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Email: contact@findersinternational.ie
www.findersinternational.ie

Ireland Office
Unit 12D Butlers Court,
Sir John Rogerson's Quay,
Dublin 2, Ireland
Tel: +353 (0)1 567 6940
Fax: +353 (0)1 640 1899

Denis Naughten T.P.,
Cathaoirleach to the Committee,
Joint Committee on Social Protection,
Community and Rural Development,
and the Islands,
Leinster House,
Dublin 2,
D02 XR20

12th July 2023
Email: maeve.mullin@findersinternational.ie
Phone: 01 5676940

Dear Mr. Naughten,

Re: Safe Deposit Boxes and Related Deposits Bill 2022

Further to our attendance at the Oireachtas Joint Committee meeting on May 31st 2023 in Leinster House we wish to revert regarding your question on our experience in carrying out research on behalf of financial institutions in the UK.

Whilst we were not involved in the research process of opening Safe Deposit Boxes in the UK (so we do not have any experience that we can share regarding typical contents of the boxes), we have carried out more than 700 research cases on behalf of a large UK financial institution relating to Wills that were in safe keeping. We identified beneficiaries for this project via Chain of Representation, which is the same method as would be used for owners of Safe Deposit Boxes. Research was concluded successfully in all of these 700+ cases. Please also see link to a BBC interview which tells the story of a chest of WWII items for which a rightful home was found with family members showing our ability to locate the owners of property
<https://www.findersinternational.co.uk/media/treasure-chest-of-ww2-raf-hero-pilot-found-during-house-clearance/>

Please find enclosed 3 case studies relating to a Safe Deposit Boxes project we undertook some years ago for an Irish financial institution. For reasons of confidentiality, we have anonymized these, but they give an idea of the research involved and how we can assist.

During the meeting, it was also mentioned that a report from Deloitte was undertaken in 2019 which examined the balance between the right to private property, potential additional costs to the industry, interests of consumer protection, and the common good. We understand that there were approximately 5% of the 100 Safe Deposit Boxes sampled where next-of-kin could not be identified. We would like to offer our research assistance regarding these unresolved cases as we believe this could serve as an example project, and the research outcomes could help inform and aid the proposed Bill. Please could you let us know whom should we contact regarding this proposal?

Thank you for your offer to write to the Minister for Agriculture regarding access to the Land Commission records in Portlaois. We would welcome this, as it would be very helpful with our research and will be very much appreciated. Please let us know if the Department for Agriculture require any further information.

Please let us know if there is any other information that we can provide or questions that we can answer to assist with your process of honing this Bill. We hope that directing financial institutions to use research services such as ours is included in the Bill. We are available to meet the committee and/or committee members as and when needed and we would request to be kept informed of progress.

Kind Regards

Maeve Mullin

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OTHER OFFICES
International HQ: 6-8 Vestry Street, London, N1 7RE, England | Tel: +44 (0)20 7490 4935 | Fax: +44 (0)20 7490 4936
Scotland: 83 Princes Street, Edinburgh, EH2 2ER, Scotland | Tel: +44 (0)131 278 0552 | Fax: +44 (0)131 278 0548
ISO 9001 Total Quality Management Certification ISO 14001 Environmental Management System Certification
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Case Study 1

Safe Deposit Box Case Study

The Situation

In August 2016, we were referred a case by an Irish financial institution regarding two Safe Deposit Boxes held for a customer. The only information we were provided with was the customer's name.

The Solution

Once instructed, the Finders International Dublin Research Team immediately began tracing the customer's name and it was identified that he had passed away in Monaco many years previous. Our international research confirmed that he had made a Will and bequeathed the residue of his Estate to his cousin. Sadly his cousin had pre-deceased him resulting in the residue being passed to other family members. Consequent Chain of Representation research identified the ultimate heirs to the Estate and the Safe Deposit Box property.



About Finders

Finders International Ireland are a leading international probate genealogy firm who pride themselves on providing a fast, friendly, and efficient service. Finders have been working in Ireland for many years and in 2015 set-up the office in Dublin to focus on providing a professional and tailored service to solicitors, financial institutions, pension companies, councils, hospitals, nursing homes and private individuals.

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International HQ: 6-8 Vestry Street, London, N1 7RE | Scotland: 83 Princes Street, Edinburgh, EH2 2ER | Australia: L8, 99 Elizabeth Street, Sydney, NSW 2000

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Missing heirs & next of kin found worldwide | Missing Will searches | Missing Asset searches | Empty Property owners located worldwide | Medallion Guarantees

Case Study 2

Safe Deposit Box Case Study

The Situation

In August 2016, we were referred a case by an Irish financial institution regarding a Safe Deposit Box held for a customer. The only information we were provided with was the customer's name.

The Solution

Once instructed, the Finders International Dublin Research Team immediately began tracing the customer's name and through meticulous research, it was identified that he had passed away in 1980. It was confirmed that he had four children and we were able to contact one of his sons still living in Ireland. Our contact established that the family knew of their father's Safe Deposit Box and they provided permission for their current contact details to be provided to the financial institution. Our research enabled our Client to successfully reconnect with the correct family in order to return the contents of the Safe Deposit Box to them.



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Case Study 3

Safe Deposit Box Case Study

The Situation

In November 2017, we were referred a case by an Irish financial institution regarding an unusual item of possible historic interest that was left in a Safe Deposit Box. The only information that we were provided with was the customer's name.

The Solution

Once instructed, the Finders International Dublin Research Team began tracing the customer's name. Our research successfully identified details relating to the correct individual and confirmed that he had passed away leaving a Grant of Probate with Will. International Chain of Representation research concluded that a beneficiary of the Will had passed away in France and we reverted to the bank with this information. Given the international research involved, and the likely costs, the bank chose at that time to cease research at that point, however, further research is entirely feasible should the funds be allocated to this project.



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