PROBATE AND ESTATE ADMINISTRATION

Probate instructions

Someone has died. Section 01 is all Aaron needs to tell you what has to happen and what it costs. Blanks are normal.

HOW THIS WORKS

01 Fill in what you can
Nothing here has to be complete. Blanks are normal at this stage.

02 Send it back
Email the saved file to aaron@safeharbour.legal. He replies within one working day.

03 Aaron checks the route
What has to be done, what it will cost, and what has to happen first.

04 A fee in writing
Agreed before any work starts, and it does not move unless the work does.

WHO AARON ACTS FOR

The executors who are applying, or the closest relative where there is no will. Not the beneficiaries, and not the estate itself. Aaron will say so in writing before he starts.

WHAT IT COSTS

Grant only probate USUALLY WITHIN 12 WEEKS OF THE APPLICATION (HMCTS)	**£950** + VAT, so £1,140
Grant only probate with the full inheritance tax account HMRC'S CODE FIRST, THEN USUALLY WITHIN 12 WEEKS OF THE APPLICATION (HMCTS)	**£1,800** + VAT, so £2,160
Estate administration 6 TO 9 MONTHS	from **£3,000** + VAT, so £3,600
Estate administration with a property, a full tax account or no will 9 TO 14 MONTHS	from **£5,000** + VAT, so £6,000

Grant only means Aaron obtains the grant and you deal with the rest. Estate administration means he deals with all of it. Which one fits is a conversation.

The two estate administration figures are starting fees, not fixed fees: the number of accounts, a property to sell and a full tax account all move them.

Every figure is plus VAT at 20 per cent, and the figure with VAT is beside it. Fees reviewed 14 September 2026. What the fee covers, what it does not and anything paid to somebody else are set out on the closing page, and the fee for your own matter is confirmed in writing before any work starts.

Inheritance tax comes first Where inheritance tax is due, it is paid before the grant can be applied for, and interest runs from a date fixed by the death. Aaron works out the tax first.

SEND IT BACK TO

aaron@safeharbour.legal

01262 310 850 · safeharbour.legal

Answer section 01 and send it. That is enough for Aaron to open the file, confirm the fee and book the appointment. A blank is an answer: it tells him what to ask you about.

IF AN ADVISER SENT YOU THIS

No referral fee is paid or received in either direction.

Adviser name	Firm	Email	FCA or firm reference

01

Start here

If you fill in nothing else, fill in this. It is enough for Aaron to open the file, confirm the fee and book the appointment.

NEEDED TO START
ABOUT 5 MIN

Your full name

Your relationship to the person who died

Phone

Email

Your address, with postcode

How would you like Aaron to reply?

☐ Email ☐ Phone ☐ Post

The person who died

Their full name

Date of birth

DD / MM / YYYY

Date of death

DD / MM / YYYY

Their last address, with postcode

Is there a will?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Do you have the original? A photocopy is not enough. If you are not sure, answer no.	☐ Yes	☐ No
Is there a house or a flat?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Is anyone unhappy about the will, or about the arrangements? Better said now, in confidence.	☐ Yes	☐ No
Is anything at risk right now? An empty house, an unpaid insurance premium, a business that has stopped.	☐ Yes	☐ No

Roughly what is everything worth, before debts?

A round number is enough. It decides which route the estate takes.

Roughly what is owed?

Mortgage, cards, loans, care fees.

Anything that would make this easier

Someone else Aaron can contact if he cannot reach you, and their number

Anything that would make it easier to deal with Aaron

Hearing, sight, reading, a language, a time of day, or someone you would like with you.

That is section 01 finished

Your name	Signature	Date
		DD / MM / YYYY

Send it now to aaron@safeharbour.legal if that is as far as you have got today. It is a complete thing to send. The rest of the form is what Aaron goes through with you, and you can send it later or bring it with you.

02 About the person who died

Take these from the death certificate where you can.

ONLY IF IT APPLIES
ABOUT 4 MIN

Any other names they used

Including a maiden name, and any spelling used on an account or a deed

Place of death

Where were they living permanently when they died?

