



Response to Request for Information

Reference FOI 0615143
Date 25 June 2015

Information Relating to Deceased People

Request:

Names, date of births, addresses, dates or deaths and values of the estate of those in your area that have died intestate in the last 3 years.

I regret to inform you the information you requested is being withheld as the Council considers that Section 31 of the Freedom of Information Act (Law Enforcement) is applicable in this case, for the reasons outlined below.

In cases of intestacy referred to the Treasury Solicitor, the normal practice is for the Treasury Solicitor to establish the value of the estate and whether it is bona vacantia (ownerless goods). To do this they will take steps to secure the estate (for example, by freezing bank accounts) and make enquiries as to the location of title deeds to property and the possible existence of a will. To disclose information that would reveal details of the assets of an estate before such steps have been taken would provide an opportunity for criminal acts such as theft or fraud to be committed.

Given the sensitivity of the information requested and the risk that its disclosure could possibly aid criminal activities, I consider that it would not be in the public interest to release this information.

The Treasury Solicitor may be able to release to you information about persons who have died intestate and their estates, if the estate's assets have been secured. You may wish to contact them at:

Freedom of Information Officer
Treasury Solicitor Department
1 Kemble Street
London
WC2B 4TS
foi@tsol.gsi.gov.uk

You might also find it helpful to visit their website at: www.bonavacantia.gov.uk

Section 31- Law Enforcement

Section 31 is concerned with protecting a wide range of law enforcement interests

[NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]

and its application turns on whether disclosure would be likely to prejudice those interests.

Some interests that are protected by section 31 are drawn quite widely, for example: the administration of justice, the prevention or detection of crime and the operation of immigration controls. But section 31 also applies where the exercise by any public authority of certain specified functions would be prejudiced by disclosure. Those functions include: ascertaining whether a person is responsible for improper conduct, determining the cause of an accident and ascertaining a person's fitness to carry on a profession.