

Probate or Letters of Administration (uncontested)

Price information

Obtaining a grant of representation and dealing with the administration of an estate can be complicated. It can take several months to make sure everything is done properly although we endeavour to deal with matters expeditiously. At Thompson Allen we offer a complete estate administration service to deal with everything for you.

Every estate is different, which is why we encourage you to contact us so we can provide you with an estimate outlining a range of potential fees to make sure that you get the right amount of support to meet your individual circumstances. We will update you regularly on your costs throughout the matter so you can stay in control throughout.

Service Information

At Thompson Allen your probate matter will be dealt with by an experienced probate solicitor with more than 20 years' experience in that field.

We will do the following:

- Check the validity of the will or make searches for one.
- Advise you in connection with obtaining the appropriate grant of representation to the estate.
- Advise you in connection with the administration of the estate; including the legal, taxation and administrative matters.

The estate administration will typically break down into the following tasks, many of which the family will be able to deal with, but we are happy to carry out all of them:

- Reading and understanding all aspects of the Will.
- Advising on intestacy and who receives what.
- Registering the death and organising the funeral.
- Paying funeral account and arranging funds to be released for this.
- Gathering information and papers relating to the estate (meeting clients)
- Working through paperwork to establish a full picture of the assets and debts of the estate
- Contacting house insurance provider to ensure coverage continues.
- Notifying relevant people: employer, tax office, subscriptions, passport, DVLA, etc.
- Notifying utility providers (to discuss paying bills, final readings etc)
- Writing to banks and institutions to obtain valuations of all the assets.
- Establishing the tax position and closure procedure for all assets.
- Notifying all creditors and establishing values for all debts.
- Posting 'Trustee Act notices' to protect executors against unknown debts.
- Filling in Inheritance Tax forms, making all available claims for exemptions, paying inheritance tax and getting clearance from HMRC.
- Arranging to transfer inheritance tax nil-rate-band (where available) to reduce Inheritance Tax payable.
- Drafting the statement of truth.
- Contacting pension providers and arranging for pension benefits to be paid where appropriate.
- Contacting state pension and benefits and settling any overpayments and claims.
- Settling all outstanding debts.

- Finalising the income tax (liaising with accountant and filing a self-assessment form where necessary). Applying for an income tax rebate where appropriate.
- Contacting employers regarding death in service and any outstanding wages.
- Property aspects:-
 - Arranging valuations
 - Arranging for family to collect items they wish to keep.
 - Arranging clearance of the property.
 - Marketing the property
 - Maintaining the property (winter drain-down and payment of service charge etc)
 - Corresponding with life insurance companies / claiming on policies.
 - Encashing assets – filling in claim/encashment forms.
 - Arranging the sale or transfer of shares and dealing with any missing certificates.
 - Complying with all deadlines (re tax, payment of legacies, council tax etc)
 - Advising on, drafting and completing deeds of variation.
 - Paying all legacies, disbursements and expenses.
 - Double-checking all liabilities are settled.
 - Drawing up estate accounts setting out all assets, debts, expenses, legacies, income and distributions.
 - Getting approval of estate accounts.
 - Arranging bankruptcy searches to protect the executors.
 - Ensuring deadlines have passed regarding claims against the estate.
 - Paying funds to beneficiaries.
 - Issuing tax certificates for all beneficiaries who require them.
 - Arranging storage of files and returning papers to family if necessary.
 - Co-ordinate advice with professional advisers in other jurisdictions in relation to assets held abroad.

Contested Probate

Providing advice in relation to dealing with actual claims made against the estate, or contentious matters in dealing with the administration of the estate would be a separate matter, however we are able to co-ordinate with other professional advisers on how this impacts the administration of the estate but only to the extent specifically agreed in writing between us.

Calculating Our Costs

Estates vary widely in size and complexity. We shall endeavour to provide an estimate of our costs once we know the issues involved, for example:-

- Number of beneficiaries.
- Whether inheritance tax is payable.
- Complexity of the estate, in particular if it includes foreign assets, shareholdings or real estate.
- If the will contains on-going trusts to set up and administer.

In all cases our costs are likely to be a minimum of £2,500 plus VAT. Our average fees for dealing with a typical probate valued at £6 million with a foreign element would be £20,000 plus VAT.

The price information below is a general indication of costs based on our experience.

Our charges will be calculated by reference to all time spent by individual fee-earners on the matter. This will include meeting you and others where appropriate, considering, preparing and working on papers, correspondence, making and receiving telephone calls, research, internal consultations and travelling.

Such time is recorded and charged in six-minute units at the hourly rates applicable to the relevant individual. Where less than six minutes is taken on a matter, a full unit of six minutes will be charged. You will be notified by letter of the rates chargeable by fee-earners dealing with your matter. These rates are exclusive of VAT. Charging rates will be reviewed from time to time and you will be notified of any changes as soon as reasonably possible. Our current hourly rates are set out below.

Grade	Description	Hourly rate
1	Partners and consultants with over 8 years' post-qualification experience	£260.00
2	Solicitors and legal executives with 4 or more years' post-qualification experience	£240.00
3	Solicitors of less than 4 years' post-qualification experience, legal executives and fee earners of equivalent experience	£200.00
4	Trainees, paralegals and fee earners of equivalent experience	£150.00

As a guideline the costs often work out at 1% of the estate or less. Our charges will reflect the amount of work involved in administering the estate. A large estate with simple assets would therefore work out at far less than 1% of the estate. However, a small estate with complicated foreign assets might work more than this.

The likely disbursements for a standard probate matter are as follows:-

Item	Amount	VAT
Probate fee*	£155.00	none
Office copies for the grant of probate	£0.50	none
Trustee Act notices to protect against	£185.00	none
Post in the London Gazette	£62.15	none

* Please note that the government has issued proposals that these fees increase up to £6,000 in estates over £2,000,000 and when these are passed, we shall publish them.

THOMPSON ALLEN

PROPERTY AND COMMERCIAL LAW SPECIALISTS

Conveyancing services are quoted for separately and our conveyancing team will be happy to provide a quote for this service.

We can usually obtain a grant of probate for a non-taxable estate within 2 weeks of submitting the application form. We typically finalise a full administration in 6 to 8 months. Simple estates will be quicker. Complex estates may be longer.

The following factors are likely to increase the cost of your matter:

- not having all of the paperwork available, or having missing or incorrect information that needs investigation and correction
- third parties not responding to our communications promptly
- dealing with unusual or complex assets or items (for example: fine art; timeshares; shares in private companies etc)