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# Succession

## England and Wales

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European Judicial Network  
(in civil and commercial  
matters)

### 1 How is the disposition of property upon death (will, joint will, agreement on succession) drawn up?

The disposition of property is drawn up by the testator or testators. There is no requirement for legal advice or the involvement of a legal practitioner.

### 2 Should the disposition be registered and if yes, how?

There is no requirement to register the will.

### 3 Are there restrictions on the freedom to dispose of property upon death (e.g. reserved share)?

No, but specified family members and persons maintained by the deceased may apply to the court for an award of financial provision from the estate under the [Inheritance \(Provision for Family and Dependents\) Act 1975](#).

### 4 In the absence of a disposition of property upon death, who inherits and how much?

A valid will vests the estate of the deceased in the executors (personal representatives) of the deceased on death. It does not dispose of the property to the beneficiaries.

If or to the extent that the deceased does not leave a valid will the estate will be distributed in accordance with the intestacy rules specified in the [Administration of Estates Act 1925](#) (as amended).

### 5 What type of authority is competent:

5.1 in matters of succession?

5.2 to receive a declaration of waiver or acceptance of the succession?

5.3 to receive a declaration of waiver or acceptance of the legacy?

5.4 to receive a declaration of waiver and acceptance of a reserved share?

The estate of the deceased vests in the personal representatives of the deceased, who can receive declarations of waiver or acceptance. They may apply to the court for a grant of representation (probate in the case of a will and letters of administration in case of intestacy). The grant will confirm their authority to deal with the estate in accordance with the will or intestacy rules as the case may be. Disputes as to entitlement to succession or the grant can be referred to the court. Proceedings in the court are governed by the [Non-Contentious Probate Rules](#)

or the [Civil Procedure Rules](#).

## 6 Short description of the procedure to settle a succession under national law, including the winding-up of the estate and sharing out of the assets (this includes information whether the succession procedure is initiated by a court or other competent authority on its own motion)

The personal representatives are responsible for identifying and collecting the assets of the deceased in the estate, paying the debts of the deceased (including [inheritance tax](#)) and distributing the residue to the beneficiaries in accordance with the will or the intestacy rules.

## 7 How and when does one become an heir or legatee?

A testator can specify the beneficiaries who will inherit the estate by making a valid will. In the absence of a valid will the beneficiaries are determined by the intestacy rules. The beneficiaries become entitled to inherit on the death of the deceased or, in the case of beneficiaries entitled by virtue of the death of a beneficiary during the administration of the estate, the death of the person previously entitled.

## 8 Are the heirs liable for the deceased's debts and, if yes, under which conditions?

No. The estate of the deceased is liable.

## 9 What are the documents and/or information usually required for the purposes of registration of immovable property?

As mentioned in the answer to question 5, the estate of the deceased vests in the personal representatives of the deceased. The personal representatives will transfer immovable property to the beneficiary entitled in the course of the administration of the estate. The beneficiary will present evidence of the grant of representation and the transfer to the Land Registry in accordance with the relevant Land Registration Rules.

### 9.1 Is the appointment of an administrator mandatory or mandatory upon request? If it is mandatory or mandatory upon request, what are the steps to be taken?

See the answer to question 9.

### 9.2 Who is entitled to execute the disposition upon death of the deceased and/or to administrate the estate?

See the answer to question 9.

### 9.3 What powers does an administrator have?

See the answer to question 9.

## 10 Which documents are typically issued under national law in the course of or at the end of succession proceedings proving the status and rights of the beneficiaries? Do they have specific evidentiary effects?

The personal representatives administer the estate and distribute the net assets. The form of the transfer of the assets will depend on the nature of the assets. Some goods may be delivered by possession. Money may be paid by cheque. See question 9 regarding land.

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