



Blake Morgan

## **Probate Fees Guide**

A non-taxable intestate estate

(where there is no Will and no Inheritance Tax is payable)

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## **Indicative fees for administering an estate**

*You may be an Executor or a Beneficiary named under a Will; you may be a family member or friend of someone who is recently deceased; you may not know at this point in time if there is a Will.*

Whatever your circumstances, we are very experienced in dealing with this kind of work and sensitive to the challenges that you and your family may be facing. We are happy to work to your timetable, subject to any formal key dates for tax, etc. and to take on as much, or as little, of the work as you need. It's usual to have an initial call or meeting to understand the details of your situation and to explain how we can help.

We appreciate that having to deal with the administration of a loved one's estate is never easy. Aside from the emotional difficulties associated with the task, there may be practical challenges to face – perhaps the deceased lived in a different part of the country and there is a vacant property that needs to be taken care of. It can, depending on the complexity of the estate, be time-consuming and quite daunting for those having to go through the process for the first time. Please remember, if you are an Executor, then you will have a formal responsibility arising from the Will on death.

[If you are unsure about any of the terminology used in this guide, please refer to the glossary on our website for a short explanation.](#)

### **In experienced hands**

You can always be assured that your matter is being handled by someone who is suitably qualified and experienced in dealing with this kind of work. [More details about individual lawyers are shown on their profile page.](#) We use the term "lawyer" to refer to anyone undertaking fee-paying work for our clients. This includes solicitors, chartered legal executives (CILEx), licensed conveyancers, those training to become solicitors, CILEx or licensed conveyancers, and paralegals. The term "paralegal" is used to refer to someone part-qualified or without a legal qualification, but who may have a number of years' relevant experience.

### **Giving you peace of mind**

We take supervision very seriously and operate team structures where junior lawyers' work is supervised by a senior member of the team. By working in this way, we endeavour to offer a cost-effective service while ensuring a consistently high level of client care. You may therefore work with more than one individual during the course of the matter. Occasionally a member of the team may leave, or be away from the office for an extended period. If this is the case, we will tell you as soon as we can and will advise you if the fees are likely to change. We will not charge you for the time spent by a new member of the team reading into your file.

### **Understanding the need to manage costs carefully**

The links below are intended to give you an outline of our fees in 4 different scenarios. Once we have been in touch with you to understand the details of your particular matter, we can provide a specific estimate, tailored to your situation. Whilst we can take care of everything, we also know that costs are an important consideration. We are happy to discuss with you ways in which we can work together to help keep costs down. An example maybe where you wish to instruct us to obtain a Grant of Probate or Grant of Letters of Administration for you as an Executor or Administrator, but then wish to deal with the collection and distribution of the assets personally.

## **Indicative fees for obtaining Grant of Letters of Administration and full estate administration (where an IHT 400 is not required)**

To assist us in providing an indication of our fees, we have made certain assumptions about the estate:

- The deceased is UK resident and domiciled
- Under the Intestacy Rules, the entire estate passes to a known surviving spouse or civil partner, or to no more than 2 known beneficiaries
- The total value of the estate, taking into account any exemptions, is below the threshold at which Inheritance Tax is payable
- All assets are in the UK and consist of: one property, wholly or jointly owned by the deceased; no more than 3 bank or building society accounts; and no investments or shareholdings
- There are no disputes amongst family members and / or beneficiaries

Based on the above, we would expect our fees to be between **£3,500 and £4,500 plus VAT** (between **£4,200 and £5,400 including VAT**).

Any work undertaken by members of the team in London will be subject to an uplift of approximately 30% - see 'The basis of our charging' below.

Where members of this firm have been appointed to as Professional Administrators for the deceased, we charge a fixed fee of £225 plus VAT (£270 including VAT) per Administrator. If the administration of the estate becomes complex, requiring additional work by the Administrator(s), then we may have to charge for their time on an hourly basis. Their hourly rate is currently £275 plus VAT (£330 including VAT) per hour. We will always inform you in advance if we consider this necessary.

