

# Wills and Probate Cheat Sheet



## Overview

Probate records are official documents relating to the administration of a deceased person's estate. They can be used to confirm whether someone has died and typically include:

- Full name of the deceased
- Date of death
- Last known address
- Name(s) of executor(s) or administrator(s)



## Why It Matters

- Confirm whether a subject is **deceased**
- Identify the last known **residential address**
- Trace **family members** or executors
- Verify death to support **estate recovery, fraud checks, or family tracing**



## Limitations

- **Search limitations** – doesn't confirm exact **property or financial details**
- **Timeliness** – Probate entries don't always appear immediately and may take **weeks or months after death**
- **Clarity** – Limited information on relationships unless you order the **full record**



## Tips and Considerations

- Combine probate records with electoral roll and planning data to build **timeline continuity**
- Search around the **estimated** year of death
- Use probate records to rule out **similar identities** in complex people-tracing cases
- Cross-reference with **social media memorials**



## Investigation Support

- **Fraud Investigations** – Confirm if a subject is alive or **using the identity of someone deceased**
- **Missing Persons** – Identify **relatives or last known addresses** to support location efforts
- **Estate & Probate Law** – Trace **heirs**, confirm executors, and uncover potential claims
- **Asset Tracing** – Link subjects to estates and identify **asset transfers or inheritance**
- **Journalism** – Confirm deaths, uncover **family connections**, or support timeline verification



## Where to Search

- **Probate Search Service**
  - Search by surname and year of death
  - Shows probate calendar entries and lets you order copies of wills and grants (£1.50 per document)
  - Covers England and Wales
- **Bona Vacantia** (Temporarily offline)
  - Lists unclaimed estates of people who died without a will or known heirs
  - Useful for identifying recently deceased individuals with no known family

### About Public Insights

Public Insights helps investigators find addresses, associates, and financial signals tied to UK people and businesses — all from a single search. The platform brings together government and commercial records to uncover properties, companies, directorships, insolvencies, and more. Designed for OSINT workflows, it's the starting point for investigations into fraud, due diligence, asset tracing, and more. Try Public insights today at [cradle.publicinsights.uk/accounts/signup](https://cradle.publicinsights.uk/accounts/signup) to see how our platform can support your investigation workflows.