

Fee Transparency – Probate Services

Introduction

In most cases, our costs for administering an estate are paid directly from estate funds. We do not usually require payment upfront and will only request fees once funds become available.

We offer a **free initial meeting** to review the estate and provide you with a tailored estimate based on the information you provide. We will adhere to this estimate unless new details or complexities arise. If they do, we will provide an updated quote.

Our Hourly Rates

Our fees are calculated based on the following hourly rates (plus VAT at 20%):

- **Partner:** £370
- **Solicitor or CILEX:** £325
- **Senior Paralegal (15+ years' experience):** £290
- **Trainee Solicitor:** £210

Your written quote will outline which team members are involved. You can view their qualifications and experience via our website by clicking their names in the quote.

Probate Costs – Typical Estimates

The total cost of administering an estate depends on factors such as its size, complexity, tax liabilities, and the number of beneficiaries.

1. Simple Estates

Estimated Cost: £3,500 – £7,000 + VAT

A simple estate typically involves:

- A valid Will
- One property or a share in a property

- Clear and fully disclosed assets and liabilities
- No Inheritance Tax payable
- One or very few beneficiaries
- No need for property visits or funeral arrangements
- No claims from DWP or HMRC

2. More Complicated Estates

Estimated Cost: £7,000 – £15,000 + VAT

A more complex estate may include:

- Two to three properties
- An investment portfolio
- One or more Trusts
- No valid Will
- Several insurance policies
- Multiple beneficiaries (typically over four)
- Inheritance Tax liabilities
- Claims involving the Residence Nil Rate Band

3. Complex Estates

Starting From: £10,000 + VAT

Costs usually do not exceed 2% of the gross estate value.

Complex estates may involve three or more of the issues above or include:

- Over three properties
- Multiple high-value or varied assets

- Foreign assets
- Significant or complex debts
- Multiple or unusual legacy arrangements
- Business or agricultural assets
- Trusts or property relief claims
- IHT, CGT, and/or income tax complications
- Claims from DWP or HMRC

In some situations—such as where we are appointed as Executors or are required to fund administration ourselves—an **additional fee based on a percentage of the estate's value** may apply. This will be detailed in our initial engagement letter.

We may need to charge an additional fee if we are required to prepare a Deed of Variation to the original Will, this may be necessary as part of Inheritance Tax Planning or redirection of Legacies. This will be charged at our hourly rate.

Disbursements (Third-Party Costs)

Probate involves third-party costs that will be paid from estate funds if available. Where estate funds are not yet accessible, we may ask Executors to cover these initially (to be reimbursed later).

Typical disbursements include:

- **Probate Application Fee:** £300 plus £1.50 per sealed copy of the Grant
- **Land Registry Office Copy Entries:** £8.80 each
- **ID/Anti-Money Laundering Search Fee:** £14.40 +VAT per person
- **Bankruptcy Search (per beneficiary):** £9
- **London Gazette Notice:** £83.40 (protects Executors from claims by unknown creditors)
- **House Clearance Fees:** From £500 + VAT (depending on contents and property size)
- **Surveyor's Property Valuation:** From £600 + VAT (if required by HMRC or in high-value cases)
- **Chattels Valuation (e.g. jewellery, antiques):** Based on expert quotations (always pre-approved by you)

- **Travel Expenses:** Charged by time spent travelling; no mileage fee for car use. Train fares will be charged at cost.
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Key Stages of Probate

While each estate is unique, probate generally follows these stages:

1. Gathering Information

- Identifying all estate assets and liabilities
- Contacting banks, asset holders, and creditors
- Notifying beneficiaries of their entitlements

2. Preparing Accounts & Tax Submission

- Compiling a detailed estate account
- Submitting to HMRC and confirming tax liability

3. Applying for the Grant of Probate

- Submitting formal application
- Receiving the Grant

4. Administering the Estate

- Selling property and investments
- Paying debts, including taxes
- Collecting funds into estate account

5. Finalising & Distributing

- Preparing final estate accounts
- Calculating and settling final tax liabilities
- Distributing the estate to beneficiaries

Estimated Timescales

Due to delays at the Probate Registry, timescales are approximate:

- **Simple Estates:** 6–12 months
- **Moderately Complex Estates:** 6–18 months
- **Complex Estates:** 12–24 months

These are general guidelines and may vary based on circumstances outside our control.

Work Not Included in Probate Estimates

The following services are **not included** in standard probate quotes. If required, they will be quoted for separately:

1. **Conveyancing** related to property sales
2. Addressing **caveats** lodged against the Will
3. Dealing with **challenges to the validity** of the Will
4. **Inheritance Act claims** or disputes involving trusts/estoppel
5. **Tracing missing beneficiaries**
6. **Locating original Wills**
7. Resolving **lifetime liabilities** of the deceased
8. Disputes with the **Department for Work and Pensions**
9. Disagreements between **Executors**
10. Disputes between **Executors and Beneficiaries**
11. **Investigation of unknown assets or liabilities** where Executors have not provided full information

Your Legal Team

All probate work is handled by **Keren Vinall-Morgan, Senior Partner**, or members of her team under her direct supervision. Team members will be introduced to you formally in your engagement letter.

Client Involvement

To help reduce legal costs, we are happy to delegate appropriate tasks to clients who wish to take a more active role. We'll advise you on which tasks can be completed independently and adjust our fees accordingly.

If you would like to discuss your matter or arrange your free initial consultation, please get in touch. We're here to guide you through the process with clarity, care, and professionalism.