

PUBLIC EXPERIENCE – 140/13

REQUEST

Please see below my freedom of information act request. If you cannot answer all or some of the questions please could you respond anyway?

I would like information on people dying with no next of kin being known at the time of death from 1/8/13 to the day of your response to this request. If someone died before 1/8/13 but the case has only come to your attention since, could you please also include details, as follows:

1. Surnames and forenames or initials
2. Dates of death
3. Age at death or date of birth
4. Place of birth
5. Marital status
6. Maiden surnames of married or widowed women
7. Usual address at time of death
8. Approx. value of their estate if known
9. The date you sent information to the Treasury Solicitor (or, if in Lancashire, the Duchy of Lancaster, or, if in Cornwall, the Duchy of Cornwall), or confirmation that this action was not applicable.
10. If you have yet to send the information on, as per 9 above, or a decision has not yet been made whether or not to do so, please also advise of this.
11. Has the council submitted and information to the Land Registry in relation to any deaths that have occurred? If so,
12. on what date? and
13. in relation to which Title Deed Number?

RESPONSE

I refer to your request for information in relation to persons dying with no known next- of-kin and would inform you that the Authority holds the information requested, but is unable to provide this information because it is exempt under section 31(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act (Law Enforcement) and is therefore being withheld.

Section 31(1) states that Information which is not exempt information by virtue of section 30 is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice —

- (a) the prevention or detection of crime

We are applying this exemption because the release of personal details of a deceased individual with no known relatives and no will may make the assets of that person vulnerable and disclosure of the information may lead to the commission of offences and cause loss to the unsecured estates.

The Authority has applied the public interest test and determined that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests are reviewed in accordance with the Council's Complaints Procedure and should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be addressed to: Mrs D Bunce, Legal Administration and Information Officer, Legal Services, Town Hall, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex CO15 1SE.

If you are still not satisfied you can complain to the Information Commissioner at: Wycliffe House,
Water Lane, Wilmslow SK9 5AF Telephone: 0303 123 1113, www.ico.gov.uk.