



Treasury Solicitor's Department

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Our reference: BVFOI/375/14 re Ronald William Edwards

Freedom of Information Act 2000 Request

You asked for the following information from the Treasury Solicitor's Department ("the Department"):

1. Can you tell me if you know whether my father was buried or cremated and if so where?
2. Cause of death.
3. What will have happened to his personal effects.
4. Once the case has been passed to the solicitors do you know how long the claim will take to process.
5. Would it be possible for you to give me an idea of the value of his estate.

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

The Division holds some of the information that you have requested.

The Division holds information relating to the cause of death of the deceased. This information can be found on the death certificate of the deceased. Certificates can be obtained from the local Registrar where the event took place or from the General Registrar Office (GRO), PO Box 2, Southport, Merseyside, PR8 2JD or by telephoning 0845 603 7788. Further details can be obtained from the GRO's website at <https://www.gov.uk/browse/births-deaths-marriages/register-offices>. The information is reasonably accessible to you by other means and is therefore exempt from disclosure under section 21 of the Act. This exemption confers absolute exemption from the requirement to provide information pursuant to section 1(1)(b) of the Act.

The Division holds information regarding the value of the estate, I am withholding this information, 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.

The Division holds no further information relating to your request.