

## Step By Step Guide

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# Dealing with a Deceased's Estate



To be responsible for dealing with someone's estate when they pass away is always very difficult. It carries great responsibility at a time when you are no doubt grieving and have many things to do and think about.

However, the first steps you take are very important and can make a big difference to how straightforward the process of distributing the estate will be. Listed below are points to remember that we hope will help you at this difficult time. If you would like advice or assistance in relation to any of the points discussed below, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

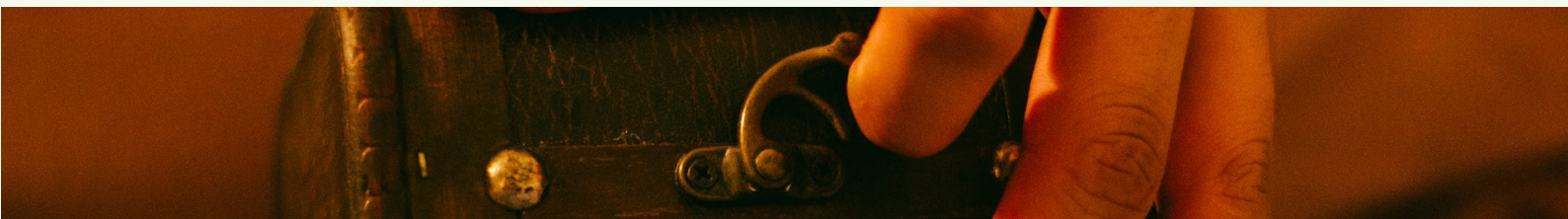


## Find the Will

It is important when a loved one passes away that you find their original will.

This is because:

- It names the executors, who are the people appointed to administer the deceased's estate.
- It may contain funeral wishes.
- It is required to obtain a Grant of Probate.
- It may be stored by the deceased's solicitor or bank and may take some time to locate and retrieve.
- Making searches and enquiries to discover if a will was made can take time and cost money.



## Keep the Will in a Safe Place

The original will has the original signature of the deceased plus the original signatures of two witnesses. It must be kept safe as any damage or marks on it may invalidate it. The original is needed to apply for a Grant of Probate.

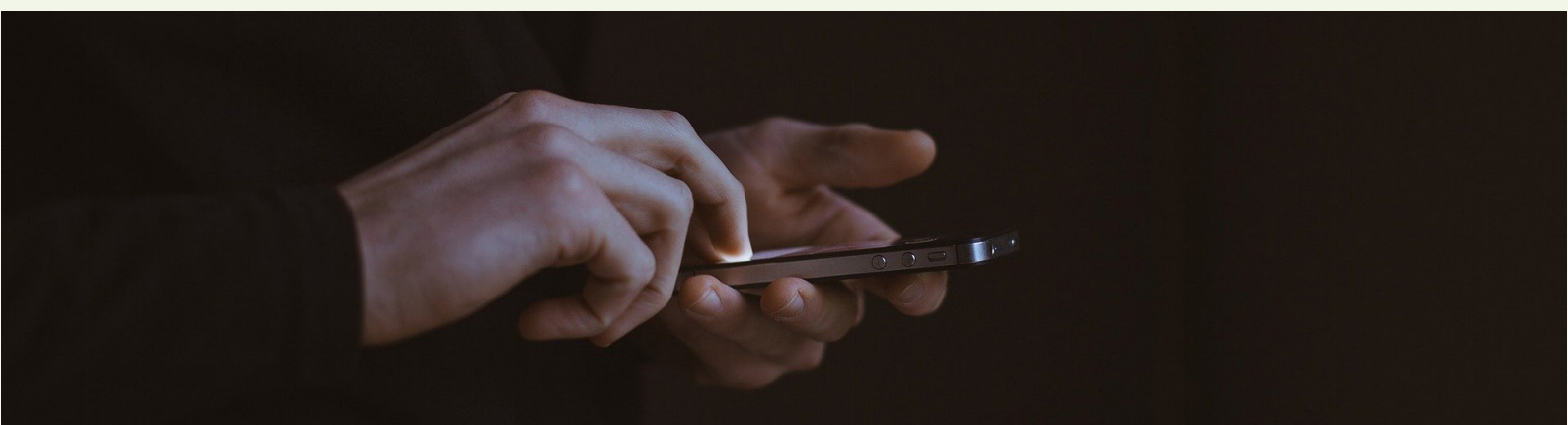
## **Obtain a Death Certificate with Certified Copies**

A certified copy of the death certificate will be required by the banks, building societies insurance companies and other companies you will need to contact when dealing with the estate, so it is essential that you obtain this.



## **Notify Friends and Relatives of the Deceased**

It is unfortunate how often families and friends fall out or argue at such a difficult time. Early, open and clear communication can help significantly and can make this challenging time much easier.

