

Probate (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. 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

We will do the following:

- 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 full estate administration service we offer will typically break down into the following tasks:

- Reading and understanding all aspects of the Will.
 - Formal arrangements – 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 (Searching unclaimed assets register if necessary)
 - Contacting house insurance provider to ensure coverage continues.
 - Notifying relevant people: employer, tax office, subscriptions, passport, doctor, 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, 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 probate oath and arranging for executors to swear the oath.
 - 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 (3 for a taxable estate)

- 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 for sale of shares and dealing with any missing certificates.
- Complying with all deadlines (re tax, payment of legacies, council tax etc)
- Drafting deeds of variation where necessary.
- 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 from all residuary beneficiaries.
- 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.

We will not do the following:

- provide any advice in relation to foreign assets, however we are able to co-ordinate advice with professional advisers in other jurisdictions in relation to assets held abroad but only to the extent specifically agreed in writing between us (which may incur an additional cost);
- provide advice in relation to dealing with actual claims made against the estate, or contentious matters in dealing with the administration of the estate – these 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 (which may incur an additional cost).

Calculating Our Costs

Estates vary widely in size and complexity. In straightforward cases we can provide a fixed fee quote for uncontested probate. The fixed fee is worked out using numerous factors, in particular:-

- Number of beneficiaries.
- Value of estate, and 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.

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

We estimate a fixed fee cost is likely to range between £1,750 and £2,500 plus VAT and disbursements* for a straightforward grant of probate and administration of an estate, for estates in England and Wales, where:

- there is no more than one property in the sole name of the deceased
- there are no more than three bank accounts
- there are no debts (other than utility bills)

- there is a valid will appointing executors
- there is a single beneficiary
- there are no complications

In more complicated cases, where it is not possible to agree a fixed-fee quote, we would charge on a time-spent basis. Our charge 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. Whether our fees are based on a fixed-fee quote or a time-spent basis, they 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. All these factors are discussed prior to agreeing the basis upon which we will charge you. In the case of a fixed-fee quote we arrive at a figure which accurately reflects the work involved and which should not change during the administration unless new factors are discovered, such as previously unknown assets.

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 to increase fees in the future. We will attempt to make the application for the grant before the fee changes but due to the nature of the process and reliance on third parties this may not be possible.

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. We typically finalise a full administration in 6 to 8 months. Simple estates will be considerably quicker. Complex estates may be longer. We use the advanced case management systems to ensure the administration is progressed in the fastest possible time.

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)

As soon as any complications arise we will discuss these with you and agree the fee for the additional work being carried out in advance of any additional work being undertaken.