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Probate Price Transparency

Presented by

Scott Bailey LLP

Estate Administration Price Transparency

Managing someone's estate after they have died can be a stressful and complex process particularly if you are dealing with the loss of a loved one. We do not believe that the legal costs of a probate solicitor should be a source of uncertainty.
Your matter will be handled by one of our solicitors with support from the rest of the department. Our team has a wealth of experience and all of our solicitors specialise in this particular area of law. The team comprises of:

Richard Wadsworth
Partner & Head of Private Client

Deborah Sandys
Senior Solicitor

Katie Dougan
Associate Solicitor

Danielle Harvey
Associate Solicitor

Laura Keith
Paralegal

Alexandra Bridle
Paralegal

The team are supported by a team of legal assistants;
Laura Finlay, Sara Ridout, Toby North, Laren Merrington and Ayesha Jamil.

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scottbailey.co.uk
Tel: 01590 676933
63 High Street, Lymington, Hampshire, SO41 9ZT

With no two estates being the same, the amount of work to administer them depends on various factors such as whether or not there is a Will and the number, nature and location of assets and liabilities.

This is why we encourage you to contact us to discuss the estate, the range of options available to you as well as providing you with an estimate of potential fees to make sure you get the right amount of support to meet your individual circumstances. We will update you regularly on your costs throughout the matter so that you can stay in control.

We can offer a full administration service or provide as much or as little help as you need. For example, you may be happy to collate the valuations of the estate and obtain details of the liabilities yourself and just ask us to help with the Inheritance Tax Return and application for the Grant of Probate.

While we try to provide an accurate estimate at the outset it is not always possible to foresee every eventuality. There may be missing documentation, family disputes arising during the administration period, a claim against the estate or other issues that the family are unaware of such as debts or gifts. In those circumstances our estimate may need to be revised as the matter progresses.

There can be problems with the Will such as questions about the capacity of the person who made it or indeed if people have been left out that might have been expected to be mentioned. Those elements can significantly increase the amount of work that is needed.

Similarly, if there is no Will and enquiries have to be made about who the rightful beneficiaries would be under the rules of intestacy then that too can make it difficult to estimate the exact cost at the outset.

Administration of a non-taxable estate

We have calculated the costs we would charge for administering a straightforward non-taxable estate so that you can have a clear and transparent view of the potential fees. This would typically be an example of the estate of the first of a couple to die and the surviving spouse inherits or where the estate passes to other beneficiaries and there is not tax to pay. Charges are made based upon our hourly charging rates of the fee earners who works on your matter. We do not take a percentage of the value of the estate. We will only charge for work we undertake.

Based upon our experience, we would anticipate that it will take a senior solicitor between 15 and 25 hours of work. The estimated costs would be £4,425 to £7,375 plus VAT. Hourly rates are set according to our fee earners' roles and experience. These range from £180 for a legal assistant; £275 for a paralegal with solicitors and private client executives starting at £295 and extending up to £350 for a partner or senior solicitor. Hourly rates are subject to VAT and are reviewed annually. Details of our current hourly charge-out rates will be included in our letter of engagement with you. All VAT on fees and disbursements subject to VAT is charged at 20%.

This costs estimate is based on estates where:

- There is a valid Will that does not contain any Trusts
- There is no more than one property
- There are accounts with no more than four Banks or Building Societies
- There are no other intangible assets
- The deceased was UK domiciled and all assets are in the UK (excluding Channel Islands and Isle of Man)
- There are not more than four beneficiaries
- There are no disputes between the beneficiaries regarding the division of assets. If disputes arise, this is likely to lead to an increase in costs
- There is no Inheritance Tax payable and the Executors do not need to submit a full Inheritance Tax Return to HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

- There are no claims made against the Will or the estate
- There is no requirement for a formal tax return to be submitted for the period of administration

A full administration service would usually include:

- Corresponding with the asset holders and creditors to establish the extent of the deceased's assets and liabilities
- Ascertaining if an Inheritance Tax Return is required and if so, preparing and submitting the Inheritance Tax Return to HMRC
- Preparing and submitting the probate application to the Probate Registry
- Arrange for "statutory notices" to be placed to protect the executors if appropriate
- Collecting in or transferring the estate assets once the Grant of Probate has been received
- Produce full Estate Accounts
- Discharge any expenses or liabilities
- Distribute the final balances to the beneficiaries

This service does not include costs associated to the marketing and sale of any property held in the estate.

In addition to our fee, there will also be other costs related to your matter which have to be paid to third parties.

