

WILLS AND PROBATE

Our team has over 20 years of collective experience in delivering high quality work in all matters relating to wills and estate administration.

We have two members of the team who may work on your matter. Regardless of who works on your matter, they will be supervised by John Mellon Partner and Head of probate and estate administration.

John Mellon – Partner/Director

John is the head of our team and has over 20 years' experience in private client work, specialising in wills and probate. John has been working in this area since he qualified and has helped thousands of families and individuals.

John qualified as a solicitor in 1984 after attending Sir Thomas Rich's school in Gloucester and the College of Law in Guildford

John has also completed several professional development courses in probate and estate administration.

Veronica Harman – Partner/Director

Veronica qualified as a solicitor in 1999. She attended the University of West of England and completed the Graduate Diploma in Law and Legal Practice Course.

She has been working in our probate team since she qualified

Veronica has also completed several professional development courses in probate and estate administration.

Below is an example of typical costs for dealing with a typical straightforward estate. It is not an estimate for a specific case and in all cases we will discuss with you your needs and tailor an estimate to suit your particular case. The exact cost depends on the individual circumstances of the matter. For example if there is one beneficiary and one property, the costs will be lower than if there are multiple beneficiaries, a property and multiple bank accounts.

This example quote is for an estate where:

- There is a valid will
- There is no more than one property
- There are accounts with no more than three separate institutions
- There are no other intangible assets (eg shares)
- There are up to 4 beneficiaries, all of whom are adult
- No trusts are involved, for example of a share in a house or for minor children.
- There are no disputes between beneficiaries on division of assets. If disputes arise this will lead to an increase in costs
- There is no inheritance tax payable and the executors do not need to submit a full account to H M Revenue & Customs
- There are no claims made by creditors against the estate (eg Department for Work and Pensions often make claims for repayment of pension credit after death)

In relation to an estate of this type this may take between 5-10 hours work at a cost of £220.00 per hour. Consequently the costs are likely to be in the range of £1,200.00 - £1,800.00 plus VAT.

Disbursements are additional to our fees. Typically they will be:

- Probate application fee of £150.00 plus .50p for each additional copy of the grant. Usually one copy grant is required per asset in the estate.

- Bankruptcy Land Charges Department search (£2.00 per beneficiary and the name of the deceased)
- Approximately £100.00 – statutory advertisement in the London Gazette including agency fees for arranging the post and the London Gazette's charge. This protects against unexpected claims from unknown creditors.
- Approximately £150.00 – statutory advertisement in a local newspaper including agency costs of placing the advertisement. This is only required where there is a property in the estate. This also helps to protect against unexpected claims. The precise costs are based on the column size of the notice.

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

On average estates that fall within this range are dealt with within 3 months. Typically obtaining the grant of probate takes 4 – 6 weeks from our first meeting with you, depending on your being able to supply all necessary information promptly. Collecting assets then follows which can take between 2 – 4 weeks but depends upon how promptly the financial institutions respond once they are sent a copy of the grant. Once this has been done we can distribute the assets which normally takes 2 – 3 weeks assuming that the executors respond promptly once they have received draft estate accounts.

Additional costs

In other types of cases there are likely to be additional costs which could range significantly depending on the estate and how it is to be dealt with. We can give you a more accurate quote once we have more information. The following is not an exhaustive list but will give some idea of circumstances that will usually result in additional costs:

- Dealing with the sale or transfer of any property.
- There is no will
- The estate includes shareholdings (stocks and bonds)
- A full inheritance tax account is required
- Deeds of variation
- Gifts to minors
- The will sets up any kind of trust