

England and Wales probate delays - Government update

Synopsis: The latest position on delays to the probate service.

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On 9 January, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice, Mike Freer MP, said...

“The past 12 months have seen the largest volume of probate applications received by the service since 2006, and that follows two years of above-average receipts. In response, we have increased staffing levels by more than 100 people and streamlined processes. We have seen some improvement, in that the level of grants issued has been running at about 8,000 more over the past two months than receipts. The average mean length of time for a grant of probate following receipt of all the documents required is now 12 weeks.”

He added...

“Following a recovery plan...a new management team is in place and we are now seeing a distinct improvement in recruitment, competency, productivity and call handling, and for the past few months disposals have outstripped receipts. I appreciate that the service is not yet where we would want it to be, but...we are starting to see some impact as a result of the measures we have introduced.”

The House of Commons Justice Select Committee launched an inquiry into the probate registry's performance, in November last year, following continuing delays in the issue of grants.

The inquiry is taking evidence on capacity, resources and delays across the probate service.

It will also examine the impact of digitisation and centralisation, including the effectiveness of the online probate portal. Evidence can be submitted here until 22 January 2024.

Comments

Again, only time will tell whether we see any further reduction in the time taken to process applications.

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