These include:

- The Probate Registry application fee, currently set at £526 as of 13 July 2026, plus £2 for each sealed copy of the Grant requested on application. Additional copies required after submission are £16 each
- A UK Bankruptcy Search fee of £6 plus VAT for each executor and beneficiary, which will be incurred at the outset of the matter and before any distribution is made

- A fee of approximately £200 plus VAT for the publication of Notices in The London Gazette and a local newspaper to protect Executors from unexpected claims from unknown creditors and unknown beneficiaries
- Land Registry copy title document at £7 plus VAT per document
- Bank transfer fee £42 Inc. VAT

We handle the payment of these fees on your behalf to ensure a smoother process. It may be necessary to request a payment from Executors if we do not have access to funds in the estate at the stage when payment needs to be made.

There may be additional costs involved in dealing with the administration of the estate if:

- There is no Will and the rules of intestacy apply
- The estate consists of any shareholdings
- There are assets outside of the UK (including in the Channel Islands and Isle of Man)
- The deceased was not UK Domiciled
- The deceased was a beneficiary of a Trust
- There is a Trust contained in the Will
- There is Inheritance Tax to pay or a full Inheritance Tax Account needs to be submitted to the Revenue
- Beneficiaries want to undertake any post death variations
- There is any challenge to the Will or a claim is made upon the estate
- Lifetime Income Tax of Capital Gains Tax Returns need to be dealt with
- You require us to deal with the sale or transfer of any property. This would be dealt with by our Conveyancing Department and a separate quote would be provided for this
- There are more than four beneficiaries named in the Will
- The beneficiaries request interim distributions
- There is a requirement for a formal Tax Return to be submitted for the administration period

Please contact us so that we can provide you with an individual quote based on your specific circumstances.

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Timescales

It is difficult to estimate timescales for dealing with the administration of an estate. Average estates of this nature will typically be dealt with within 9 to 15 months but are dependent upon the level of delays at the Probate Registry and if there is a property sale.

The initial stages of dealing with an administration of an estate involve ascertaining the extent of assets and liabilities in order to determine if an Inheritance Tax Return is required. It can take approximately 4 to 8 weeks to have all of the information to hand. If there is no Inheritance Tax to pay, then it can take a further 1 to 2 weeks to draft the probate application for Executors together with any supporting documentation required. Once the application is approved and signed by the Executors, it may take the Probate Registry up to 20 weeks to issue and send out the Grant of Probate.

The next stage is then to close Bank accounts and collect in any other assets, deal with the sale of the property and pay any liabilities and taxes due. At this stage, any legacies in the Will shall also be paid. Once all matters have been dealt with, we will prepare a set of Estate Accounts for approval by the Executors. After the Accounts have been approved, we can then make final distributions. We will always do our best to give you up to date timescales as the matter progresses.

Fee for obtaining the Grant of Probate only

In some circumstances, Executors may wish to simply instruct us to obtain the Grant of Probate on their behalf.

If the estate is not subject to Inheritance Tax then, on the basis that Executors provide us with all necessary information, we can offer a fixed fee of £1,500 plus VAT for this service. This fee includes an initial consultation, drafting the probate application, liaising with you regarding signing of the probate application, submitting the probate application on your behalf and providing you with the sealed copies of the Grant once obtained.

If you require further meetings, a Deed of Renunciation because an Executor does not wish to act or any other advice then there may be an increased fee which we would be able to advise you of once we know the extent of the further work that you require to be undertaken.

If a full Inheritance Tax Return needs to be submitted to HMRC then we would estimate our fees to start from £2,500 plus VAT based upon the Executor providing us with all necessary information. Again, this would include an initial consultation, preparing the Inheritance Tax Return and drafting the probate application, liaising with you regarding signing of the Return and probate application, submitting the Inheritance Tax Return to HMRC, arranging payment of inheritance tax (if applicable), submitting the application for the Grant on your behalf and providing you with the sealed copies of the Grant once obtained. However, this fee would depend upon the nature of the assets in the estate and any other circumstances that render it necessary to complete the full Return and we would be able to advise you of the cost once we have more information regarding the circumstances.

This service does not include the preparation of the deceased's lifetime or estate administration tax returns, any correspondence with the asset holders and creditors of the estate, the collection of assets and payment of liabilities, distributions to beneficiaries, preparation of estate accounts, advice on any Trusts contained within the Will, advice on implications of foreign assets and the availability of specific tax reliefs. If any of these wider administration services are required the additional time involved will be charged at our standard hourly rates.

Helping You and Future Generations

When matters have been concluded, our solicitors will be pleased to advise beneficiaries about opportunities which may exist for their own tax or estate planning.

Prices and fees quoted are subject to change. Prices quoted are correct as at the time of printing. Please contact the relevant department for up-to-date prices and bespoke quotes.

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