

**CHP ACCOUNTANTS LIMITED**  
**STANDARD TERMS OF BUSINESS - PROBATE SERVICES**  
**EFFECTIVE JULY 2023**



The following terms of business apply to all probate engagements accepted by **CHP Accountants Limited**. All work is carried out under these terms except where changes are expressly agreed in writing.

## **1.0 Applicable law**

- 1.1 Our engagement letter, the schedules of services and our standard terms and conditions of business are governed by, and should be construed in accordance with English law. Each party agrees that the courts of England will have exclusive jurisdiction in relation to any claim, dispute or difference concerning this engagement letter and any matter arising from it on any basis. Each party irrevocably waives any right to object to any action being brought in those Courts, to claim that the action has been brought in an inappropriate forum, or to claim that those Courts do not have jurisdiction.

## **2.0 Client identification**

- 2.1 As with other professional services firms, we are required to identify our clients for the purposes of the UK anti-money laundering legislation. We may request from you, and retain, such information and documentation as we require for these purposes and/or make searches of appropriate databases. If we are not able to obtain satisfactory evidence of your identity, we will not be able to proceed with the engagement.

## **3.0 Client money**

- 3.1 We may, from time to time, hold money on your behalf. The money will be held in trust in a client bank account, which is segregated from the firm's funds. The account will be operated, and all funds dealt with, in accordance with the Clients' Money Regulations of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.
- 3.2 To avoid excessive administration, interest will only be paid to you where the amount earned on the balances held on your behalf in any calendar year exceeds £25.00. If the total sum of money held on your behalf is enough to give rise to a significant amount of interest or is likely to do so, then we will put the money in a designated interest-bearing client bank account and pay the interest to you. Subject to any tax legislation, interest will be paid gross.
- 3.3 We will return monies held on your behalf promptly as soon as there is no longer any reason to retain those funds. If any funds remain in our client account that are unclaimed and the client to which they relate has remained untraced for five years or we as a firm cease to practise then we may pay those monies to a registered charity.

## **4.0 Commissions or other benefits**

- 4.1 In some circumstances we may receive commissions or other benefits for introductions to other professionals or in respect of transactions which we arrange for you. Where this arises we will notify you in writing of the amount and terms of payment and receipt of any such commissions or benefits

## **5.0 Complaints**

- 5.1 If you would like to talk to us about how we can improve our service to you, or if you are unhappy with the service you are receiving, please let us know by contacting Timothy Robinson. We will consider carefully any complaint that you may make about our probate services as soon as we receive it and will do all we can to resolve the issue. We will acknowledge your complaint within five business days of its receipt and endeavour to deal with it within 8 weeks. Any complaint should be submitted to us by letter. If we do not deal with it within this timescale or you are unhappy with our response, you may of course take the matter up with our professional body the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales and the Legal Ombudsman. Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman should be made within one year of the act or omission or one year from when you should reasonably have known that there was cause for complaint - and in either case within six months of our written response to your complaint to us.

The contact details for the Legal Ombudsman are:

Legal Ombudsman, PO Box 15870, Birmingham, B30 9EB, email-  
[enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk) or telephone 0300 555 0333

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- 5.2 In the unlikely event that we cannot meet our liabilities to you, you may be able to seek a grant from ICAEW's Compensation Scheme. Generally, applications for a grant must be made to ICAEW within 12 months or the time you become aware, or reasonably ought to have been aware of the loss. Further information about the scheme and the circumstances in which grants may be made is available on ICAEW's website: [www.iceaw.com/probate](http://www.iceaw.com/probate)

## **6.0 Confidentiality**

- 6.1 Unless we are authorised by you to disclose information on your behalf, we confirm that where you give us confidential information we shall at all times during and after this engagement keep it confidential, except as required by law, by our insurers or as provided for in regulatory, ethical, or other professional pronouncements or as part of an external peer review applicable to us or our engagement. This undertaking will apply during and after this engagement.
- 6.2 If we act for other clients whose interests are or may be adverse to yours, we will manage the conflict by implementing additional safeguards to preserve confidentiality. Safeguards may include measures such as separate teams, physical separation of teams, and separate arrangements for storage of and access to information. You agree that the effective implementation of such steps or safeguards as described above will provide adequate measures to avoid any real risk of confidentiality being impaired.
- 6.3 We may, on occasions, subcontract work on your affairs to other tax or accounting professionals. The subcontractors will be bound by our client confidentiality terms.
- 6.4 We reserve the right, for the purpose of promotional activity, training or for other business purpose, to mention that you are a client. As stated above we will not disclose any confidential information.