The country, and the county if it was England or Wales

National Insurance number

Marital status at the date of death

☐ Married ☐ Civil partnership ☐ Widowed
☐ Divorced ☐ Separated ☐ Single

Date of the marriage or civil partnership	If widowed, the date their spouse died	Date of divorce
DD / MM / YYYY	DD / MM / YYYY	DD / MM / YYYY

	YES	NO	NOT KNOWN
Do you have the death certificate?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not known
Is a coroner's inquest open?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not known
Had they ever lived, worked or held property outside the UK?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not known
Were they receiving means-tested benefits?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not known

03 The will, who is applying, and the family

Who is named to deal with the estate, what the will says, and who was alive at the death.

ONLY IF IT APPLIES
ABOUT 5 MIN

No will? Leave the top half blank and go to the family schedule below.

Date of the will

DD / MM / YYYY

Where the will is held

If a bank or another firm holds it, say which. Aaron sends you an authority to sign.

Everyone the will names, whether or not they are applying. Under the last column: applying, not applying, died before, died since, or not decided.

EVERYONE NAMED AS EXECUTOR	ADDRESS, WITH POSTCODE	RELATIONSHIP	EMAIL OR PHONE	APPLYING, OR WHY NOT
EG David Hartley	8 Quay Road, Bridlington	son	07700 900456	applying

More than this? There is a continuation sheet at the back, headed C. Write the section number beside each line.

If any executor is not applying, is that for now or for good, and why

Too far away, unwell, does not want to, or wants to keep out of it for now. It changes the paperwork.

Anyone applying with you who is not named in the will, and their relationship to the person who died

Where there is no will, the closest relatives apply.

Date of each codicil, and where it is

A codicil is a later signed change to the will. Write none if there are none.

	YES	NO	NOT KNOWN
Are there any codicils, that is later signed changes to the will?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not known
Does the will leave anything to charity?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not known
Does the will create a trust, or leave anything to someone under 18?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not known
Has anyone sold, given away or cleared anything already? Cash taken out, the car sold, the house cleared. It is common and it is better known now.	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not known

Who inherits

Aaron writes to, pays and accounts to every one of them. If there is no will, put the closest living relatives instead.

FULL NAME	RELATIONSHIP	ADDRESS, WITH POSTCODE	SHARE
EG Kate Ellis	daughter	14 Tennyson Ave, Brid	one third

More than this? There is a continuation sheet at the back, headed C. Write the section number beside each line.

The family

The court asks who was alive at the death, whether or not there is a will.

The family, by name

Children first, then anyone else the estate might pass to: parents, brothers and sisters, and their children. Say whether a brother or sister shared both parents or one.

RELATIONSHIP	FULL NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	ALIVE AT THE DEATH?	IF NOT, DID THEY LEAVE CHILDREN?
EG son	David Hartley	02 / 11 / 58	yes	

More than this? There is a continuation sheet at the back, headed C. Write the section number beside each line.

	YES	NO	NOT KNOWN
Did a husband, wife or civil partner survive them?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not known
Were they living with a partner they were not married to?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not known

04 What the estate holds

ONLY IF IT APPLIES
ABOUT 7 MIN

Values at the date of death. Estimates are expected. Aaron writes to every institution for the formal figures.

If a husband, wife or civil partner died first

It changes the route and the fee, and Aaron will need their death certificate and their will.

Their full name	Date they died	Did they leave everything to the survivor?
	DD / MM / YYYY	

Property

Names, rather than "jointly", and include a holiday home, a rented-out property and anything abroad. The names on the title and the money that bought it are not always the same, so both are asked. A restriction is a paragraph in the register beginning "No disposition by a sole proprietor". If you have a copy of the register it shows all three; if not, leave them and Aaron gets one.

PROPERTY ADDRESS	WHOSE NAMES ARE ON THE TITLE	WHO PUT THE PURCHASE MONEY IN	A RESTRICTION ON THE TITLE	ROUGHLY WHAT IT IS WORTH	MORTGAGE LEFT
EG 31 Marton Road, Brid	him and his wife	both equally		240,000	none
			☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ NOT KNOWN		
			☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ NOT KNOWN		
			☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ NOT KNOWN		
			☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ NOT KNOWN		

More than this? There is a continuation sheet at the back, headed C. Write the section number beside each line.

