

Request 8916 Funerals

I am aware that some of the following information is available via the council's website, however, what is there doesn't cover the whole of the period I'm interested in (January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2020), so under the Freedom of Information Act, could you please provide the following information for the rest of the period.

Please provide information about each funeral arranged by the council between October 1 2019 and December 31 2020, where possible including name, date of birth, date of death, age, cost to the authority, whether next of kin are known, and value of estate.

Response

Some of the information requested is available under open data and can be accessed from [our website](#). Please note the information dates from January 2016 to the present which is within the time frame you have stated above.

The average cost to the authority of a public health funeral is £1500, details of payments made to suppliers above £500 is already available to you on [our website](#).

This information is exempt under section 21 – information reasonably accessible - of the Freedom of Information Act and provided for re-use under the terms of the Open Government Licence. This is an absolute exemption.

Some of the information you have requested is refused and exempt from disclosure by virtue of exemptions under section 22 and 31 and 40 of the Freedom of Information Act. Information relating to value of any estate and the address of the deceased is exempt from disclosure under section 31 of the Freedom of Information Act. Personal information relating to living individuals is exempt from disclosure under section 40(2) of the Act

Under section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act an exemption applies where information requested is intended for publication at a future date. In the event of referral of the estate to the Bona Vacantia Division of Treasury Solicitors Office the

details of the estate will be published via their Unclaimed Asset List which is updated on a daily basis. This information where it exists will be published as part of this process.

This information is refused under s 31 (1) 'information is exempt if its disclosure under this Act would be likely to, prejudice -(a) the prevention and detection of crime' we find that disclosure of these details are likely to have a significant negative impact on the prevention of crime.

There is a real risk that this information could be used for fraudulent activity and the disclosure of this ready collated information increases that risk of prejudice to the prevention of crime, in the form of criminal damage to property and squatting, arson and anti-social behaviour. Whilst there is an argument that disclosure would assist in the process of identifying those who have entitlement to the estate of the deceased there are already provisions in place operated by the BonaVacantia division of the Government Legal Department.

We believe it is in the public interest to protect the public purse, to protect property and to ensure resources are used efficiently. There is also a strong public interest in avoiding personal distress to the victims of crime and in relation to damage to properties those in the neighbourhood may be negatively affected. The risk of prejudice to the prevention and protection of crime ranging from anti -social behaviour to identity fraud at significant public expense means the public interest in avoiding prejudice and maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

Section 40(2)- personal information – is an absolute exemption and no public interest test is required