



## Public Sector

Tracing next of kin

A free service for Local Authorities



### How we can help you:

- Locating and contacting next of kin
- Will searches
- Estate administration for search service
- Property checks, including: securing property, changing locks and contents search
- Funeral arrangements
- Establishing the original owners of land and other property
- Settling Local Authority expenses without delay
- Proof of title to property and assets



# 100

Our reputations speaks for itself as we celebrate our centenary

Since 1923, when Alfred Hooper founded the company bearing his name, Hoopers has sought to set the standard for the profession of probate genealogy - the tracing of missing beneficiaries. A century on, and with Hoopers representatives across five continents, we conduct our business on a truly international basis.

# ISO

Achieved formal ISO approved status

Our experienced team of researchers offer a collective wealth of expertise which, matched with our dedicated approach to our work, means we are able to successfully resolve hundreds of intestacies every year. We pride ourselves on maintaining friendly working relationships, whilst delivering a quality of service that is unmatched.

# ICAPGen & ICO

ICAPGen & ICO approved

### A valued source of assistance

Hoopers has become the preferred choice of probate genealogists for many Local Authorities, NHS Trusts and other divisions of the public sector.

The public sector as a whole has faced significant cutbacks in recent years. Hoopers has gained a growing reputation as a valued and reliable source of assistance due to our efficient response to referrals and enquiries, the thoroughness of our research, and our sensitive approach to both our referral sources and members of the public.

We do not heavily publicise our considerable experience and success in working with the public sector; our aim is to personally engage and meet with an appropriate and manageable number of Local Authorities to ensure we continue to deliver the standard of service we promise - prompt, accurate and comprehensive - regardless of the nature of the referral.

### Our services are tailored to your requirements

Each Local Authority faces its own individual challenges and budgetary pressures, and as such may have differing priorities.

Hoopers does not offer a rigid "one size fits all" service to Local Authorities. We prefer to meet with each Council individually to discuss your needs and concerns, and in each case will endeavour to adapt our working methods to best suit your requirements.



[www.hoopers.co.uk](http://www.hoopers.co.uk)

Find us on...



Connect with Hoopers for a free consultation

### Email

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### Telephone

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### Fax

020 7490 3909

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London, SE1 2YG

GB Hooper & Son  
Registered in England  
No. 1775525



#### Our guarantees to Local Authorities

1. A swift and uncomplicated referral process, with a designated member of our Public Sector Team as your point of contact throughout.
2. Councils will not at any stage be charged for our services. Where there are assets in an estate, we are usually paid for our work by way of a commission arrangement with the next of kin.
3. We will accept all referrals, regardless of the likely/estimated value of the deceased person's estate.
4. When the deceased person's estate is likely to be of very low to zero value, we will nevertheless make every effort to locate one family member, and report back to you with their details without delay. If a referral is received at a sufficiently early stage, we would hope to trace a family member in time for them to have the option of attending the funeral, or to make their own preferred funeral arrangements.
5. When an estate's value is estimated at approximately £5,000 or above, we will immediately initiate a full and thorough search for a Will. Should a valid Will be located,

- we will provide you with details of the deceased person's executors.
6. Progress updates provided at a regularity according to your preference.
  7. In cases of intestacy, we will recommend the family member acting as Administrator to instruct one of our panel of independent solicitors who are highly experienced in estate administration; the solicitor will contact you to request any details you may have of the deceased's assets and liabilities, and will relieve you of any administrative burden as soon as possible.
  8. Once a Grant of Letters of Administration has been obtained on behalf of the Administrator, the solicitor will prioritise the reimbursement of the Local Authority for any costs or administrative expenses incurred during their involvement at the earliest possible stage of the administrative process.
  9. We are happy to offer a Service Level Agreement detailing the service and quality standards expected in public sector procurement, which can be adapted to your requirements.



#### Quality assurance and procurement

Hoopers has achieved ISO 9001 Certification for Quality Management and ISO 27001 Certification for Information Security Management.

Having reached our centenary, we are able to offer the public sector a wealth of experience and expertise in family research and locating next of kin. We can reassure our referral sources of our considerate and respectful treatment of all family members we contact.

The very nature of our work means our initial contact with a potential heir is frequently unexpected; the first reactions of a family member can vary from confusion and suspicion to fascination and excitement.

All Hoopers employees who engage directly with the public are highly trained. Every member of staff is salaried and does not receive any additional commission-based incentives.

about a deceased relative, we will whenever possible make the effort to do so in person. When we have reason to believe an entitled person may be in some way vulnerable, we will always take steps to establish contact through other family members instead of making a direct approach. Similarly, in the event of an heir not having capability, we will identify any and all persons legally empowered to deal with their affairs, whether they be lawful attorneys, deputies or legal personal representatives.

All beneficiaries or their representatives are fully and clearly advised of the nature of our business and the service we offer them. We always point out that they have the option of seeking independent legal advice before proceeding.

Our ICCM (Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management) membership enables us to assist Local Authorities in meeting all ethical, professional, environmental and social standards for the management of burial, cremation and related services.

#### Advantages of referring to more than one genealogy company

Local Authorities are regularly inundated with Freedom Of Information (FOI) requests demanding information about their procurement and selection of genealogy services. The obligation to reply to each and every request necessitates a considerable allocation of time and resources.

Many Councils refer cases to more than one firm of genealogists on a rotational basis. Hoopers endorses this approach as an effective method of responding to such FOI challenges. We would recommend that achieving the appropriate ISO 9001 and ISO 27001 certifications should be a requirement for any company to be included in the rota. From a quality assurance point of view, the Local Authority is able to compare and contrast the performance and efficacy of each firm they refer to, and has the option to cease referrals to any company which falls short of expectations.

#### Government Legal Department (Treasury Solicitor) referral policy

Recent years have seen significant changes to the Government Legal Department's (GLD's) referral policy. As stated on the official gov.uk website, the Bona Vacantia Division of the GLD does not deal with estates if "there are known or likely to be entitled relatives who survived the deceased, even if these have subsequently died, cannot be traced or do not wish to deal with the estate." Considering that a number of Local Authorities Hoopers regularly engages with have received information that 95% of cases referred to genealogists result in the successful tracing of a family

member, this precludes a vast majority of cases from being referred to the Government Legal Department.

A further change of policy has resulted in the GLD no longer liaising with an heir or their solicitor after admitting a valid claim - instead they direct the claimant back to the original source of the referral (in many cases, a Local Authority). The Bona Vacantia public notice concerning the estate will also include details of the source of referral, which may result in firms of genealogists or members of the public who believe they may be entitled making direct contact with a Council.

A combination of these factors has added considerably to the potential administrative burden faced by Local Authorities; for this reason, many have decided to refer such cases directly to Hoopers.

#### Fully regulated estate administration

Hoopers always ensure a solicitor, who would be subject to statutory regulation from the Solicitors' Regulation Authority, is instructed to undertake an impartial and independent estate administration process. This could be a solicitor with proven experience in this field recommended by us, or the solicitor of choice of the Local Authority or the family members concerned.

This is the only way to ensure the estate funds are entrusted to fully regulated professionals. An increasing number of probate genealogy companies now administer estates internally, but as our profession is not currently subject to statutory regulation, this can result in serious conflicts of interest.



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