

Shipleys Probate Services Limited

Our fees

No two estates are the same, and therefore we will price each estate based on initial, free of charge, conversations with the executors/family. Any initial estimate given is just an estimate. There are often unexpected events which occur, and sometimes things work out much simpler than expected. However, if we ever consider our fees will exceed our estimate, we will discuss with you before proceeding further.

Any estimate will take into account:

- the scale of the job and the amount of work we are expected to do, and
- how much the family wishes to undertake themselves.

Our approach is flexible, and for very large estates an initial estimate is incredibly difficult to state accurately.

We can do as much or as little as required in relation to the estate reporting and administration, but clearly the more we undertake, the higher our fees will be.

Our professionals

We have a highly experienced team of tax advisors and administrators who will undertake the work. Our focus is on the numbers and form-filling – the initial part of probate being the completion of a tax return and a financial reconciliation of the estate.

The ongoing administration is backed up with accounts and estate tax returns where required, and for which we are best placed to help.

However, not being lawyers, there are a few areas we cannot help with, but we have a very efficient and friendly network of solicitors who we work with to complete those tasks. Their input is not included in our fees. Also, we cannot deal with contentious estate work.

We are required to publish the details of our prices for probate work in relation to uncontested cases where all the assets are in the UK. This includes both estates where the deceased has left a will and those where the deceased has died without leaving a will (intestate) and this covers both taxable and non-taxable estates.

All our fees are quoted individually based on the time we expect will be required to complete the work – broken down into stages if required. We will always give a cost estimate, and will always keep the client informed as to their position on fees, discussing any material increase before those charges are incurred.

Our staff charge out rates vary from £100 an hour to £450 an hour depending on the level of complexity of the work involved.

An example of our fees:

Scenario 1 Estimate - £3,000 plus VAT and disbursements

Obtaining a grant of probate (simple)

- We are dealing with a new client whose mother has recently died.
- Her mother was a widow, so the last surviving parent.
- There is a valid, non-contested will.
- The daughter, our client, has been named as the sole executor in the will.
- The total value of the estate is £200,000 and consists mainly of bank accounts.
- There are no complicating factors.
- We will need to help our client to obtain a grant of probate, but you will not need to administer the estate.

Scenario 2 Estimate - £12,000 plus VAT and disbursements

Full administration of estate including obtaining a grant of probate (complex)

- A new client whose father has recently died.
- His father was a widower, so the last surviving parent.
- The deceased also inherited the entire estate of their spouse.
- There is a valid and non-contested will.
- The son, our client, has been named joint executor in the will with his sibling.
- The total value of the previously inherited estate is £370,000 and the value of the estate in question is £350,000. The combined total takes the value of the estate over the IHT threshold.
- The estate includes cash, residential properties, a property abroad and a private pension scheme.
- There are beneficiaries under 18 so the process involves setting up a trust.

In this scenario we would complete the IHT forms, apply for probate and help with the administration, the fee reflects this, but is also more variable due to the potential for unknown factors to affect things.

If a solicitor was required for the transfer of the property, that cost would be in addition to our fees, as would the involvement of any overseas professionals.

Other disbursements in addition to our fee might include:

- Probate application fees and the cost of multiple copies of the grant
- Advertisements for creditors in the Gazette and a local paper
- Bankruptcy searches for the deceased and beneficiaries
- Any costs relating to the valuation of assets

As noted, in the simplest of cases the fee estimate will likely be more accurate, and the more complex an estate, the higher the fee will be and for the very high value and complex estates a simple estimate will not be possible.

Timeframes

This, again, depends very much on the complexity of the estate, and whether tax is payable.

In the very simple case on the previous page, the timeframe for the application for probate to be submitted might be as little as 6-8 weeks – the tax form can go to HMRC as soon as the valuations are finalised, and they undertake to issue the relevant certificate to the probate office in 28 days.

However, for more complex estates, the application can take up to 6 months whilst the assets of the estate are investigated and valued, and following grant of probate, the following administration might take a significant amount of time after that – some complex estates are running many years after death.

Advice after Probate

Once Probate has been granted and the administration is in process, we or Shipleys LLP can advise further on planning for the estate assets – there may be significant opportunities to rearrange things after the death to help others or save current or later tax liabilities. This is not included in any initial quote, but can be discussed further once the assets of the estate have been established.

For more information

For more information about our probate services, contact:

Steve Foster in our Godalming office on t: +44 (0)1483 423607

David Hartles in our London office on t:+44 (0)20 7312 0000

Shipleys Probate Services Ltd

10 Orange Street, Haymarket, London WC2H 7DQ. T +44 (0) 20 7312 0000

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