

Executor's Beneficiary Tracing Checklist

Executors have a legal duty to ensure every heir is located before an estate is distributed. Missing a beneficiary can delay probate, cause disputes, or even result in personal liability. Use this checklist to ensure your search is thorough and defensible.

1. Review the Will

- ☐ Identify all named beneficiaries in the will
- ☐ Confirm spelling of names and addresses where available
- ☐ Check for codicils or updated versions of the will

2. Identify Potential Heirs (Intestacy Rules)

- ☐ Map family tree if the deceased died without a valid will
- ☐ Include estranged or distant relatives under intestacy law
- ☐ Confirm relationships with official documentation where possible

3. Collect Known Information

- ☐ Record last known addresses for each beneficiary
- ☐ Gather phone numbers, emails, or employer details if available
- ☐ Request supporting details from family, friends, or solicitors

4. Search Public Records

- ☐ Check the electoral roll for current addresses
- ☐ Search birth, marriage, and death registers
- ☐ Review property records for ownership or residency

5. Overseas Tracing

- ☐ Confirm whether beneficiaries have emigrated
- ☐ Check for dual citizenship or overseas records
- ☐ Engage international tracing agents if required

6. Verify Identity & Residency

- ☐ Confirm identities with passports, driving licences, or ID documents
- ☐ Verify current residence to avoid mistaken distributions
- ☐ Ensure details are cross-checked against official sources

7. Contact Attempts

- ☐ Send letters to last known addresses
- ☐ Attempt contact via phone/email if appropriate
- ☐ Record all attempted communications

8. Professional Tracing

- ☐ Engage a private investigator for non-responsive or missing heirs
- ☐ Request a formal tracing report (with verified evidence)
- ☐ Retain a copy for the probate file

9. Probate Court Documentation

- ☐ Keep a record of all tracing steps taken
- ☐ File supporting evidence with probate application if needed
- ☐ Ensure all actions are lawful and proportionate

10. Audit Trail

- ☐ Keep copies of all correspondence, reports, and records
- ☐ Store securely with executor's files
- ☐ Ensure transparency in case of legal challenges



Keeping a detailed audit trail not only protects beneficiaries but also shields executors from future claims of negligence or misconduct.

Contact Panthera Investigations

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