	YES	NO	NOT KNOWN
Did they ever sign anything saying they owned a property in shares? A declaration of trust, or wording in the deeds.	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not known
Is any property empty now?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not known
Does the will leave the home to children or grandchildren?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not known

If a property is empty, who insures it and until when

Bank and building society accounts

Current accounts, savings, ISAs and old passbook accounts. No bank will talk to Aaron without the number, and it is on any statement.

BANK OR BUILDING SOCIETY	ACCOUNT OR ROLL NUMBER	SOLE, OR JOINT WITH WHOM	ROUGHLY THE BALANCE
EG Yorkshire Building Society	1234 5678	sole	18,400

More than this? There is a continuation sheet at the back, headed C. Write the section number beside each line.

Investments, shares, ISAs, NS&I and Premium Bonds

Include share certificates from old privatisations and building society conversions, and any NS&I savings certificates or Premium Bonds, with the holder's number if you have it.

PROVIDER	WHAT IT IS	HOW MANY SHARES OR UNITS	SOLE OR JOINT	ROUGHLY WHAT IT IS WORTH
EG Aviva	ordinary shares	482	sole	about 1,900

More than this? There is a continuation sheet at the back, headed C. Write the section number beside each line.

Pensions and life insurance

Every pension, including the state pension and old works pensions, and every life policy, including one through work.
What matters most is whether anything has been paid out already, and to whom.

PROVIDER	PENSION OR POLICY	WHO IS NOMINATED, OR IS IT IN TRUST	ANYTHING PAID OUT YET?
EG Aviva	works pension	his wife	not yet

More than this? There is a continuation sheet at the back, headed C. Write the section number beside each line.

Household contents, roughly

Vehicles

Jewellery and valuables

Any single item worth more than £1,500, and what it is

Money owed to them

A loan to a family member, a refund due, unpaid wages, a benefit or pension not yet paid, a tax repayment.

Cash in the house, and anything held for them by somebody else

	YES	NO	NOT KNOWN
Did they have a business, a farm, or shares in a company?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not known
Did they hold cryptocurrency, or anything of value held only online?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not known
Did they set up a trust, or receive anything from one? Including a trust under someone else's will.	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not known
Did they own anything outside the UK at the death? A property, an account, shares, or a pension abroad.	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not known

If yes to any of those, the detail

For a business or farm: what it is, who runs it now, and whether there is a partnership or shareholder agreement. For a trust: its name and who the trustees are. For anything abroad: what and where, roughly what it is worth. Online: where the access details are, not the details themselves.

05

Gifts, debts, tax and the agencies

What they gave away in the seven years before they died, what they owed, who they dealt with about tax, and who has been told.

ONLY IF IT APPLIES
ABOUT 4 MIN

Gifts in the seven years before death

Money towards a house deposit, a wedding, school fees. Include anything given away that they went on using.

DATE	WHO RECEIVED IT	WHAT IT WAS	ROUGHLY HOW MUCH
EG March 2022	his grandson Tom	towards a car	6,000

More than this? There is a continuation sheet at the back, headed C. Write the section number beside each line.

Debts at the date of death

Mortgage, equity release, cards, loans, care fees, utilities, tax.

WHO IS OWED	WHAT FOR	ROUGHLY HOW MUCH
EG Halifax	mortgage on 31 Marton Road	about 42,000

More than this? There is a continuation sheet at the back, headed C. Write the section number beside each line.

Funeral cost

Who paid it

Was there a pre-paid plan?

YES NO NOT KNOWN

Did they make regular payments to anyone out of their income? A standing order to a grandchild, or paying someone's rent.	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not known
Was any care paid for by the council? Which council, and roughly for how long, in the box below.	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not known
Did they deal with HMRC in any way other than through PAYE? Self-employment, a tax return, a company directorship, rental income.	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not known
Will the estate earn anything while it is being dealt with? Rent, interest or dividends after the death.	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not known
Has anyone told you a full inheritance tax account will be needed? A bank, an adviser, or the probate helpline. Aaron decides the route himself, but it helps to know what you have been told.	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not known

Their accountant, if they had one	Unique Taxpayer Reference, if you have it	If the council paid for care, which council

Who has been told

The agencies that have to know, and any that have written since.

