



Treasury
Solicitor's
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Our reference: BVFOI/045/15 re Frank William John Little

Freedom of Information Act 2000 Request

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

Can I find out how much the estate is worth and whether I'm expected to trace all other potential beneficiaries as part of the claim?

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

The Division holds all the information that you have requested.

In order to give up his interest in an estate, the Treasury Solicitor only needs a fully documented claim, including ID documents, from **one** relative entitled to, or to share in, the estate in priority to the Crown. This does not affect anyone else's entitlement to share in the estate and it is the legal responsibility of whoever ultimately administers the estate to ensure that all relatives who are entitled receive their share. It is, therefore, not necessary for everyone who considers that they may have a claim to provide me with evidence of their relationship in support of your claim. For further information on the role and responsibilities of the administrator, you are advised to seek independent legal advice or contact your local Citizens' Advice Bureau.

I am withholding the information in relation to the value 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.