JUSTLY - GUERNSEY

Executor of an Estate

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Justly Guide for: **"I'm the Executor of an Estate – What Do I Do?"**

Being named an executor in Guernsey means you're responsible for dealing with someone's affairs after they've passed away. It can feel overwhelming — but this guide breaks it down step by step.

Step 1: Understand Your Role

An **executor** carries out the wishes in a person's will and manages their estate.

You are legally responsible for:

- Registering the death
- Securing assets (bank accounts, property, valuables)
- Paying off debts and taxes
- Distributing what's left to beneficiaries

You can step down from this role if you feel unable to manage it. You do this by renouncing your executorship before you start any actions.

Step 2: Register the Death

You must register the death with the **Greffe** (Guernsey's official public records office) within 5 days.

You'll need:

- The medical certificate of cause of death
- Personal details of the deceased
- Any documentation related to burial or cremation

Step 3: Locate the Will

- Check for the original will (not a copy).
- Confirm you're named as executor.
- If no will is found, someone (usually next of kin) will need to apply for Letters of Administration instead.

Step 4: Apply for Probate

This is a legal process giving you authority to manage the estate.

In Guernsey:

- Apply through the **Ecclesiastical Court of the Bailiwick of Guernsey**.
- You'll need:
  - Original will
  - Death certificate
  - Details of assets
  - Oath and application forms

The Court charges a fee depending on the estate's value.

Step 5: Gather the Estate

Start collecting and valuing all the deceased's assets:

- Bank accounts
- Property
- Insurance policies
- Pensions
- Debts owed to them

Also, identify any debts or taxes owed by the estate.

Step 6: Pay Debts and Taxes

You **must** clear the estate's debts before giving money to beneficiaries.

That includes:

- Funeral costs
- Outstanding loans or credit cards
- Final income tax

You may need to file a tax return on behalf of the deceased.

Step 7: Distribute the Estate

Only once debts are settled, you can distribute what's left as outlined in the will:

- Keep records of everything.
- Provide beneficiaries with a summary of what they're receiving.

Step 8: Keep Records

You should keep:

- Copies of all correspondence
- Receipts
- Bank statements
- A log of decisions and actions taken

This protects you in case there are questions or disputes later.

Step 9: Get Advice if You're Unsure

Executors can be **personally liable** for mistakes. If the estate is:

- Large or complex
- In dispute
- Lacking clear instructions

... consider getting legal advice or a probate specialist.

Support in Guernsey

- **Ecclesiastical Court –** Probate process guidance
- **Citizens Advice Guernsey** – Free general support
- **Justly Guernsey –** Tools to help with forms, deadlines, and planning