

Probate

(uncontested cases with all assets in the UK)

Our private client team often deals with the administration of high value and complex estates which may require complicated or detailed Inheritance Tax Returns and negotiations with HMRC. Details of the team and their respective biographies and expertise can be accessed [here](#)

The precise cost of administering an estate is difficult to estimate but answers to the following questions enable us to provide a bespoke quotation of the work and cost likely to be involved:

- Is there is a valid will?
- How many beneficiaries are there to consider?
- How many properties are included?
- What type of investments are there?
- Are there any specialist assets such as business or foreign items?

We also need to consider:

- the complexities around the drafting and submission of the inheritance tax return, sources for payment of any tax due, and the nature and extent of tax or other planning which has been done
- the need for any post-death planning, such as a Deed of Variation to alter the effect of the will provisions and
- any cross-border aspects, for example where the testator or the beneficiaries lived or lives abroad.

All of these factors will be taken into account and will form the basis on which we work.

If we were instructed to apply for a grant of probate for an estate:

- with straightforward assets (which do not include non-UK assets);
- where there is no dispute regarding the disposition of the estate;
- where there is no Inheritance Tax to pay and no requirement to complete an Inheritance Tax return; and
- where our role is limited to:
 - taking instructions from the executors and reporting to them;

- obtaining details of the value of the estate;
- drafting and finalising the probate application; and
- lodging the probate application at the Probate Registry and obtaining the grant and official copies;

we would expect our legal fees to be in the range £5,000 to £6,000.

Our fee estimates are calculated on an hourly basis. The charging rates for our fee earners vary between £150 to £420 per hour depending on their seniority and experience. All fee estimates shown are exclusive of VAT which will be added where applicable to each bill.

There are also third-party charges which may be added to our invoices. These include:-

- Probate fees payable when lodging the application – see [Applying for probate](#);
- Third party identity confirmation searches – approximately £20 per individual;
- advertising in (a) the London Gazette and (b) a local newspaper (which is advised but not always required) estimated at £250; and
- searches (where relevant).

On average, the administration of this type of estate should be completed within a period of 12 to 24 months.

- Typically, the stages of the administration would be:
- obtaining the grant of probate – 3 to 6 months;
- collecting the assets – 3 to 6 weeks thereafter; and
- distributing the assets – 6 to 18 months thereafter.

These timescales are, however, liable to be impacted by delays with HMRC and the Probate Service.

Whenever we are asked to obtain a Grant of Probate we will provide a fee estimate once all relevant factors have been established.

Similarly, where we are asked to assist in the administration of the estate, including collecting and liquidating assets and distributing funds to beneficiaries, we will provide a full costs estimate at the outset and (where relevant) a revised estimate once Probate has been obtained.

All fees and costs shown above are exclusive of VAT which will be added where applicable to each bill. Our rates are subject to review annually on 1 April each year. If the rate applicable to a particular matter is varied through that review we will notify you in writing at the time.