



# How to deposit a will with the Probate Service

## A guide for people who want to deposit a will for safekeeping

### What is the Probate Service?

The Probate Service is part of HM Courts & Tribunals Service. It administers the system of probate, which gives people the legal right to handle the estate (for example, money, possessions and property) of a deceased person.

This leaflet is to advise you if you want to deposit a will for safekeeping with the Probate Service.

If you have any queries, please contact your local probate registry. The staff are there to help you – but they cannot give you legal advice.

### Introduction

The Probate Service offers a service to store wills for safekeeping at the Principal Probate Registry in London.

You can deposit your will, a codicil (a document which changes something in the will) or both.

### Why should I store my will with the Probate Service?

Wills need to be stored securely. You could keep it in your home – or if a solicitor has helped you prepare your will, the solicitor can usually keep it for you. However, storing your will with the Probate Service means that you won't have to worry about where you have put your will, or whether you should move it from your solicitor's office, if, for example, you move to another part of the country.

It could also make things easier for your dependents in the event of your death, as they won't have to try to find the will.

### How to deposit a will

You can either deposit your will yourself or ask someone to do it on your behalf. You can bring it in person, post it or ask someone else to take it or post it for you.

### How much does it cost to deposit a will or codicil?

There is a one-off charge of £20 to deposit a will or codicil at the Principal Probate Registry. So if you need to deposit both, make sure you submit them together in one envelope, to avoid being charged separately for each item.

## What happens when I bring in a will in person?

You can take your will to any of the regional probate registries listed in the **PA4** leaflet enclosed. They will give you an envelope and ask you to provide details such as your name, address and date of birth. You then seal the will in the envelope, witnessed by a Probate Service officer. The officer will also sign the envelope. It will then be sent to the Principal Probate Registry for safekeeping. We will post you a certificate of deposit to confirm safe receipt within two weeks.

## How do I send in my will by post?

You must first obtain a safe custody will envelope pack. You can ask for this free of charge from any regional probate registry or from the Principal Probate Registry in London.

Fill in all the details. Then seal the will inside the envelope. You must also get a witness to sign the envelope. The envelope should be accompanied by a cheque for £20 made payable to 'HM Courts & Tribunals Service' in respect of the fee.

Send the envelope and the fee by recorded or registered post to the Principal Probate Registry in London – you'll find the address on page 3. We will send you a certificate of deposit within two weeks.

## What happens if I want someone else to bring or send in my will?

You can ask someone else (for example, a relative or solicitor) to act as your agent and arrange deposit of your will for you.

Whoever you ask, you must provide them with a letter signed by you giving them authority to act on your behalf. Then they can either bring the will into a regional probate registry or send it in by post to the Principal Probate Registry in London.

Once we receive the envelope, we will send you a certificate of deposit and send a photocopy to your agent.

## How can I withdraw my will from safekeeping?

During your lifetime, only you can withdraw your own will from safekeeping. There is no charge for this.

You will need to obtain form **PA7A** from the Principal Probate Registry in London. You will then need to complete this form and return it to the Principal Probate Registry in London, enclosing the original certificate of deposit, which you received when you deposited your will.

If you can't find your certificate of deposit, you will need to write a letter explaining this and state that if you subsequently find the certificate, you will send it immediately.

The will can then be sent out to you by registered or recorded post. You must complete the enclosed acknowledgement of receipt and return it to the Principal Probate Registry.

## How can someone else withdraw my will after my death?

After your death, your executor(s) can withdraw the will. (Your executors are the people you name in your will to administer your estate and transfer your money and property to the people you have left them to.) There is no charge for this.

Your executor(s) should obtain and complete a withdrawal form from the Principal Probate Registry and send it in, with the certificate of deposit and an official copy of the death certificate.

If the certificate of deposit cannot be found, your executors will need to write to explain this. Once they have received the will, they must return the acknowledgement of receipt.

## Useful contacts

### Principal Registry of the Family Division

The Principal Probate Registry

7th Floor

First Avenue House

42-49 High Holborn

London

WC1V 6NP

Tel: 020 7947 6000/7022

Minicom 020 7947 7602

### For general information on wills and probate:

[www.direct.gov.uk/en/RightsAndResponsibilities/Death/index.htm](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/RightsAndResponsibilities/Death/index.htm)

### For information about the Probate Service and online forms:

<http://www.hmcourts-service.gov.uk/infoabout/civil/probate/index.htm>

## Probate forms and leaflets

- PA1 Probate application form
- PA1A Probate application form (guidance notes)
- PA2 How to obtain probate (leaflet)
- PA3 Probate fees list (leaflet)
- PA4 Directory of probate registries and interview venues (leaflet)
- PA5 Do I need a grant of representation (probate or letters of administration)? (leaflet)
- PA6 What will happen at my probate appointment? (leaflet)
- PA7 How to deposit a will with the Probate Service (leaflet)
- PA7A Withdrawing your will from the Principal Probate Registry (form)
- PA8 How to enter a caveat (leaflet)
- PA8A How to enter a caveat (form)
- PA9 How to enter a general search (leaflet)
- PA10 How to enter a standing search (leaflet)
- PA1S Application for a probate search (form)

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