Things that would make the estate more complex and therefore increase our fees may include:

- The residence and domicile of the deceased is non-UK (or uncertain)
- There are multiple possibly unknown beneficiaries – these may include beneficiaries, who may not be adults, where the Intestacy Rules give rise to a trust
- The assets in the estate are extensive, unusual or uncertain - for example, there may be: more than one property and its condition may require further work or investigation; significant investments and/or multiple shareholdings; foreign or extensive digital assets; the deceased may have an interest in a Lifetime Trust or in an un-administered estate
- The deceased had undertaken sophisticated tax planning during his / her lifetime – there may be pre-death tax issues to resolve
- Post-death planning may be required – for example, a Deed of Variation
- There is a potential challenge to the estate
- The client prefers not to meet in Blake Morgan's office

### **The basis of our charging**

Estate administration work undertaken by us is charged at hourly rates. These are dependent on the level of seniority and experience of the lawyer doing the work for you. For our regional offices (i.e. outside London) the range of our hourly rates, excluding VAT, is:

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| • Partners and Legal Directors:                              | £240 to £400 an hour |
| • Solicitors and Legal Executives (depending on experience): | £145 to £240 an hour |
| • Paralegals, Legal Assistants and Trainee Solicitors:       | £100 to £190 an hour |

The range of hourly rates for estate administration work undertaken at our London Office is:

- Partners and Legal Directors: £350 to £450 per hour
- Solicitors and Legal Executives (depending on experience): £240 to £250 per hour
- Paralegals, Legal Assistants and Trainee Solicitors: £150 per hour

We do not presently offer fixed fees as a matter of course as this can be high risk before knowing the extent of the work involved. For this reason we have offered an indication of the expected range based on a typical scenario. Normally, we would arrange to meet with you to help you understand what's going to be involved in administering the estate and allow you to make an informed decision about how best to deal with it. Should you wish to engage us, we will update the quote to reflect the precise nature of the estate, providing milestones as necessary. We will update you on fees routinely during the course of our instructions.

### **Disbursements and other costs**

In addition to our fees above, disbursements are the third-party costs we need to pay in the course of your instructions. Once we are instructed we can be more specific but, based on the scenario above and by way of illustration, these may include:

- Landmark Dormant Assets Search: £135 plus VAT (£162 including VAT)
- Probate Court fees: £155 no VAT payable
- Swear fees: £5 (per Administrator) no VAT payable
- Statutory Advertising: £200 plus VAT (£240 including VAT) est.
- Missing Wills search: £38 plus VAT (£45.60 including VAT) \*
- Missing Wills and beneficiaries' insurance: From £400 plus VAT (from £480 inc. VAT) \*\*

(\* for a search of the National Will Register; more comprehensive searches are available

\*\* costs will vary significantly, depending on the value of the estate)

### **Additional fees**

- Electronic money transfer fee (CHAPS): £35 plus VAT (£42 including VAT)

There will also be additional costs should any of the following be required – individual costs can vary significantly and may include:

- Funeral expenses
- Property management fees (insuring, securing, clearance, maintaining or renovating)
- Property sale or transfer fees
- Accountancy fees for tax returns
- Professional tracing agents' / genealogists' fees

### **How long will it take?**

On average, estates similar to that set out in our example above are dealt with within 5-6 months. Typically, obtaining information required to apply for the Grant of Letters of Administration takes 4-5 weeks; obtaining the Grant will take 2-3 weeks. Collecting assets then follows, which can take between 4-6 weeks (where no property sale or transfer is required). Once this has been done, we can finalise the estate accounts and distribute the assets, which normally takes 4 weeks.

Timeframes would be extended if any of the complexities set out above applied. For example, it might be considered necessary to place a statutory advertisement to identify any unknown creditors to the estate. It is usually prudent to wait 6 months from the date of obtaining the Grant before making any final distributions to beneficiaries. We are happy to discuss the reasons for this when we meet or on the telephone.

**[If you are unsure about any of the terminology used in this guide, please refer to the glossary.](#)**

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