## **7.0 Conflicts of interest**

- 7.1 We will inform you if we become aware of any conflict of interest in our relationship with you or in our relationship with you and another client unless we are unable to do so because of our confidentiality obligations. We have safeguards that can be implemented to protect the interests of different clients if a conflict arises. Where conflicts are identified which cannot be managed in a way that protects your interests then we regret that we will be unable to provide further services.
- 7.2 If there is a conflict of interest that is capable of being addressed successfully by the adoption of suitable safeguards to protect your interests then we will adopt those safeguards. You agree that we reserve the right to act during and after our engagement for other clients whose interests are or may be competing with or adverse to yours subject of course to our obligations of confidentiality and the safeguards set out in the paragraph on confidentiality above.

## **8.0 Data protection**

- 8.1 In this clause the following definitions shall apply;  
"Client personal data "means any personal data provided to us by you, or on your behalf, in connection with an agreement to provide business services pursuant with our engagement letter.  
"Data Protection Legislation " means all applicable privacy and data protection legislation and regulations including PECR, The GDPR and any applicable national laws, regulations and secondary legislation in the UK relating to the processing of personal data and the privacy of electronic communications, as amended, replaced or updated from time to time;  
"Controller ", " data subject", " personal data " and " process " shall have the meanings given to them in the data protection legislation;  
"GDPR "means the General Data Protection Regulation ((EU) 2016/679) and  
"PECR "means the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003 ( SI 2426/2003 ).  
Specific policies regarding the collection and use of personal data are included in our Privacy Notice available on our website [www.chpaccountants.co.uk](http://www.chpaccountants.co.uk)
- 8.2 We shall only process the client personal data:  
(i) in order to provide our services to you and perform any other obligations in accordance with our engagement with you:  
(ii) in order to comply with our legal or regulatory obligations

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**9.0 Disengagement**

- 9.1 Should we resign or be requested to resign we will normally issue a disengagement letter to ensure that our respective responsibilities are clear. Should we have no contact with you for a period of 3 months or more we may issue to your last known address a disengagement letter and hence cease to act.

**10.0 Electronic and other communication**

- 10.1 Unless you instruct us otherwise we may, where appropriate, communicate with you and with third parties via email or by other electronic means. The recipient is responsible for virus checking emails and any attachments. Our Privacy Notice provides more information in respect of such commitments.
- 10.2 With electronic communication there is a risk of non-receipt, delayed receipt, inadvertent misdirection or interception by third parties. We use virus-scanning software to reduce the risk of viruses and similar damaging items being transmitted through emails or electronic storage devices. However electronic communication is not totally secure and we cannot be held responsible for damage or loss caused by viruses nor for communications which are corrupted or altered after despatch. Nor can we accept any liability for problems or accidental errors relating to this means of communication especially in relation to commercially sensitive material. These are risks you must bear in return for greater efficiency and lower costs. If you do not wish to accept these risks please let us know and we will communicate by paper mail, other than where electronic submission is mandatory.
- 10.3 Any communication by us with you sent through the postal system is deemed to arrive at your postal address two working days after the day that the document was sent.

**11.0 Fees and payment terms**

- 11.1 Our fees depend not only upon the time spent on your affairs but also on the level of skill and responsibility and the importance and value of the advice that we provide, as well as the level of risk.
- 11.2 If we provide you with an estimate of our fees for any specific work, then the estimate will not be contractually binding unless we explicitly state that that will be the case. Otherwise our fees will be calculated on the basis of the hours worked by each member of staff necessarily engaged on your affairs multiplied by their charge-out rate per hour, VAT being charged thereon.
- 11.3 Where requested we will indicate a fixed fee for the provision of specific services or an indicative range of fees for a particular assignment. It is not our practice to identify fixed fees for more than a year ahead as such fee quotes need to be reviewed in the light of events. If it becomes apparent to us, due to unforeseen circumstances, that a fee quote is inadequate, we reserve the right to notify you of a revised figure or range and to seek your agreement thereto.

