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Information

Our fees for administering an estate

Our fees for administering an estate (depending on complexity) are set out below. Our fees are inclusive of VAT (currently at 20%) and apply irrespective of whether our trust corporation is acting as a personal representative ('PR')

Simple UK estate: £6,000 – £24,000 (which is £5,000 – £20,000 plus VAT)

Medium complex estate: £24,000 – £60,000 (which is £20,000 – £50,000 plus VAT)

Highly complex estate: £60,000 - £120,000 (which is £50,000 - £100,000 plus VAT)

The above fees are an indication of our typical costs for administering an estate. We will always provide information on specific fees at the start of the matter, with the bespoke costs depending on complexity of the individual estate and the scope of our instructions.

The above fees have been calculated with reference to:

- 1 The factors that make an estate simple or complex to administer (see [here](#)).
- 2 Our current probate team (see [here](#)).
- 3 Our current hourly rates (see [here](#)).
- 4 The typical stages and timings of an administration (see [here](#)).



Please note that there are other external costs associated with the administration of an estate as detailed [here](#).

Communication of scope and costs

If you wish to consider instructing us to administer an estate, we will provide detailed information of our costs as soon as the relevant information is available, and we will continue to review costs and our progress for the duration of our instruction. We may be able to offer fixed fees for some aspects of the work and will aim to do so where possible.

Mills & Reeve Trust Corporation acting as a PR

Mills & Reeve Trust Corporation may be acting / appointed as one of the PRs of the estate. As a PR, they (together with any other personal representatives) have primary responsibility for ensuring that the administration is dealt with appropriately. The PRs may appoint Mills & Reeve LLP to assist them with this and to carry out parts of the administration on their behalf.

Please see [here](#) for further details of the background, options and implications of appointing Mills & Reeve Trust Corporation Limited as a PR and / or instructing Mills & Reeve LLP to carry out work involved in administering an estate.

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What makes an estate simple or complex?

Estates may be simple or more complex depending on several factors and this will influence our fees. An accurate indication of costs can only be given once all the factors of a particular estate have been considered.

Factors that might make an administration simpler or more complex:

- **Will:** A well-drafted valid Will or an intestacy situation (meaning there is no valid Will) where the relevant individuals are limited, identifiable and able to act will lead to a more straightforward administration. A simple estate may include a small number of easily identifiable beneficiaries, but a more complex estate might include a large number of beneficiaries or beneficiaries who are difficult to locate, several specific and / or cash legacies and / or formal trust structures.
- **Range and location of assets:** Assets in a typical simple estate will be located only in the UK and include one residential property, a range of bank accounts but no business assets. A more complex estate may include multiple assets or liabilities (including those not easily determined), international / business / landed estate assets, complex investments, more unusual assets and / or insurance policies.
- **Other overseas issues:** If the deceased had links to jurisdictions outside the UK, this will make the estate more complex as it is likely that the involvement of specialist colleagues will be necessary to determine the application of inheritance tax to worldwide assets.
- **Tax:** A simple estate may attract no inheritance tax because of value or exemptions but a more complex estate may involve the calculation and payment of inheritance tax, including making claims for available reliefs.
- **Scope of instructions:** The personal representatives may only require professional assistance with certain aspects of the administration, for example the work needed to obtain the grant from the Probate Court, with the rest of the work being carried out by other parties. Commonly however, Mills & Reeve LLP will assist with every stage of the administration process. The scope of services required will affect our level of fees.
- **Disputes:** If there is a formal claim in relation to an estate, such as that the Will is invalid, that a party hasn't been appropriately provided for, or that the personal representatives are acting improperly, this will necessitate separate instructions with specialist colleagues – see [here](#). However, even if no formal claim is brought, if the personal representatives are unable to give united instructions, or if any of the parties are uncooperative or obstructive, this can make the administration of an estate significantly more complex.

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Our current probate team

We have different grades of legal professionals working within the Private Client team.

- **Partners** – they have typically been working as qualified lawyers (either as a solicitor or barrister) specialising in private client for a minimum of 14 years, with frequent involvement in estate administration work for the duration of that time.
- **Chartered Legal Executives** - they typically have more than 10 years' experience in the administration of estates.
- **Principal Associates, Senior Associates, and Associates** – they handle matters that correspond to their level of seniority and number of years' experience.
- **Trust & Estate Practitioners, Paralegals and Trainee Solicitors** (who spend four months in the team) – they always work under the direction and supervision of an authorised team member.

