Probate and estate administration

Tailored probate support to simplify estate administration and taxes.

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Dealing with loss while managing the practicalities of death and taxes can feel overwhelming.

Our regulated and licensed specialists are here to ease that burden, taking care of the HMRC requirements. Whether you are dealing with a simple estate or a more complex situation, we'll manage every stage efficiently and sensitively, ensuring compliance, minimising stress, and giving you peace of mind.

Advice

Our dedicated probate and estate specialists combine technical expertise with a people-first approach. We tailor our support to the circumstances of each estate - whether that involves HMRC applications, preparing accounts, or distributing assets.

We'll work closely with you throughout the process, sharing regular updates so you know where things stand. We look at the whole picture and make the process as clear and manageable as possible, so you can focus on what matters most during this challenging time. We'll continue to assist with probate, covering advice on the process, completion and filing of the inheritance tax account, assistance with the application for the grant of probate, administration of the estate, estate accounts, tax returns for the executors, and tax planning for the family. We can also advise on and look after any trusts created prior to and following the death.

For existing clients, we are often best placed to handle their estate on death, as after acting for them over the years, we are familiar with their assets and their wishes. For this reason, one of us may have been appointed executor or trustee. For new clients, we work closely with personal representatives (PRs) to establish a seamless service which suits their needs.

Inheritance tax (IHT) account and probate

We start by obtaining a copy of the last will and a summary of the deceased's assets. We may well already have these on file. We advise on the right IHT form to complete, how to deal with complex assets and valuation issues, assist with the obtaining of information, complete the form for approval by the PRs and submit it to HMRC. We complete the form and make the application for the grant or, if preferred, can work with the client's own solicitors to do so. Thereafter we liaise with HMRC to obtain the IHT assessments and advise on payment of tax.

Administration of the estate, accounts, tax returns and R185s

The administration will usually be dealt with by the client, but if required, we can deal with or assist with this, selling the assets or transferring them to the legatees, paying the liabilities and advising on distributions. We will suggest how to minimise the administration burden and if tax returns can be avoided. We will prepare the forms R185 required by the legatees for their personal income tax reporting. In most cases, detailed accounts will not be required, and we can prepare statements showing how the funds were realised and distributed. However, for substantial or contentious estates, we will prepare detailed accounts, including for court proceedings if required. If there is a trust created under the will, we can advise on the registration of that trust and assist the trustees with compliance matters.

Tax planning

There may be opportunities to minimise the tax liabilities arising following a death. Ideally, we will have had the opportunity to advise clients on their wills and IHT planning prior to death. If not, we will discuss what can be done to rearrange the estate, advise on deeds of variation or obtaining legal advice for claims under the Inheritance Act. There are income tax and capital gains tax mitigation opportunities during the estate administration period too, such as timing of distributions for directing the year of assessment for the income due to legatees and transfer of assets prior to sale for making use of any losses or legatees non-UK tax status.

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Other services

Not included in the estate are pensions and insurance policies and we can refer these to our Financial Planning Team for advice. They can also assist the legatees with dealing with their new found wealth. If the deceased was involved in a business our Corporate Finance Team would be happy to advise ways of selling or restructuring.

Fees

At every stage of the process, our team will support and advise you in an empathetic and pragmatic manner, to bring the estate to closure efficiently, keeping costs to a minimum.

Whether or not we are acting as executor, we do not charge fees based on the value of the estate, but charge our usual hourly rates for time spent. We can offer fixed fees for consultations and compliance work and quote in advance for the more detailed advice work. However, fixed fees for the Probate and Estate Administration work could end up being more than if fees are chargeable on a time spent basis, because an element of a fixed fee is a reserve for contingencies.

Also, we need to reserve the right to revise the fixed estimates where the original information is inaccurate, the circumstances change or complications arise during the process that significantly increase the amount of the work required.

Timescales

There are many steps involved in obtaining Probate and Administering an Estate. Gathering the information, ascertain liabilities, obtain valuations, preparing IHT Account, preparing tax returns to date of death, preparing the probate application. Typically, these stages take 3 to 5 months to complete. Once approved by the PRs the IHT Account is submitted but it is necessary to wait about a month before the probate application can be made. These stages typically take 8 to 12 weeks to complete.

After the grant has been issued, collecting the assets, settling liabilities, preparing accounts, registration of the Estate, if required, preparing tax returns and the transfer of the assets to beneficiaries typically takes between 3 to 6 months to complete with non-complex estates.

Probate Services

These reserved legal activities we offer are regulated by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales (ICAEW) and we are insured, giving clients peace of mind.

Compensation scheme

In the unlikely event that we cannot meet our liabilities, clients may be able to seek a grant from the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales (ICAEW) Compensation Scheme.

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Get in touch

For specialist probate and estate administration advice tailored to your unique circumstances, please get in touch:

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