The following fee structure is indicative of the level of costs for services that we provide assuming full availability of information;

Securing Grant of Probate and completing IHT returns	-	<b>£2,250 + VAT</b>
Realising the assets and making distributions to beneficiaries		<b>£750 + VAT</b>
Agreeing personal tax liabilities for pre-death period		<b>£200 + VAT</b>

Where circumstances dictate that the charges are likely to exceed these amounts we will communicate with you to agree the position before the work is undertaken.

- 11.4 In some cases, you may be entitled to assistance with your professional fees, particularly in relation to any investigation into your tax affairs by HMRC. Assistance may be provided through insurance policies you hold or via membership of a professional or trade body. Other than where such insurance was arranged through us you will need to advise us of any such insurance cover that you have. You will remain liable for our fees regardless of whether all or part are liable to be paid by your insurers.
- 11.5 Our invoices are due for payment within 14 days of issue. Our fees are exclusive of VAT which will be added where it is chargeable. Any disbursements we incur on your behalf and expenses incurred in the course of carrying out our work for you will be added to our invoices where appropriate.
- 11.6 Unless otherwise agreed to the contrary our fees do not include the costs of any third party, counsel or other professional fees. Should these costs be incurred to fulfil our engagement then such necessary additional charges may be payable by you.

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- 11.7 It is our normal practice to ask clients to pay by monthly direct debit and to periodically adjust the monthly payment by reference to actual billings.
- 11.8 We reserve the right to charge interest on late paid invoices at the rate of 1.5% per month. We also reserve the right to suspend our services or to cease to act for you on giving written notice if payment of any fees is unduly delayed. We intend to exercise these rights only where it is fair and reasonable to do so.
- 11.10 If you do not accept that an invoiced fee is fair and reasonable you must notify us within 21 days of receipt, failing which you will be deemed to have accepted that payment is due.
- 11.11 If a client company, trust or other entity is unable or unwilling to settle our fees we reserve the right to seek payment from the individual (or parent company) giving us instructions on behalf of the client and we shall be entitled to enforce any sums due against the Group Company or individual nominated to act for you.

## **12.0 Implementation**

- 12.1 We will only assist with implementation of our advice if specifically instructed and agreed in writing.

## **13.0 Intellectual property rights**

- 13.1 We will retain all copyright in any document prepared by us during the course of carrying out the engagement save where the law specifically provides otherwise.

## **14.0 Interpretation**

- 14.1 If any provision of our engagement letter or terms of business is held to be void, then that provision will be deemed not to form part of this contract. In the event of any conflict between these terms of business and the engagement letter or appendices, the relevant provision in the engagement letter or schedules will take precedence.

## **15.0 Internal disputes within a client**

- 15.1 If we become aware of a dispute between the parties who own or are in some way involved in the ownership and management of the business, it should be noted that our client is the business and we would not provide information or services to one party without the express knowledge and permission of all parties. Unless otherwise agreed by all parties we will continue to supply information to the normal place of business for the attention of the business owners. If conflicting advice, information or instructions are received from different principals in the business we will refer the matter back to the owner(s) and take no further action until they have agreed the action to be taken.

## **16.0 Investment advice (including insurance mediation services)**

- 16.1 Investment business is regulated by the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000. If during the provision of professional services to you, you need advice on investments [including insurances], we may have to refer you to someone who is authorised by the Financial Conduct Authority [or licensed by a Designated Professional Body], as we are not. We are licensed by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales and may be able to provide limited investment services that are complementary to, or arise out of, the professional services we are providing to you. This may include introduction to an authorised person and commenting on their suggestions. In the unlikely event that we cannot meet our liabilities to you, you may be able to claim compensation under the Chartered Accountants' Compensation Scheme in respect of exempt regulated activities undertaken.
- 16.2 We are not authorised by the Financial Conduct Authority. However, we are included on the Register maintained by the Financial Conduct Authority so that we can carry on insurance mediation activity, which is broadly the advising on, selling, and administration of insurance contracts. This part of our business, including arrangements for complaints or redress if something goes wrong, is regulated by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. The register can be accessed via the Financial Conduct Authority website at [www.fca.org.uk/register](http://www.fca.org.uk/register).

## **17.0 Lien**

- 17.1 As far as we are permitted by law or professional guidelines, we reserve the right to exercise a lien over all funds, documents and records in our possession relating to all engagements for you until all outstanding fees and disbursements are paid in full.

