

Probate Administration

For many of our clients the administration of an estate in a tax-efficient manner with a full appreciation of the legal obligations that arise for executors and administrators can be a daunting affair. This is why many of our clients choose to instruct an experienced team of experts such as those engaged by our firm. By instructing us to deal with this important transaction on your behalf you will receive a dedicated and personal service from an experienced and skilled member of our team who will do all that they can to complete the transaction as soon as possible and to keep you informed and updated regularly during the process.

Given the pitfalls that can be encountered in the administration of an estate we would encourage executors and administrators to consider carefully the following benefits of instructing an experienced, regulated, up to date with the latest legislation, and professionally trained team of experts such as can be found in our team. These benefits include:

- Specific focus on the minimisation of potential inheritance, income and capital gains tax liabilities
- Experienced property valuation negotiators
- Collection of estate funds removing the need for a separate executor's bank account
- Experienced in liaising with charities and other non-personal beneficiaries
- Advice on intestacies, contested estates, competence and deeds of variation
- Direct access to Probate Registry and HMRC
- Will trust and life interest trust administration and advice
- Completion of trust and estate tax returns and preparation of estate accounts
- Advice on executors' and administrators' obligations and personal liabilities

Our team has over 100 years of collective experience in delivering high quality work in all matters relating to estate administration, wills and lasting powers of attorney, trust and tax planning services. The team has particular expertise in high value estates and inheritance tax matters.

The pricing information provided here only relates to uncontested probate administrations where all the assets are located in the UK. The information set out below will indicate the different range of charges that we estimate will normally apply to taxable and non-taxable estates. However, it is important to note that our charges are generally based upon the amount of time spent on the administration and this will vary in accordance with the size and complexity of the estate. Different charges will also apply where the administration is limited to obtaining the grant of probate rather than the full estate administration process which will include the collection and distribution of the assets, the repayment of any liabilities, advice in relation to the calculation and minimisation of any taxation payable and the completion of estate accounts.

Clients should recognise that much of our expertise is focused upon ensuring that the estate suffers as little tax as possible and that the assets are collected and distributed in the most efficient manner. Furthermore, clients should not underestimate the legal obligations and possible potential liabilities that can arise upon the executors if the administration is not conducted in accordance with the applicable legislation.

If the administration includes arranging for the sale or transfer of one or more properties or for the sale or transfer of shares / securities in an unlisted company, then additional charges will apply which are not included below and for which separate fee estimates should be obtained.

Full Administration Service - Applying for the grant, collecting and distributing the assets

Stages of the process

To complete the full administration of an estate we will normally need to complete the following activities. The length of time taken at each of these stages will vary according to the size and complexity of the estate.

- Checking the validity of the Will and if necessary, making enquiries to check it is the latest Will.
- Writing to financial institutions and organisations to obtain balances of accounts and values of investments and other assets and details of pensions.
- Liaising with the surviving spouse if applicable regarding any ongoing pension payments.
- Writing to utilities and transferring accounts to surviving spouse where necessary. Obtaining details of any other debts.
- Valuing shareholdings, liaising with deceased's financial advisor.
- Obtaining property ownership details from Land Registry and current market valuations.
- Reviewing information received from those financial institutions and organisations as well as information from the Executors/Administrators to prepare a statement of assets and liabilities for approval.
- Making searches for unclaimed assets or occupational pension schemes as and where required.
- Arranging payment of the funeral account from the deceased's bank account.
- Requesting further information from the Executors/Administrators and other relevant third parties regarding any gifts given by the deceased prior to death.
- Requesting information from the Executors/Administrators and other relevant third parties regarding any life interest or income from trusts that may have been received by the deceased.
- Preparing an IHT Return and Oath for Executors/Administrators to sign and swear.
- Completing closure forms for bank accounts.
- Filing the IHT Return and lodging the application for Probate.
- On receipt of the Grant, sending the office copies to any bank and building society or investment

provider as necessary with the instructions of the Executors/Administrators for closure or transfer of the accounts/investments.

