

Disbursements

There are costs involved in administering an estate whether or not you employ a professional or deal with the administration yourself. These are called disbursements and are costs related to probate matters that are payable to third parties, such as court fees and include the following :-

- Probate Court Fee – currently £155 application fee plus 50p for each additional copy required (we usually recommend 5 copies so fee would be £157.50). These fees are due to increase as per the table below (a date for implementation of the changes is yet to be announced)

Value of Estate	Current Fee	New Fee	Increase
under £5,000	No fee	No fee	no change
£5,000 - £50,000	£ 215.00	No fee	reduction of £215
£50,001 - £300,000	£ 215.00	£ 250.00	increase of £35
£300,001 - £500,000	£ 215.00	£ 750.00	increase of £535
£500,001 - £1,000,000	£ 215.00	£ 2,500.00	increase of £2,285
£1,000,001 - £1,600,000	£ 215.00	£ 4,000.00	increase of £3,785
£1,600,001 - £2,000,000	£ 215.00	£ 5,000.00	increase of £4,785
over £2,000,000	£ 215.00	£ 6,000.00	increase of £5,785

- Bankruptcy Searches £2 per name (to be carried out against each Personal Representative and Beneficiary)
- Official Copies of the property title (if any) £3 per property
- £300 - £400 Post in The London Gazette and a Local Newspaper – Protects against unexpected claims from unknown creditors

Potential additional costs:

- Inheritance Tax
- Income Tax
- Capital Gains Tax
- If original share certificates or policies are missing an indemnity fee will be payable to the Registrars
- Land Registry assent or registration charges. These are determined by reference to a scale based on the value of the property
- Managing an estate property - such as obtain probate valuations, undertake a security check and maintenance, drain down the heating etc. Accountant costs for preparation of income tax returns (if required)

Legal Fees

As a guide, our fees for a full estate administration will typically start from £3,000 to £5,000 (plus VAT) plus disbursements for a straightforward estate. For more complex estates or estates with numerous assets, properties, farmland or foreign assets the fees will typically be in the region of £10,000 to £15,000 (plus VAT) plus disbursements.

Our fees for a full estate administration are charged on an hourly rate depending on the experience and qualification of the person carrying out the work. Most often, an estate administration will be carried out by a mix of the team members as work is allocated to the appropriate grade. Our hourly rates are:

Team Member	Hourly Rate
Partner	£225 (plus VAT) per hour
Solicitor / Senior Private Client Executive	£185 (plus VAT) per hour
Paralegal	£150 (plus VAT) per hour
Trainee Solicitor	£125 (plus VAT) per hour

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.

As part of our legal Fee we will:

- provide you with a dedicated and experienced probate practitioner 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;
- draft a legal Statement of Truth for you to sign;
- make the application to the Probate Court on your behalf;
- obtain the Grant of Probate and securely send two copies to you;
- collect and distribute all assets in the estate.

Who pays the costs?

All estate administration costs are paid from the estate itself. However, you may be required to make some upfront payments such as the probate court fee, house insurance (if applicable), utility bills (if applicable), some funeral costs, death certificate fee and other minor payments. We recommend keeping a list of all the payments you make on behalf of the estate and these should be refunded to you once the estate has released money from the deceased's assets.

How long will Estate Administration take?

This will vary from estate to estate but on average, we would expect the following timescales to apply:

	Non-Taxable Estate	Taxable Estate
Gathering date of death information	8 - 12 weeks	8 - 12 weeks
Completing short form IHT return	2 - 4 weeks	N/A
Completing long form IHT return and all accompanying forms, obtaining HMRC clearance to apply for probate	N/A	8 - 10 weeks
Obtaining Grant of Probate	2 - 4 weeks	2 - 4 weeks
Collecting in assets and paying liabilities (including income tax)	8 - 12 weeks	8 - 14 weeks
Preparing accounts, obtaining approval and arranging final distributions	4 - 6 weeks	6 - 8 weeks
Total	24 - 36 weeks (6 - 9 months)	32 - 48 weeks (8 - 12 months)

What would increase these timescales?

The time estimates set out above could be increased by any of the following:

- An invalid Will
- More than one property in the estate
- Intangible assets i.e. something that is not physical for example goodwill, patents and trademarks
- Disputes or problems with executors and/or beneficiaries
- A claim being made against the estate
- Litigation connected to the estate
- HMRC compliance investigation or a delay obtaining clearance
- DWP benefits investigation

These are just some of the examples of causes of delay but it is not an exhaustive list.