

COSTS INFORMATION

PROBATE & ADMINISTRATION OF ESTATES

At Dickins Hopgood Chidley we provide clear costs information at the outset of your matter, to ensure you are aware of the likely fees and expenses involved.

Our charges for probate and the administration of an estate are made purely on a time basis, with no additional charges based on the value of the estate. We believe this is a fair way of reflecting the work involved.

The process of collecting information for the probate application and completion of the necessary documents is variable depending on the number of assets and liabilities the Deceased held. The number of legacies and number of residuary beneficiaries also affects the time taken to administer an estate. It is difficult to provide accurate estimates of costs without further information about the finances of the estate, so we highly recommend you contact us directly for a quotation. However, to give you an idea of the costs you may incur, you should note the following.

Main stages

The main stages involved in applying for probate and administering an estate are as follows:

- Explaining and advising on the contents of the Will (if any);
- Notification of all relevant organisations, obtaining financial details and valuations of all assets and liabilities;
- Completion of inheritance tax return, as appropriate;
- Completion of online probate application via secure portal;
- Preparation of executor's or administrator's statement;
- Obtaining the grant of probate or letters of administration;
- Collecting in or transferring assets as required;
- Settlement of outstanding debts and placing statutory advertisements;
- Settlement of outstanding income and capital gains tax and closure of tax records;
- Preparation of estate accounts showing capital, income, outgoings and distribution;
- Distribution of the estate.



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Hourly rates

Probate and estate administration work is undertaken by either a partner, a solicitor, or a trainee solicitor. Their hourly rates are as follows:

Partner rates: £300 (+ VAT of £60)

Solicitor rates: £250 (+ VAT of £50)

Trainee Solicitor rates: £160 (+ VAT of £32)

Our trainee solicitors' work is checked and managed by their supervising partner, so there will often be a combination of rates applicable to your matter.

Estimated costs

Estates vary greatly in their complexity and the volume of work involved. The following estimated costs will provide you with some guidance:

Simple estate: £2,500 (+ VAT of £500) - £5,000 (+ VAT of £1,000)

Medium complexity estate: £5,000 (+ VAT of £1,000) - £12,000 (+ VAT of £2,400)

High complexity estate: £12,000 (+ VAT of £2,400) - £25,000 (+ VAT of £5,000)

Factors affecting the costs

The exact cost will depend on the individual circumstances of the matter. Matters which will affect the costs incurred include the following:

- Whether there is a valid Will
- The number of properties
- The number of bank or building society accounts
- Whether there are shareholdings, investments, premium bonds, and/or personal items to be sold
- How many beneficiaries there are
- Whether there are disputes between beneficiaries on division of assets. If disputes arise this will lead to an increase in costs
- Whether a full inheritance tax return is to be completed and whether there is inheritance tax payable
- Whether there are any claims made against the estate
- If there is a property to be sold, the costs for this are excluded from the probate fees and will be calculated in accordance with our conveyancing costs.



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Disbursements

Disbursements are costs which we have to pay to third parties, which we recover from you. The likely disbursements in a probate matter are additional to the costs referred to above. They are likely to be as follows:

- Probate application fee of £273, plus £1.50 per additional official copy of the Grant
- Land Registry entries for any property owned of £6 (+ VAT of £1.20) per property
- Bankruptcy-only Land Charges Department searches £2 (+ VAT of 40p) per beneficiary
- £200 - £250 for statutory advertisements in the London Gazette and a local newspaper, which help protect against unknown claims.

If formal income or capital gains tax reporting is needed, then we will refer this to an accountant who will make a charge for completing the estate tax returns, which we shall discuss with you if the need arises.

How long will this take?

On average, an estate in which there is no tax payable may be dealt with within 6-9 months. A more complex taxable estate is likely to take longer. Typically, obtaining the grant of probate takes 12-20 weeks. Collecting assets then follows, which can take between 6-8 weeks. Once this has been done, we will ensure any liabilities and expenses are paid, clear any taxes due, and then distribute the assets, which can take between 4 weeks and 6 months, depending on whether there are any HMRC issues.

Further information

To discuss your circumstances in further detail, please contact Emily Payne or Alison Richardson on 01488 683555 or by email: epayne@dhc-solicitors.co.uk or arichardson@dhc-solicitors.co.uk