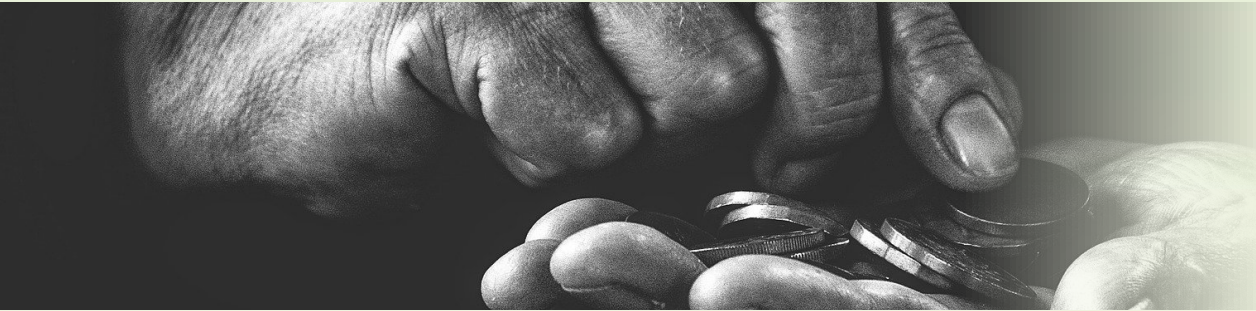


## **Notify Banks and Building Societies**

Any bank or building society where money is held should be notified as soon as possible. No one has the right to withdraw money from a deceased's account in their sole name except for the executors when dealing with the estate, and often a Grant of Probate will be required first.

## **Enquire if the Bank or Building Society Can Assist with Funeral Expenses**

Executors or loved ones do not have to pay for the funeral with their own funds. If they do, they are entitled to be reimbursed from the deceased's estate.



The deceased's bank may pay the funeral bill directly to the Funeral Director if there are sufficient funds in the deceased's accounts. The bank may also be willing to reimburse wake and other funeral expenses paid by individuals if original receipts are produced and funds are available.

## **Keep Cash and Other Valuables Safe**

The executors are responsible for maintaining the value of the estate and should therefore ensure that cash and valuables are secured and covered by insurance. Full details of any cash and other valuables should be taken (taking photos of items is a quick and easy way to do this) as they will be required when administering the estate. It may also avoid arguments to establish what items were in the deceased's possession when they died.

## **Find Details of Accounts**

Go through the deceased's paperwork to identify their assets, such as bank accounts, savings, stocks and shares, pensions and life assurance and also any liabilities such as rent, credit cards, utility bills and tax. Gather up all paperwork that may be relevant. Contact the share registrars, pension trustees, credit card company etc to inform them of the death, to check the value of the asset/liability and to ask for their requirements to deal with the asset.

## Look After Pets

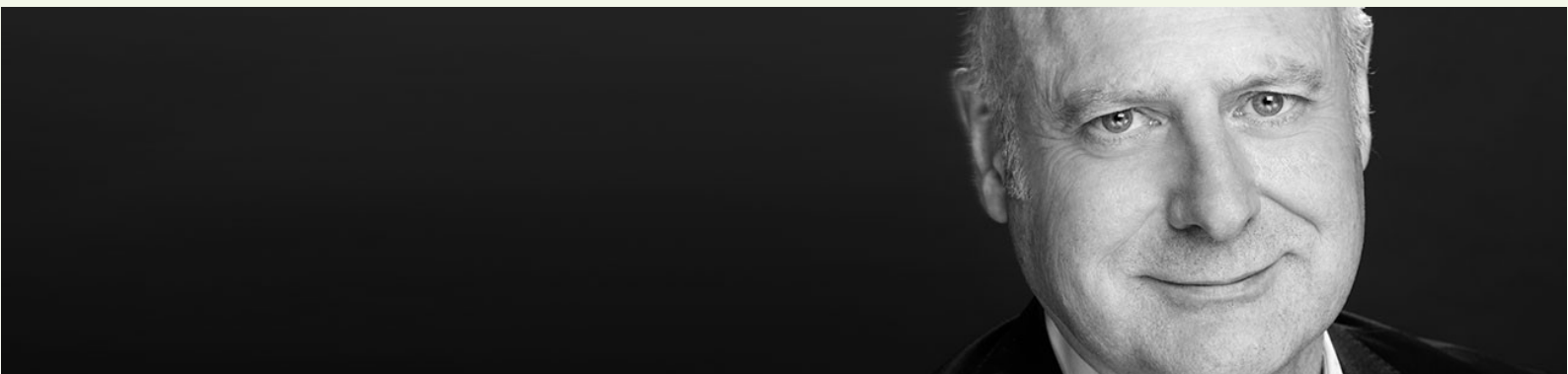
If no instructions have been left by the deceased, whether in their will or otherwise, ask around family, friends and neighbours for a willing foster home for any pets. If none are found, local animal charities will care for most pets in these circumstances.



## Find a Solicitor

Dealing with the administration of a deceased's estate brings with it legal responsibilities - from looking after the assets in the estate and paying from the estate any taxes and liabilities that may be due, to distributing the estate to the correct beneficiaries within a reasonable timeframe.

By engaging a solicitor to assist you, you can ensure that you are complying with your legal responsibilities and minimising the chances of things going wrong. It can also save time and cost by ensuring all assets are recovered, the correct tax, if any, is paid and matters are dealt within permitted time frames.



## Contact Our Specialist Wills, Trusts and Probate Solicitors

If you need advice or assistance with any legal matters relating to wills, trusts or probate, we can help. Our expert team have years of experience in guiding clients through this difficult time and can help you today. Get in touch with us by calling us on 01727 858807 or email us at [crt@labrums.co.uk](mailto:crt@labrums.co.uk).