A full list of the team members who specialise in the administration of estates is available in Appendix One - see [here](#).

The administration of each estate is managed by a team of individuals working within our probate team.

This would typically comprise:

- 1 A matter manager
- 2 A supervisor
- 3 A matter partner (who may also act as supervisor) (the 'core team')

The core team will together advise the PRs on the legal process, options and strategy. Where appropriate and from time to time, the core team may be assisted by other solicitors, paralegals, trust & estate practitioners or trainee solicitors. This might be to carry out the work efficiently and cost effectively, or where specialist knowledge (for example estate disputes, business or landed estate, international issues or charity expertise) is required.

The matter manager will be the primary point of contact. The identity of the matter manager will be carefully selected to match the complexity and scope of the individual matter. Likewise, the supervisor will be selected to compliment the grade, knowledge and skills of the matter manager and will always be a solicitor or CILEx Chartered Legal Executive (with additional Probate Practising Rights) experienced in the administration of estates.

Generally, complex matters will involve greater partner involvement and straightforward matters will require less partner involvement.

Current hourly rates for our probate team

The current hourly rates for the team members typically involved in this work are:

| | Hourly rates inclusive of VAT | Hourly rates exclusive of VAT |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Trainee solicitor / paralegal / trust & estate practitioners / Chartered legal executives | £240 - £480* | (£200 - £400 plus VAT)* |
| Associate / senior associate / principal associate | £318 - £576* | (£265 - £480 plus VAT)* |
| Partner | £612 - £696** | (£510 - £580 plus VAT)* |

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The hourly rates quoted are inclusive of VAT (currently at 20%). If during a matter the rate of VAT changes, the inclusive hourly rates will be adjusted accordingly. These rates exclude partners working in our London office on complex international matters.

We review our rates each year (with any changes applying at the beginning of June) and we will notify the PRs of the changes if necessary. If we are instructed on an estimated costs basis, the increase in hourly rates may affect the total estimate of costs.

Scope of services

As part of our fee, we will:

- Identify the legally appointed PRs and beneficiaries entitled to the estate and advise on the required distribution under the Will or intestacy.
- Explain the obligations and duties of the PRs.
- Identify the appropriate probate process for the type of estate, including what application forms and documentation are required and what organisations need to be involved.
- Obtain the necessary information to calculate the net estate and taxation position.
- Complete the HMRC forms and the probate papers and arrange for your approval and signature.
- Make the application on your behalf, secure the grant and provide you with copies.
- Collect in and distribute the assets of the estate on your behalf.
- Finalise the inheritance, income tax and capital gains tax position of the estate.

Typical stages and timings of the administration of an estate

It is often the case that lay executors (see below) or family members will obtain the death certificate and arrange the funeral. With guidance if needed, those individuals will also take immediate steps to secure assets and identify / obtain any valid Will and identify and locate the beneficiaries. If there is no-one available to take these steps in relation to the assets, Will and the beneficiaries (and we must facilitate this work) this is a factor that would make an estate more complex for pricing purposes.