- Arranging the placing of statutory notices advertising for any creditors if the Executors/Administrators instruct us to do so.
- Correspondence with the Executors/Administrators and beneficiaries to update them on progress during the course of the administration and advising on the transfer or disposal of other assets in the estate if appropriate.
- Correspondence with the IHT Office/District Valuer's Office to agree the value of the estate/property, any tax reliefs, and any further IHT payable if applicable.
- Collecting and paying estate money into our client account, where it will be subject to the protection of the Law Society's rules regarding solicitors' firms' handling of clients' money.
- Correspondence with all legatees and beneficiaries to obtain ID documentation.
- Settlement of any outstanding bills and expenses if required and arranging payment of legacies if applicable, undertaking bankruptcy searches.
- Finalising the administration tax situation by reporting details of any income received or capital gains realised by the Executors/Administrators during the course of the administration of the estate to HMRC either informally or a full Tax Return may need to be submitted, liaising with tax specialists accordingly.
- Preparing Estate Accounts detailing all monies received and paid during the course of the administration of the estate for approval by the Executors/Administrators and residuary beneficiaries.
- Arranging bankruptcy searches and making interim distributions to the residuary beneficiaries during the course of the administration where necessary and obtaining signed receipts for the funds.
- Providing tax deduction certificates to the residuary beneficiaries where necessary.
- Making final distributions on completion of the administration to the residuary beneficiaries and providing final Estate Accounts.
- Closure of the files, undertake all due diligence, storage of original documents.

The amount of our legal fees will vary according to the size, value and complexity of the estate and the estimated amount of time it is likely to take to complete the administration and a number of other factors.

By way of example, we can advise you that the estimated costs payable on a typical and straightforward full estate administration service where all of the assets and beneficiaries are located in the UK with a gross estate value of up to £300,000 would be calculated as follows:

We anticipate this will take between 20 and 40 hours work at £285 - £395 per hour + £57 - £79 VAT per hour.

Total costs estimated at £5,700 - £15,800 + £1,140 - £3,160 VAT (excluding disbursements).

The exact cost will depend on the individual circumstances of the matter. For example, if there is one beneficiary and no property, costs will be at the lower end of the range. If there are multiple beneficiaries, a property* and multiple bank accounts, costs will be at the higher end.

A Client Due Diligence (CDD) fee of £49 plus £9.80 VAT per client will be incurred at the outset of the matter.

* As noted above any conveyancing services relating to the sale of the property will be charged separately and are not included in the above costs estimate.

We will handle the full estate administration process for you. This estimate is for estates where:

- There is a valid will.
- There is no more than one property.
- There are no more than 5 bank or building society accounts.
- There are no intangible assets.
- There are no unlisted investments or securities.
- There are no more than 5 other assets or liabilities.
- There are no more than 10 beneficiaries.
- There are no disputes between beneficiaries on division of assets or any other matter. 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 account to HMRC.
- There are no claims made against the estate.
- There are no more than 2 tax returns to be completed during the administration.
- There are no will or life interest trusts to administer.
- There are no deeds of variation required.
- There are no issues of competence or bankruptcy in relation to any of the beneficiaries.

Disbursements not included in this fee would be estimated at:

- Probate application fee of £300.
- Bankruptcy-only Land Charges Department searches (£2 per beneficiary plus VAT)
- Approximately £200 + £40 VAT posting in The London Gazette and a local newspaper – Protects against unexpected claims from unknown creditors.

This will give a total estimated cost of between £5,215 and £15,515 + £1,043 - £3,103 VAT.

Disbursements are costs related to your matter that are payable to third parties, such as court fees. We handle the payment of the disbursements on your behalf to ensure a smoother process.

Potential additional costs:

- If there is no will or the estate is of a higher value than indicated in the above example or if any of the conditions set out above are not met there is likely to be additional costs that could range significantly depending on the estate and how it is to be dealt with. We can give you a more accurate estimate of our costs once we have more information.
- If any additional copies of the grant are required, they will cost £16 (1 per asset usually).
- Dealing with the sale or transfer of any property in the estate is not included.