	YES	NO	NOT KNOWN
Has the death been reported through Tell Us Once, or to the DWP and the council directly? The registrar usually offers Tell Us Once. If you are not sure, answer not known.	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not known
Has the DWP, HMRC or the council written since the death asking for money back, or for information? Bring the letters. Aaron answers them as part of the work.	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not known
Were they receiving a state pension, or any other pension, that has carried on being paid since the death?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not known

06 Anything that could go wrong

Better raised now than after the money has gone out.

ONLY IF IT APPLIES
ABOUT 3 MIN

	YES	NO	NOT KNOWN
Is any beneficiary under 18?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not known
Is any beneficiary bankrupt, or in an arrangement with creditors?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not known
Is any beneficiary on means-tested benefits? It changes how Aaron pays them, so it is worth knowing first.	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not known
Is anyone financially dependent who is not inheriting? A partner they lived with, a child, or anyone they were supporting.	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not known
Is there a caveat, a claim, or a court case?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not known
Has anyone said they will challenge the will, or claim against the estate? Even if nothing has been put in writing yet.	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not known

Is any beneficiary, or executor, missing or out of contact? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not known

Anything Aaron should know about the family or a likely dispute

Said now, in confidence. It changes what he does first.

07

Before you send it

What happens to your answers, what to bring, and where to sign.

NEEDED TO START

ABOUT 2 MIN

What Aaron will need to see, at or before the appointment

- The death certificate, and any certified copies you have
- The original will and any codicils
- Photo ID and proof of your own address
- Recent statements for accounts, investments and pensions
- The title deeds or the title number for any property
- The funeral invoice

Tick what you already have. Nothing has to be sent with this form, and nothing missing here delays the work.

What the fee covers

Taken from the schedule on page one. The fee for your own matter is confirmed in writing before any work starts.

WHAT THE FEE COVERS
Reviewing the will and death certificate, the estate figures and any transferred allowance reported in the probate application, the legal statement, the application, and the grant handed to you.

NOT INCLUDED
Collecting in assets, paying debts and distributing, the full IHT400 account, deeds of variation and disputes.

PAID TO SOMEBODY ELSE
Probate application fee, £526 (none if the estate is £5,000 or less). Extra copies of the grant, from £2 (each, ordered with the application; £16 each afterwards). Bankruptcy searches, £7.20 (Per beneficiary, before distribution). Section 27 statutory notices, from £250 (London Gazette and a local newspaper; protects executors from unknown creditors). Land Registry official copies, £7 (per document, HM Land Registry, no VAT).

ONBOARDING AND IDENTITY CHECKS
£20 plus VAT, once, for the matter, and an identity check of £6.25 plus VAT for each person applying. Both are confirmed in writing before any work starts.

Two things to agree

- Tell the adviser named on page one when the matter opens, with the agreed fee, and again when it is signed.
- Ordinary email is fine for documents about my matter, and I have read the warning about money below.

Where the originals go

Where you would like the signed originals kept

With Aaron, with you, or somewhere else.

Who else should know where they are

A name and a phone number is enough.

Did anyone help you fill this in, and which parts?

Their name and how they are related to you. Write none if you did it yourself.

Signed

Type your name, or print this page and sign it by hand.

You, full name	Signature	Date
		DD / MM / YYYY

Your information
MDLS Solicitors Limited is the controller for the information on this form. It is used to advise you and to carry out your instructions, and is kept as long as the file and the professional record require. It is not sold, and it is not shared outside the firm without your consent except where the law requires it. The data protection officer is Matthew Dowell, md@legalstudio.co.uk. The firm is registered with the Information Commissioner under ZA057790, and you can complain to the Commissioner at ico.org.uk.

