

The Estate Registry calls for appointment of new 'Tsar' to overhaul 'unfair' treatment of consumers in probate cases

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, March 21, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Consumers' experience of probate is almost universally poor, the process unnecessarily complicated, and the outcome often unfair.

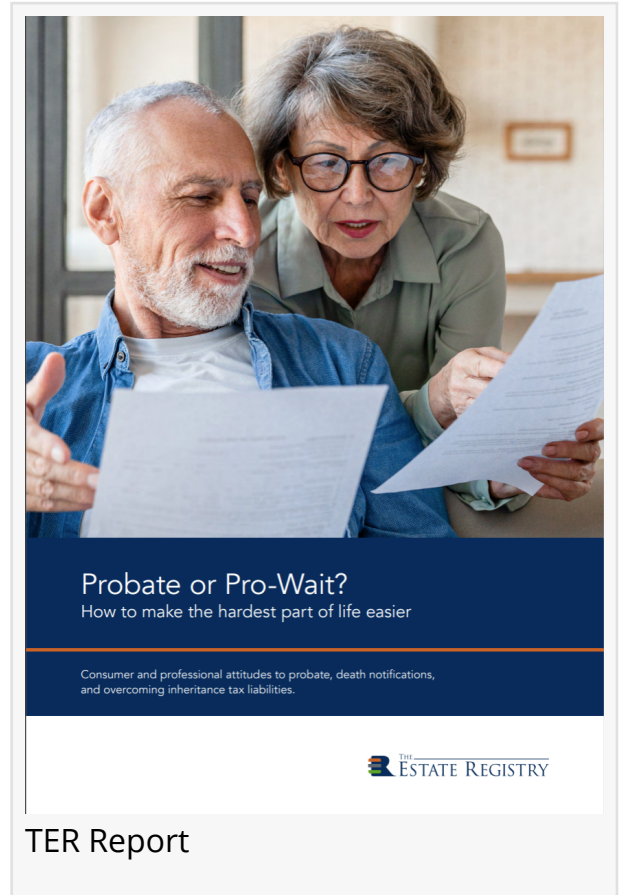
And while the bereaved have a single route to notify public sector organisations of a death through the Government's 'Tell Us Once', the lack of any similar universally agreed process for the private sector is contributing to a more stressful bereavement experience.

Comprehensive research conducted for The Estate Registry found that nearly three in four (72%) of 2,000 UK adults surveyed agree that every bank and utility company should have a specific death notification service similar to the service provided by Government. In one case, a bereaved widow had to contact more than 20 individual organisations to inform them that her husband had died.

This comes after the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) urged the Government to mandate firms to accept digital death notifications to ease the stress on bereaved families.

Phil Hickson – SVP, Global Partnerships at The Estate Registry, , owners of award-winning bereavement notification services NotifyNOW and Settld, says the findings point to the need for a significant shake-up in how the bereavement process is handled: “We have long believed that third-party providers – and not only those authorised by FCA – should be mandated to have a dedicated bereavement team and minimum Key Performance Indicators in how the bereaved are handled,” he says.

“The findings of the research are clear that every bank, utility company and service provider



should have a consistent death notification service and much better signposting is needed to steer consumers to the help available in explaining how the process works.

“We believe that the appointment of a Bereavement ‘Tsar’ is now long overdue to champion the better treatment of consumers managing a death and who should have the power to sanction those third-parties who fall short of best-practice.”

In the research, two-fifths (45%) reported that the administrative burden was complex and time-consuming, and 38% agreed that the probate process took too long. More than a quarter (28%) agreed that it was too complicated and difficult to understand, and 27% agreed that there is not enough information about it.

Nearly three in five (57%) used the government’s ‘Tell Us Once’ service and around two-fifths (39%) found the service useful. Interestingly, younger UK adults who have gone through this process were more likely to use the service (82%) and find it useful (49%) than those aged 55+ (43% and 35% respectively).

In the same Quantitative and Qualitative Research programme, a panel of 200 independent financial advisors and probate solicitors were also questioned as regards their views of the probate process. More than three out of five (61%) believe the whole process takes too long (despite HMCTS recently claiming to have halved the wait for probate for digital applications by four weeks), and a quarter (25%) that the process is difficult to understand. A fifth (21%) believe the process could also be made simpler if there was more information made publicly available; a similar number (18%) believe the process is unfair.

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Methodology: The research was conducted in two parts to derive both quantitative and qualitative data. A quantitative survey of 2,000 consumers and a panel of 200 professional advisers provided the volume; a series of 12 in-depth (i.e. 45-minute) interviews were then conducted with 12 consumers who had recently been through the probate process, and 12 solicitors who specialise in delivering probate advice.

About The Estate Registry

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