For those transactions where we are unable to provide a fixed fee estimate or where the transaction is more complicated than we understood at the outset an hourly rate may be applied. This rate will vary according to the experience, seniority and qualification of the legal practitioner involved and the following table shows the hourly rates that are currently applicable:

Partner £350 - £395 per hour + £70 - £79 VAT per hour
Senior Private Client Lawyer £325 - £350 per hour £65 - £70 VAT per hour
Private Client Lawyer £275 - £325 per hour + £55 - £65 VAT per hour
Legal Assistant £185 - £250 per hour, only available for certain duties + £37 - £50 VAT per hour

All rates shown above are with VAT at the current rate of 20%.

We aim to provide you with a professional, personal, and cost-effective solution for all your legal advice needs. Please contact us so that we can provide you with a personalised cost estimate.

More information on our pricing and our other terms and conditions of business will be provided in our letter of engagement and terms of business.

How long will this take?

On average, estates that fall within this range are dealt with within 6 and 15 months. Typically, obtaining the grant of probate takes between 6 and 24 weeks. Collecting assets then follows, which can take between 4 and 12 weeks. Once this has been done, we can distribute the assets, which normally takes 4 and 12 weeks.

Partial or 'Grant Only' Administration Service - Applying for the Grant

We can help you through this difficult process by obtaining the Grant of Probate on your behalf.

Stages of the process

In order to complete the partial administration of an estate we will normally need to complete the following activities. The length of time taken at each of these stages will vary according to the size and complexity of the estate.

- Provide you with a dedicated and experienced probate expert to work on your matter.
- Identify the legally appointed executors or administrators and beneficiaries.
- Accurately identify the type of Probate application you will require.
- Obtain the relevant documents required to make the application.
- Complete the Probate Application and the relevant HMRC forms.
- Make the application to the Probate Court on your behalf.
- Obtain the Probate and securely send two copies to you.

The amount of our legal fees will vary according to the size, value and complexity of the estate and the estimated amount of time it is likely to take to complete the administration and a number of other factors.

By way of example, we can advise you that the estimated costs payable on a typical and straightforward partial estate administration service where all of the assets and beneficiaries are located in the UK with a gross estate value of up to £300,000 would be calculated as follows:

- We anticipate this will take between 8 and 9 hours work at £285 + £57 VAT to £395 + £79 VAT per hour. Total legal fees are estimated at between £2,500 - £3,000 + VAT where no IHT forms are needed and £3,500 - £5,000 + VAT where IHT400 and detailed submissions to HMRC are required.
- A Client Due Diligence (CDD) fee of £49 plus VAT £9.80 per client will be incurred at the outset of the matter.

Disbursements are costs related to your matter that are payable to third parties, such as court fees. We handle the payment of the disbursements on your behalf to ensure a smoother process.

The estimated costs of disbursements are as follows:

- Probate court fee of £300.

For those transactions where we are unable to provide a fixed fee estimate or where the transaction is more complicated than we understood at the outset an hourly rate may be applied. This rate will vary according to the experience, seniority and qualification of the legal practitioner involved and the following table shows the hourly rates that are currently applicable:

Partner £350 - £395 per hour + £70 - £79 VAT per hour
Senior Private Client Lawyer £325 - £350 per hour £65 - £70 VAT per hour
Private Client Lawyer £275 - £325 per hour + £55 - £65 VAT per hour

All rates shown above are with VAT at the current rate of 20%.

We aim to provide you with a professional, personal, and cost-effective solution for all your legal advice needs. Please contact us so that we can provide you with a personalised cost estimate.

More information on our pricing and our other terms and conditions of business will be provided in our letter of engagement and terms of business.

How long will this take?

On average, estates that fall within this range are dealt with within 3 to 6 months.