Overall typical timescales

Simple UK estates: estimated 12 to 18 months

Medium complex estates: estimated 18 to 24 months

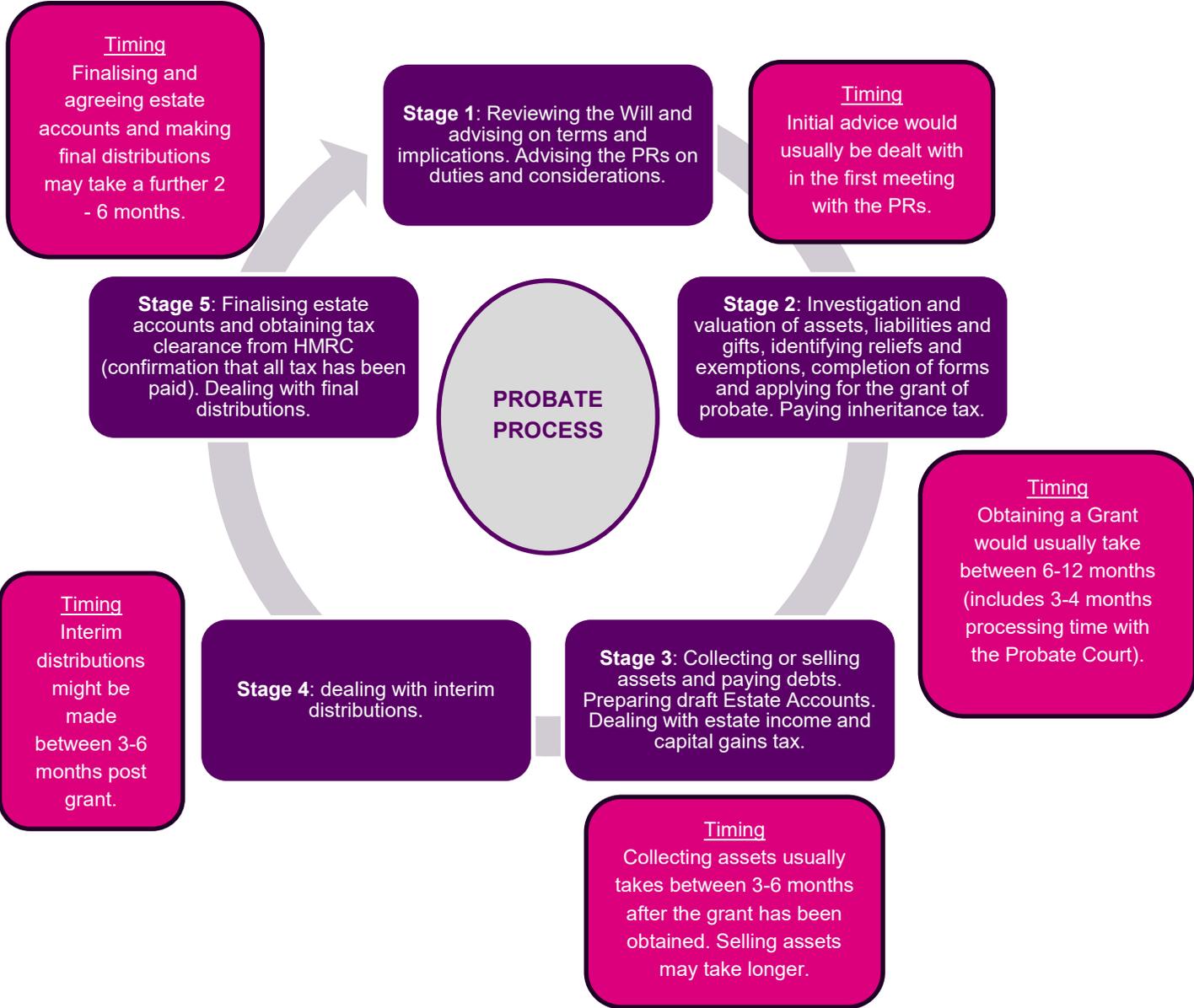
Highly complex estates: estimated 24+ months

Even if there are no disputed issues within the estate, a highly complex estate can take years to administer. This may be due to:

- Complex asset valuations or tax issues.
- Enquiries with HMRC, who can take months or even years to review claims and nonstandard papers.
- Processing time with the Probate Court, which can take significant amounts of time to process estates with any unusual elements.
- Foreign assets in multiple jurisdictions can be complex to value and transfer or sell.
- Illiquid assets such as property may be challenging to sell.

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Example stages of a standard administration (not highly complex)



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Who administers an estate? Mills & Reeve Trust Corporation acting as a personal representative for the estate

Personal representatives (“PRs”)

When making a Will, a person (the ‘**Testator**’) is entitled to appoint a person or organisation to be the executor/s of their Will. The executors can be one or more individuals or, alternatively, a professional executor may be appointed either to act alone or to work alongside other executors who are often family members or friends (often known as ‘**lay executors**’). A professional executor may be an individual, a law firm or a Trust Corporation.

If a person dies without having made a Will, or without a valid executor being appointed, there is a list of individuals who can deal with the administration. These are called ‘administrators’. Both executors and administrators are known as PRs.

Following the death of the Testator, the PRs can administer the estate themselves or, they can engage the services of an ‘authorised’¹ professional to help them.

Administering an estate can be summarised into two ways:

- 1 **PR’s Work** – decision making, reviewing, managing and checking the administration process, ensuring compliance with the terms of the Will or intestacy provisions, and the taxation rules.
- 2 **Delegated Work** – the day-to-day work involved with the administration process, including information gathering, completion of the relevant forms, liaising with the Probate Court and HMRC, transferring and selling assets and paying tax.



Mills & Reeve LLP

We are experienced in administering estates both on behalf of the PRs and acting as a PR through our trust corporation Mills & Reeve Trust Corporation Limited (‘**M&RTC**’).

