



BANK OF GHANA

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

NOTICE NO.BG/GOV/SEC/2024/22

THE CONCEPT OF “NEXT OF KIN” IN BANK ACCOUNT OPERATION

Bank of Ghana seeks to promote financial inclusion and, on that basis, encourages all citizens of legal age to own a bank account or mobile money account. As part of the **Know-Your-Customer** policy, during account opening, financial institutions require certain information from you (the customer) to be able to identify and contact you when the need arises.

The **“Next-of-Kin”** is one of such requirements during account opening. In Ghana, there is no specific statutory definition of Next-of-Kin. It generally refers to an account holder’s closest living relative who could be contacted in the event the account holder is not reachable. Typically, an account holder will be required to provide the name, address, and telephone number of the person nominated as Next-of-Kin.

The term “Next of Kin” in account opening and other banking related products and services forms is often misconstrued. There is a pervasive misconception that the person nominated as Next-of-Kin by the account holder automatically inherits the funds in the account when the account holder passes on.

For the avoidance of doubt let us appreciate the following:

- i. The person nominated as the Next of Kin does not automatically inherit or gain access to the account or the funds in the account of the deceased.
- ii. To inherit or have access to the account of a deceased customer, one will have to be named in the deceased customer’s Will as a beneficiary of the account, and a court of competent jurisdiction will have to grant Letters of Probate to empower the person who has been named in the Will as a beneficiary, to obtain access to the deceased customer’s account.
- iii. Administrators of the estate of a person who dies intestate can be appointed through Letters of Administration (L.A.) issued by a court of competent jurisdiction, which grants access to a deceased customer’s account.

Based on this understanding, it is important to choose a Next of Kin who is capable of providing relevant information about you, when the need arises. As much as possible we encourage the choice of Next-of-Kins to be of legal age.

In summary, please note that even if one is named as a Next of Kin in an account opening or other related banking product and services document, they will still need to provide legal documents, such as death certificate, Letters of Administration or Letters of Probate to be able to access a deceased customer's account.

(SGD)
SANDRA THOMPSON (MS)
THE SECRETARY

27TH AUGUST 2024

PUBLIC