
Letters to the Editor

Probate fee rise 'will cost charities £10m'

Sir, Critics are right to point out the adverse impact on the bereaved of the rise in probate fees announced on Monday, which will significantly increase the cost to families of administering an estate ("Probate fee rises are a stealth tax on the bereaved, critics claim", thetimes.co.uk, Nov 7).

The rise will also have serious repercussions for charities, which benefit hugely from the generous gifts that people leave in their wills. We estimate that the increased fees will mean a loss of at least £10 million a year for charities at a time when many are struggling to meet growing demand for their services.

The government's own impact assessment acknowledges that current probate fees cover the average cost to the state of making a grant of probate, at £215. With a maximum fee of £6,000 under the new proposed fee structure, there can be no doubt that this is a stealth tax that will in part be borne by charities.

Introducing a rebate or exemption from the increased fees for charitable estates would cost the government relatively little and improve the attractiveness of this vital form of giving.

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Management