Involvement of Mills & Reeve LLP in estate administration may happen in the following ways:

- 1 **Appointment** - the Testator may appoint M&RTC as one of the executors in their Will (or alternatively, following a death, the court may appoint M&RTC as an independent administrator) to carry out the PR’s Work.
- 2 **Instruction** - after the death of the Testator, the PRs (whether this includes M&RTC or not) may instruct Mills & Reeve LLP to help them with the Delegated Work, which is detailed above.



While PRs who include M&RTC can choose to appoint Mills & Reeve LLP to carry out the Delegated Work, they do not have to. They may equally decide to appoint another authorised professional organisation to assist them, if this is the best option at the time. If that is the case, M&RTC would still charge (through Mills & Reeve LLP) for the PR’s Work, but the scope and cost of the Delegated Work would be agreed with the other professional.

For more details of the process and costs associated with M&RTC acting as a professional executor, please see our briefing note ‘**Appointing Mills & Reeve Trust Corporation as a professional executor**’.

¹ Aspects of the administration of an estate are a ‘reserved’ legal activity under the Legal Services Act 2007 (Act), which restricts who can charge for carrying out those activities under the law. Mills & Reeve LLP is regulated and authorised by the Solicitors Regulation Authority to carry out this reserved legal activity. Our individual team members are either authorised or exempt from the restrictions by virtue of acting being under the direction and supervision of an authorised partner or colleague.

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Other external costs

The administration of estates often attracts various disbursements, which are costs payable to third parties. Typical disbursements include:



- **Probate court fee** – £300 (for an estate worth over £5,000 – there are no costs for estates under that amount) plus £16 for each additional copy of the grant of probate (which do not attract VAT)
- **Land Registry search** – £8.40 to £13.20 (£7 to £11 plus VAT at 20%) per property
- **Legal and public notices** - notices placed in The London Gazette and a local newspaper to notify unknown creditors and potential claimants of the death and give them a defined period to make claims. These notices provide statutory protection to the PRs from claims made outside the defined time period. They tend to range from £288 to £540 (£300 to £450 plus VAT at 20%)

These costs may be subject to change.

Other work

The administration of an estate may result in linked but discrete pieces of work, which are not always clear at the beginning. If an instruction is accepted by Mills & Reeve LLP to carry out such work, this would be quoted for separately and is not included in the above prices. Examples might be:

- **Conveyancing charges** in connection with the sale of property – whether this is a sale in the hands of the PRs or once beneficial ownership has passed to the intended beneficiaries.
- **Tax planning for beneficiaries** - a beneficiary to an estate in administration may undertake further tax planning to improve their own position, often by redirecting or restructuring their entitlement before assets vest. Common strategies include executing a Deed of Variation within two years of death to redirect part of or all their inheritance to other individuals or into a tax-efficient trust, allowing the redirection to be treated for inheritance tax (“IHT”) and (in some cases) capital gains tax (“CGT”) as if made by the deceased. Beneficiaries might also consider timing asset disposals to make use of CGT allowances, equalising estates between spouses or civil partners to improve future IHT efficiency, or using the inheritance to fund lifetime gifting strategies such as potentially exempt transfers or contributions to pensions and ISAs to reduce their own eventual taxable estate.
- **Litigation affecting the estate** - formal litigious action in the UK arising from the administration of an estate typically centres on disputes about the validity or interpretation of the Will, the conduct of PRs, or the proper distribution of assets. Common claims include challenging a Will’s validity (for example, on grounds of lack of capacity, undue influence, or improper execution), Inheritance (Provision for Family and Dependants) Act 1975 claims for reasonable financial provision, and executor-related applications such as removal of a PR for maladministration. Other proceedings may involve breach of fiduciary duty, estate accounting disputes, or contested probate actions, all of which are usually brought before the High Court’s Chancery Division.
- **Compliance work for Will Trusts** - this may include preparing and filing trust registration details on the Trust Registration Service and ensuring that trustees are properly briefed on their ongoing fiduciary, accounting and reporting duties as the trust moves into its operational phase.

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Get in touch

Our experienced team operates nationwide. For further advice, please get in touch with your local contact.

Transparency Statement

This information is provided in accordance with the Solicitors Regulation Authority's transparency requirements regarding price and service. It is correct at the time of publication and subject to revision.

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Appendix One - Private Client Probate Team as of 14 January 2026

For further information regarding any of the team members below, please see their profiles on Mills & Reeve LLP's website [Looking for legal advice in the UK | Mills & Reeve](#)

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