Received
1279

Requests Resolved
1283

Avg. Days to Respond
0.3

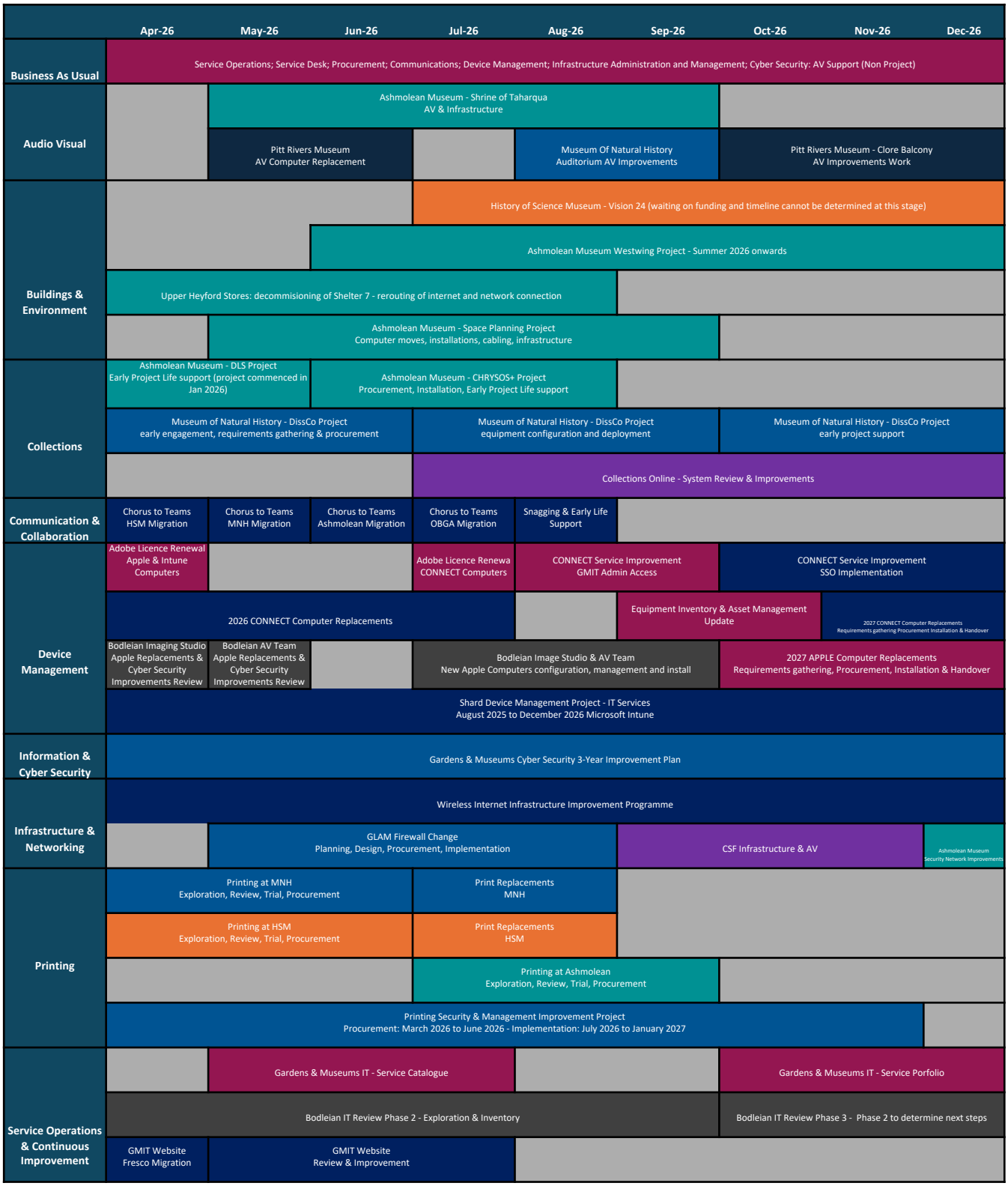
Avg. Days to Resolve
4.3



Location	Requests	Percentage
Ashmolean Museum	511	40%
Museum of Natural History	107	8%
Pitt Rivers Museum	128	10%
History of Science Museum	72	6%
Botanic Gardens & Arboretum	82	6%
GLAM Divisional Office	101	8%
Bodleian Libraries	34	3%
GLAM Stores	9	1%
All sites - requests and activities which benefit or impact all locations	235	18%

Full Service Reports are available on the Gardens & Museums IT Website: https://it.museums.ox.ac.uk/article/service-reports

2026 Gardens & Museums IT Roadmap



The latest version can be found on the Gardens & Museums IT Website: https://it.museums.ox.ac.uk/article/documents