

Indicative fess for administering an Estate

where there is no Will and
Inheritance Tax is payable

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Indicative fees for administering an Estate

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

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 is 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.



“An above and beyond service was delivered by the team in administering my father’s estate. You were thoroughly professional whilst always being caring and sympathetic.”

Client

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

This document is intended to give you an outline of our fees in a particular scenario – **where there is no Will and the estate is taxable**. 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 may be where you wish to instruct us to obtain a Grant of Letters of Administration for you as Administrator, but then wish to deal with the collection and distribution of the assets personally.

How long will it take?

On average, estates similar to that set out will usually take between 8-10 months or more to administer. Typically you have up to 6 months from the date of death to make the first payment of Inheritance Tax to HMRC. Upon confirmation of receipt from HMRC, you can then apply for the Grant of Letters of Administration, which takes a further 8-12 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 and clearance has been obtained from HMRC for all taxes owing on the estate, we can finalise the estate accounts and distribute the assets, which normally takes between 6-8 weeks.

Timeframes would be extended if any of the complexities set out above applied. With an intestate estate, it is generally 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.

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:

Level	Rate per hour
Partners, Legal Directors and Consultants	£315 to £410
Solicitors and Legal Executives (depending on experience)	£165 to £260
Paralegals, Legal Assistants and Trainee Solicitors	£100 to £190

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

Level	Rate per hour
Partners, Legal Directors and Consultants	£345 to £545
Solicitors and Legal Executives (depending on experience)	£210 to £390
Paralegals, Legal Assistants and Trainee Solicitors	£125 to £235

We do not charge a premium (as a percentage of total fees) for administering estates where members of this firm have been appointed to act as Professional Administrators. Our fees are calculated based on an hourly rates basis, which currently range from **£315 to £545 plus VAT** (£378 to £654 including VAT).

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 is 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:

- Dormant Assets Search £155 plus VAT (£186 including VAT)
- Probate Court Fees £155 plus £1.50 per additional copy of the Grant (no VAT payable)
- Statutory Advertising £200 plus VAT (£240 including VAT) estimate
- Bankruptcy Search £2 per person (no VAT payable)
- Missing Wills Search £38 plus VAT (£45.60 including VAT) *
- Missing Wills and Beneficiaries' Insurance From £400 plus VAT (from £480 including VAT) **

* For a search of the National Will Register; more comprehensive searches may be required by the insurance company

** 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.

Our charges

Obtaining the Grant of Letters of Administration and undertaking full estate administration (where there is no Will, Inheritance Tax is payable and an IHT 400 is required).

Sue dies without a Will, having never married, permanently resident in the UK where all of her assets and property are located. Her long-term partner, Adam, died several years ago leaving his own assets to various nieces and nephews as Sue had her own house and savings. In the absence of a Will, the law steps in to say who inherits. Here, her closest-living relatives – two adult siblings, her sisters Helen and Paula – are entitled to inherit her estate 50-50. There are no missing/untraced beneficiaries.

Her assets are worth £500,000 (cash in three bank accounts, modest jewellery, and her house owned, mortgage free). There are no shares/investments or complicated assets and her State and occupational pensions both now cease. She did not make any significant gifts to anyone in the 7 years before she died.

Inheritance Tax is payable on Sue's estate as it exceeds the value threshold, currently of £325,000, and there are no exemptions or reliefs available.

There are no disputes about the estate amongst her family.

A Grant of Letters of Administration is required in order to deal with the assets. Helen and Paula are able to provide all information required to complete the Grant application paperwork. Sue's bank accounts hold enough money and Helen and Paula are agreeable to paying out all the Inheritance Tax up front.

The tax paperwork is turned around expediently by HM Revenue & Customs and likewise the Grant is issued expediently by the Court to Helen and Paula as the parties entitled in law.

Once the Grant issues, the cash assets are called in and paid out to Helen and Paula, as beneficiaries. They deal with selling the jewellery, and the house is transferred to them (rather than sold) to take on themselves.

Based on the above, we would expect our fees to be between £6,000 and £8,000 plus VAT (so between £7,200 and £9,600 including VAT).

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

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 – where the operation of the Intestacy Rules gives rise to a trust - for example, where a child is a beneficiary
- The estate's assets are extensive, unusual or uncertain. For example, there may be:
 - more than one property
 - (and/or) the property's condition might require further work or investigation
 - significant investments and/or multiple shareholdings
 - business interests
 - shares not quoted on the Stock Exchange
 - foreign assets
 - extensive digital assets
 - an interest in a lifetime trust or un-administered estate
 - pre-owned assets that fall within the reach of tax
- The deceased party had undertaken sophisticated tax planning during their lifetime and there may be subsisting pre-death tax liabilities or issues to resolve



“I would like to thank you for the prompt and efficient way in which you conducted our business and for making such a complex issue so clear to us. The whole process was certainly much easier than we had thought it was going to be.”

Client





- Post-death planning may be required - for example, a deed of variation
- The Will or intestacy creates an ongoing trust
- There is a potential legal challenge to the estate
- The client prefers not to meet in Blake Morgan's offices
- The estate requires missing Will and/or beneficiary insurance that necessitates more in-depth searches and investigations as directed by the insurer



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