Meet Our Private Client Team

We have fifteen members of the team who may work on your matter. Regardless of who works on your matter, they will be supervised by Rhiannon Winter and Andrew Titmus. Rhiannon is a Partner at Parfitt Cresswell and one of our most senior and accomplished lawyers, having qualified as a Solicitor in 2000. She heads up our Executor Administration Team, is an Associate Member of STEP (Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners) and specialises in guiding clients through the intricate Probate process. Andrew is a Partner at our firm and the driving force behind our Estate Planning Team. With a career spanning over a decade, Andrew is an experienced private client lawyer, familiar with high net worth clients and safeguarding their wealth for future generations. He specialises in estate planning, tax, and trusts. As a full member of STEP (Society of Trust and Estate

Practitioners), Andrew brings a wealth of knowledge and insight to his practice.

Alice Clack qualified as a Solicitor in 2025 and specialises in Wills, Estate Planning, Lasting Powers of Attorney and Estate Administration.

Membership: Law Society

Please find a link to Alice's full bio on our website here at: <https://www.parfittcresswell.com/lawyer/alice-clack/>

Andrew Titmus qualified as a Solicitor in 2010 and specialises in Estate Planning, Tax and Trusts.

Membership: Law Society

Please find a link to Andrew's full bio on our website here at: <https://www.parfittcresswell.com/lawyer/andrew-titmus>

Bronwyn White is a Senior Associate Solicitor and Notary Public in our Private Client Department. Qualified in 2019, Bronwyn has a wide range of experience specialising in Wills, complex and high-net worth estate planning and probates. She has a particular interest in estates with an international element.

Membership: Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners (STEP) and an accredited member of the Association of Lifetime Lawyers (formerly SFE).

Please find a link to Bronwyn's full bio on our website here at:

<https://www.parfittcresswell.com/lawyer/bronwyn/>

Carole Rowe qualified as a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives in 1993 and works in the areas of Probate, Wills and Powers of Attorney.

Membership: Chartered Institute of Legal Executive

Please find a link to Carole's full bio on our website here at: <https://www.parfittcresswell.com/lawyer/carole-rowe>

Heidi Shearman is an Associate Member of the Chartered Institute for Legal Executives with over 6 years' experience of Court of Protection/Private Client work. She specialises in applications to the Court of Protection and the preparation of Lasting Powers of Attorney and Wills.

Membership: Chartered Institute of Legal Executives.

Please find a link to Heidi's full bio on our website here at: <https://www.parfittcresswell.com/lawyer/heidi-shearman>

Jo Purse is a Solicitor, qualifying in October 2020. She specialises in Wills, Lasting Powers of Attorney and Probate and Estate Administration.

Membership: Law Society

Please find a link to Jo's full bio on our website here at: <https://www.parfittcresswell.com/lawyer/jo-purse>

Jon Andrews is a Private Client Executive with over 20 years' experience working for law firms. He specialises in Wills, Lasting Powers of Attorney and obtaining Probate and Administration of Estates.

Please find a link to Jon's full bio on our website here at: <https://www.parfittcresswell.com/lawyer/jon-andrews>

Lizzy Byne qualified as a member of the Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners (STEP) in 2012 and is experienced in dealing with all aspects of Trusts and Estates.

Membership: Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners (STEP).

Please find a link to Lizzy's full bio on our website here at: <https://www.parfittcresswell.com/lawyer/lizzy-byne>

Louise Penfold qualified as a Solicitor in 2019 and has several years' experience of Private Client Work, specialising in Probate, Wills and Lasting Powers of Attorney.

Membership: Law Society

Please find a link to Louise's full bio on our website here at: <https://www.parfittcresswell.com/lawyer/louise-penfold>

Mahreen Paswal qualified as a Solicitor in 2013 and specialises in all aspects of Private Client work, including Wills, Tax Planning, Powers of Attorney, Court of Protection and administration of Estates. **Membership:** Law

Society.

Please find a link to Mahreen's full bio on our website here at: <https://www.parfittcresswell.com/lawyer/mahreen-paswal>

Peter Jelly qualified as a Solicitor in 1978 and specialises in Wills, Trusts and Probate.

