

I am my friend's Executor and I need to clear out his house. What should I be looking for?

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As executor you need to ascertain the extent of your friend's estate, pay off his debts and distribute the balance of his estate to his beneficiaries in accordance with the terms of his Will so you should bear this in mind when clearing the house.

Look for documents and letters that will give you an idea of his assets and debts such as bank statements, share certificates, credit card and utility bills, details of any pension and life policies or vehicle ownerships. This will help you to put together an idea of the extent of his estate and who you need to contact. Documents such as a passport and driving licence are also important to retain as they will need to be cancelled.

See if there are chattels or jewellery that might need to be valued especially if your friend has left specific bequests of various items in his Will. It is a good idea to take a valuer with you to the house at some point to ensure that nothing of monetary value gets discarded.

It might be necessary to look in unusual places for valuable items or money that has been hidden away. Places to look include under or within a mattress, in the hems of curtains, under floorboards, on top of cupboards or amongst clothing.

If you need further advice or guidance, please speak to your lawyer.

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