



Government Legal Department

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Our reference: BVFOI/396/16 re Kathleen Rose Thompson

Freedom of Information Act 2000 Request

You asked for the following information from the Government Legal Department (“the Department”):

Please confirm why the claim of one party has been admitted in priority to mine.

I would also like details of the estate.

Your request will be dealt with by the Bona Vacantia Division (“the Division”) under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I have interpreted your request for details of the estate to mean that you require confirmation of the value, or details of the assets and liabilities, of the estate.

The Division holds all the information that you have requested.

The Division will admit the first fully documented claim received, either directly from a kin claimant or from someone authorised to act on their behalf, which is supported by sufficient evidence (including ID documentation) to satisfy the Division that the claimant is entitled to, or to share in, the estate in priority to the Crown.

I am withholding the value and assets and liabilities of the estate as it is exempt from disclosure under section 31(1)(a) of the Act. Section 31(1)(a) provides that information is exempt from disclosure if that disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the prevention or detection of crime. We believe that disclosure of the requested information to any member of the public would, or would be likely to, help enable the commission of fraud or other criminal activity. In applying the exemption, we have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosing the information.

There is a strong public interest in ensuring that the Division’s activities are conducted in an open, transparent and honest way. However, disclosure of the exempt information could help enable the commission of fraud which would be likely to result in a loss to the public purse. There is a strong public interest in protecting the public purse and it is therefore considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption in section 31(1)(a) in this case outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.