Membership: Law Society

Please find a link to Peter's full bio on our website here at: <https://www.parfittcresswell.com/lawyer/peter-jelly>

Rhiannon Winter qualified as a Solicitor in 2000 and has over twelve years' experience working on Private Client matters. She specialises in Wills, Lasting Powers of Attorney and Probate.

Membership: Law Society

Please find a link to Rhiannon's full bio on our website here at: <https://www.parfittcresswell.com/lawyer/rhiannon-winter>

Simon Landivar qualified as a Solicitor in 2010 and specialises in all aspects of Wills, Lasting Powers of Attorney, Probate, Trusts and IHT Planning.

Membership: Law Society

Please find a link to Simon's full bio on our website here at: <https://www.parfittcresswell.com/lawyer/simon-landivar>

Victoria Boothman

Victoria Boothman qualified as a solicitor in 2015 and has a wealth of experience specialising in Wills, complex and high net worth estate planning and probates. She deals with both testate and intestate estates (estates where there is no Will), including insolvent estates and estates where there are corporate and difficult to divide assets.

Membership: Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners (STEP) and is an accredited member of the Association for Lifetime Lawyers (ALL).

Please find a link to Victoria's full bio on our website here at: <https://www.parfittcresswell.com/lawyer/victoria-boothman/>

Zoe Neale qualified as a Solicitor in 2023 and specialises in Probate, Wills and Lasting Powers of Attorney.

Membership: Law Society

Please find a link to Zoe's full bio on our website here at: <https://www.parfittcresswell.com/lawyer/zoe-neale>

Business to Business Undisputed Debt Recovery Not Exceeding £100,000.00

In matters relating to commercial (business to business) debt recovery on unpaid invoices of up to £100,000 we charge on an hourly-rate basis calculated as to the time spent on the case, regardless of the level of the indebtedness. We do not offer a fixed fee structure for all or part of any such service.

Resolution of debt recovery matters may be achieved either on the basis of a straightforward letter before action or be the subject of court proceedings which may or may not settle early on. Accordingly, the range of costs and timescales is virtually inestimable: the answer to 'how long is a piece of string' is – twice as long as half its length. Should the debtor pay up immediately on demand it follows that the time, and thus costs, is significantly less than were the case argued out in court.

Our fees for issuing court proceedings, applying for judgment, and enforcing the same will depend on if the debt is disputed and, if so, to what extent. Typically, an average fee of around £6,000 - £13,200 plus disbursements* and (where applicable) VAT should be budgeted for in undisputed claims based on the following estimates:

- Taking your instructions and reviewing relevant documentation/correspondence: £1,500 - £4,500 + VAT £300 - £900
- Making and reviewing any appropriate searches, such as at Companies House: £350 - £750 + any VAT £70 - £150 [where charged to us]
- Preparing and sending a pre-action letter: £650 - £1750 + VAT £130 - £350
- Receiving payment and remitting same to you or in the absence of payment drafting and issuing court proceedings: £1,750 - £4,500 + VAT £350 - £900
- If the debtor/defendant fails to respond, within the required period or at all, applying for default judgment: £350 - £700 +VAT £70 - £140
- Where appropriate providing you with advice on enforcement of the judgment: always remember – getting judgment is one thing, enforcing it another, depending on the debtor's financial circumstances: £350 - £1000 + VAT £70 - £200
- A Client Due Diligence (CDD) is incurred at the outset of the matter. The amount charged will be £49 plus £9.80 VAT per individual client and £125 plus

As stated, these estimated costs apply where your claim is in relation to an unpaid invoice which is not disputed and also where enforcement action is not needed. If the other party disputes your claim at any point, we will discuss any further work required and provide you with revised advice about costs.

The timescale is variable, depending on the local court's workload, particularly having regard to court staff absences; and should enforcement of any unpaid judgment be necessary this will inevitably extend such timescales. Note that these projected fees do not apply to contractual disputes where liability is denied: separate estimates should be requested for such work.

*The court fee for starting proceedings depends on the amount claimed plus interest: (NB: no VAT is payable on Court fees).