If something goes wrong
If something goes wrong, say so. Tell Aaron first, on 01262 310 850 or at aaron@safeharbour.legal. If that does not settle it, write to Ian McCann, Solicitor and Chief Executive, at ijm@legalstudio.co.uk or on 0113 247 3800. You will have an acknowledgement within five working days and an answer within eight weeks. After that, or if eight weeks pass, you can take the complaint to the Legal Ombudsman at enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk, on 0300 555 0333, or at PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH, within six months of the firm's final answer and within one year of the problem. The Solicitors Regulation Authority deals separately with conduct, at sra.org.uk.

Money
Safe Harbour's bank details do not change during a matter, and Aaron will never email to say they have. If you get any message asking you to send money somewhere new, telephone 01262 310 850 before you send anything.

C

More room, if you need it

ONLY IF IT APPLIES

Spare ruled lines for anything that did not fit in a list earlier in the form. Most people never use this page.

Your name

Date

DD / MM / YYYY

Write the section number and the name of the list on the left, then the answer on the right, in the same order as the columns on that list. One line for each thing.

SECTION AND LIST	YOUR ANSWER, IN THE SAME ORDER AS THAT LIST'S COLUMNS
EG 05 Pensions	Aviva, old works pension, about 12,000, my wife

If you have printed the form, print this page again for as many lines as you need. If you are typing and you run out of lines, put the rest in the body of the email. Nothing is lost that way.

A

At the meeting

FOR THE FIRM

Completed by Aaron, not by the client.

Instructions and what was said, in the client's own words, with their reasons

The note that answers, years later, what was said and what was understood.

Date	From and to	Where	Everyone present
DD / MM / YYYY		Office, home, telephone, video	

Client seen on their own for part of the meeting	☐ Yes	☐ No
Instructions given by the client, not through anyone who benefits	☐ Yes	☐ No
Identity verified, evidence on the file	☐ Yes	☐ No
Conflict check run and clear	☐ Yes	☐ No
Source of funds and of wealth understood and recorded where relevant	☐ Yes	☐ No
Client care letter and terms of business sent	☐ Yes	☐ No

ID: what was seen. Type and expiry only, no numbers on this sheet	How checked	File reference
	Original, certified copy, electronic	

Scope	Fee agreed, plus VAT	Matter reference	Signed and dated

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT	WHO	BY WHEN

B

For the adviser who sent this

NOT PART OF THE FORM

For the financial adviser, accountant or broker who passed this on. Nothing on this page is part of the form.

What happens to a referral

Aaron reads the form before he meets the client, confirms the fee in writing, and does the work. No referral fee is paid or received in either direction, and the client is charged the same as anyone else. If the client has ticked the box on page one, you are told twice: when the matter opens, with the agreed fee and the expected date, and again when the documents are signed. Nothing else is sent to you, and your own details are used for those two messages and nothing else. They are not added to any list and are not passed on.

What Safe Harbour does not do

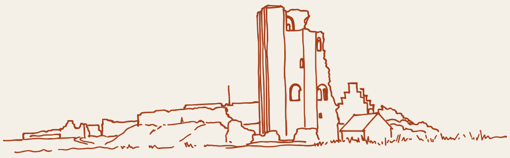
01 No investment advice, no products, no commission, and no financial promotions.
02 No approach to your client about anything you have not asked for.
03 No fee for the referral, in either direction.
04 Nothing signed without Aaron speaking to the client, on their own for part of it.

Data protection, when you forward a form

If your client returns the form themselves, MDLS Solicitors Limited is the controller from the moment it arrives and you never hold their answers. If you forward a completed form, you are processing your own client's information under your own registration and Aaron becomes a separate controller when he receives it. The cleaner route is to send the blank form and let the client return it.

Getting hold of Aaron

Aaron Johnson, Solicitor of the Senior Courts of England and Wales, TEP. Telephone 01262 310 850, or aaron@safeharbour.legal. Regulated through Legal Studio, with the professional indemnity insurance and the complaints route that brings; the complaints route is printed in full on the client's own closing page. Check the register at sra.org.uk under SRA ID 598793.



Scarborough Castle
Drawn from a photograph by Peter Turner, CC BY-SA 2.0