



Our reference: BVFOI/089/17 re Annie Austin

Freedom of Information Act 2000 Request

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

The value of the estate of Annie Austin

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.

Information about the approximate value of the estate can be found in newspaper advertisements for kin issued by the Treasury Solicitor in The Times of 7 June 1996, Daily Telegraph of 6 June 1996, and Evening Standard of 6 June 1996. Copies of The Times, Daily Telegraph and Evening Standard can be accessed at The British Library, St Pancras, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB (<http://www.bl.uk/>)

The approximate net value of the estate can be found on the Grant of Letters of Administration issued to the Treasury Solicitor. A copy of the Grant of Letters of Administration can be obtained from the Principal Registry of the Family Division, First Avenue House, 42-49 High Holborn, London WC1V 6NP or online at <https://www.gov.uk/search-will-probate>

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.

I am withholding information relating the exact 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.