

# Application for a probate search

www.theprobateservice.gov.uk

When completing your form please use CAPITAL LETTERS

## Details of the Deceased

Surname

Forenames

Probate details (if known)

Grant type:

Issuing Registry:

Grant issue date:

Date of death/search period\*

Address

\* (see Conditions of Service  
on next page)

## Document requirements/payment

Do you want a copy of the Will (if any)?

Yes

No

If Yes, how many?

Do you want a copy of the Grant of Probate  
or Letters of Administration (if any)?

Yes

No

If Yes, how many?

I enclose a crossed cheque/Postal Order  
(payable to HM Courts Service) to the value of

(see notes on fees  
on next page)

£

## Your own details

Name/Organisation

Your ref. (if any)

Address/DX number and  
Exchange

Please send the completed form, together with your payment, by post to: The Postal Searches and Copies Department, The Probate Registry, Castle Chambers, Clifford Street, York YO1 9RG (DX720629 York 21)

## For official use

# Postal Searches and Copies Department: Information and Conditions of Service

**Applicable dates and records held:** The Postal Searches and Copies Department has indexes relating to all Probate records for the whole of England and Wales from 11 January 1858 up to the present day. You may apply for a copy of any proved Will, as well as a copy of the Grant of Representation. The Grant will tell you who were the Executors or Administrators (those appointed to gather in and distribute the estate). It may also tell you the name of the Solicitor acting for them (if any) and the value of the estate, although usually only in very broad terms. The financial summary shown on the Grant is unfortunately the only information relating to the estate that the Probate record contains. No inventory or estate accounts are available. Occasionally, further details are available from the Capital Taxes Office, but you will normally need the written consent of the executors or administrators. **Please note that, if Probate has not been granted, the Probate Service will have no record of the estate and will therefore not be able to provide copies of any document relating to it.**

If the death was recent, it may be that Probate has not yet been cleared. The Probate procedure itself normally takes some weeks, and there may have been a considerable further delay before the application for Probate was made. Consequently, it may be advisable to wait two or three months after the date of death before having a search made, in order to allow time for the Probate process to be completed.

If you apply before Probate has been completed, you will be notified that no details are available. If you wish to pursue your enquiry, you will need to reapply after a suitable interval, enclosing a further fee and resubmitting all the relevant details, or enter a Standing Search. A Standing Search remains in force for a period of 6 months from the date of entry and provides copies of the Will (if any) and Grant if a Grant issues during this period. Contact the Postal Searches and Copies Department or any Probate Registry for further details.

**Other parts of the UK and the Republic of Ireland:** The jurisdiction of the Probate Service is limited to England and Wales. If the deceased died domiciled in Scotland, you could try contacting HM Commissary Office, 27 Chambers Street, Edinburgh EH1 2NS (Tel: 0131 247 2850) if the death occurred after 1985, or the Scottish Records Office, HM General Register House, Edinburgh EH1 3YY (Tel: 0131 535 1334) for records prior to this. For Northern Ireland, contact the Probate and Matrimonial Office, The Royal Courts of Justice, Belfast BT1 3JF (Tel: 028 9023 5111), or, if the death occurred more than 7 years ago, the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, 66 Balmoral Street, Belfast, BT9 6NY (Tel: 028 9025 1318). For the Republic of Ireland, contact the Probate Office, Four Courts, Dublin 7 (Tel: Dublin 725555), or the National Archives Office, Bishop Street, Dublin 8 (Tel: Dublin 407 2300) for records more than 20 years old. The Channel Islands and the Isle of Man also have independent Probate Courts.

**Fees:** When returning the completed application to the Postal Searches and Copies Department in York, please also enclose the fee of £5.00. Each **extra copy** of the same document ordered at the same time will attract an additional fee of £1.00. Cheques or Postal Orders should be crossed and made payable to 'HM Courts Service'. Fees from abroad should be paid by International Money Order, cheque or draft, payable through a United Kingdom bank, and must be made out in £ sterling. We are currently unable to accept payments by credit or debit card, nor are we able to receive search requests by telephone. Please contact the Postal Searches and Copies Department for details of fees for special copies (for instance if you are administering estate abroad), and mark your application accordingly.

The standard fee covers a 4-year search starting from the year in which the death occurred (or the year from which you ask us to start searching). Longer searches are charged at a rate of £3.00 per 4-year period, so that an 8-year search will cost £8.00, and a 12-year search £11.00. Please specify the period to be searched (as well as the date of death if known) and send the appropriate fee. If the death occurred within the last 4 years, the search will be made up to the most recent index. If the search is successful, we will obtain and forward copies of the Will and/or Grant as requested. If no Grant has issued in this time, you will be notified accordingly. We aim to respond to your request within 21 working days.

If a record is traced, the standard fee includes one copy of the Will, if any, and Grant, if requested. Please state clearly which document(s) you require. If the details you supply are incomplete, ambiguous or incorrect and the documents cannot be traced as a result, you will be asked to reapply, giving the correct information and enclosing a further payment. We cannot accept responsibility for the accuracy of the search unless full and correct details are given that accord with the information supplied on application for the Grant, normally the information in the Register of Deaths. If there is insufficient information to make a search, we will contact you for further details. **Please note that your payment is not refundable in the event of a negative search result.**

**Original documents:** If you are applying for copies of older documents, you should be aware that some of these are in poor condition. Although we make every effort to produce a legible copy from the documents we hold, a small proportion will be of unavoidable poor quality. Furthermore, copies are normally made from the record copies held by the Probate Service. This means that documents prior to the early 1930s will be, by default, copies of manuscript or typescript record copies, and not facsimile copies of the original document. If you want facsimile copies of the original, you will need to mark your request very clearly to that effect.