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**18.0 Limitation of third party rights**

18.1 The advice and information we provide to you as part of our service is for your sole use and not for any third party to whom you may communicate it unless we have expressly agreed in the engagement letter that a specified third party may rely on our work. We accept no responsibility to third parties, including any group company to whom the engagement letter is not addressed, for any advice, information or material produced as part of our work for you which you make available to them. A party to this agreement is the only person who has the right to enforce any of its terms and no rights or benefits are conferred on any third party under the Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999.

**19.0 Period of engagement and termination**

19.1 Unless otherwise agreed in our engagement letter, our work will begin when we receive implicit or explicit acceptance of that letter. Except as stated in that letter we will not be responsible for periods before that date.

19.2 Each of us may terminate our agreement by giving not less than 21 days notice in writing to the other party except where you fail to cooperate with us or we have reason to believe that you have provided us or HMRC with misleading information, in which case we may terminate this agreement immediately. Termination will be without prejudice to any rights that may have accrued to either of us prior to termination.

19.3 In the event of termination of our contract, we will endeavour to agree with you the arrangements for the completion of work in progress at that time, unless we are required for legal or regulatory reasons to cease work immediately. In that event, we shall not be required to carry out further work and shall not be responsible or liable for any consequences arising from termination.

**20.0 Professional rules and statutory obligations**

20.1 We will observe and act in accordance with the bye-laws, regulations and code of ethics of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales and will accept instructions to act for you on this basis. In particular you give us the authority to correct errors made by HMRC where we become aware of them. We will not be liable for any loss, damage or cost arising from our compliance with statutory or regulatory obligations. You can see copies of these requirements in our offices. The requirements are also available on the internet at [www.icaew.com/en/members/regulations-standards-and-guidance](http://www.icaew.com/en/members/regulations-standards-and-guidance).

20.2 We confirm that we are accredited for the reserved legal activity of non-contentious probate. When conducting probate work we are required to comply with the Probate Regulations which can be accessed on the internet at <http://www.icaew.com/en/members/regulations-standards-and-guidance/reserved-legal-services>.

**21.0 Quality control**

21.1 As part of our ongoing commitment to providing a quality service, our files are periodically reviewed by an independent regulatory or quality control body. These reviewers are highly experienced and professional people and, of course, are bound by the same rules for confidentiality as our principals and staff.

**22.0 Reliance on advice**

22.1 We will endeavour to record all advice on important matters in writing. Advice given orally is not intended to be relied upon unless confirmed in writing. Therefore, if we provide oral advice (for example during the course of a meeting or a telephone conversation) and you wish to be able to rely on that advice, you must ask for the advice to be confirmed by us in writing.

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**23.0 Retention of papers**

23.1 You have a legal responsibility to retain documents and records relevant to the financial affairs of the deceased. During the course of our work we may collect information from you and others relevant to those tax and financial affairs. We will return any original documents to you if requested. Documents and records relevant to tax affairs are required by law to be retained by individuals, trustees and partnerships:

- with trading or rental income: 5 years and 10 months after the end of the tax year
- otherwise: 22 months after the end of the tax year

23.2 Whilst certain documents may legally belong to you, we may destroy correspondence and other papers that we store electronically or otherwise that are more than 2 years old, except documents we think may be of continuing significance. You must tell us if you wish us to keep any document for any longer period.

**24.0 The Provision of Services Regulations 2009**

24.1 We are licensed by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales to carry out the reserved legal activity of non-contentious probate in England and Wales. Details about our probate registration can be viewed at [www.icaew.com/probate](http://www.icaew.com/probate), under reference number C009063079  
The probate regulations can be accessed at [www.icaew.com/regulations](http://www.icaew.com/regulations).

24.2 Our professional indemnity insurer is Axa XLInsurance Co.UK Ltd, 20 Gracechurch Street, London EC3V OBG. The territorial coverage is worldwide excluding professional business carried out from an office in the United States of America or Canada and excludes any action for a claim brought in any court in the United States or Canada.

**25.0 Timing of our services**

25.1 If you provide us with all information and explanations on a timely basis in accordance with our requirements, we will plan to undertake the work within a reasonable period of time in order to meet any regulatory deadlines. However, failure to complete our services prior to any such regulatory deadline would not, of itself, mean that we are liable for any penalty or additional costs arising.

**CHP ACCOUNTANTS LIMITED  
December 2022**