

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

February 2019

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about probate fees.

I understand your concerns over the change to fees for a grant of probate. Dealing with the aftermath of the death of a loved one is a difficult process and I have always believed it should be made as fair as possible. It is also the case that fees are a vital part of protecting access to justice through the funding of modern courts and tribunal service.

To ensure the courts continue to receive the necessary funding, a banded fee structure for grants of probate has been announced. I know that Ministers have listened to a variety of concerns raised about these changes and, in fact, the most recent proposals have been revised to ensure fees will not amount to more than 0.5 per cent of the value of an estate. This is a welcome change to keep the system fair and proportionate.

I believe it is important to recognise that the rise in estate value threshold from £5,000 to £50,000 will lift around an additional 25,000 estates out of fees altogether every year. This means that after the Government's reform, fifty per cent of people will not pay fees at all. I also understand that of those who do pay, around 80 per cent of estates will pay £750 or less and the money raised will be invested into the courts and tribunal service.

In my view the new banded fee system is a fair and progressive replacement to the current flat fee structure and ensures the courts system is properly funded without placing an excessive burden on other taxpayers. I am assured that the Government is set to release guidance to help applicants choose the option to pay which best suits their circumstances.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris".

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**

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