

MAKING A WILL

If you care about what happens to your property after you die, you should make a will. Without one, the law directs who inherits, so your friends, favourite charities and relatives may get nothing. Last year the Treasury gained £53m from people who died intestate (without a will) and the year before it was £76m.

Once you have had a will drawn up, some changes to your circumstances, i.e. marriage, separation, divorce can make all or part of that will invalid or inadequate. This means that you must review your will regularly, to reflect any major life changes. We can advise you what changes may be necessary to update your will and we can also advise you on how Inheritance tax affects what you own.

There are various legal formalities you need to follow to make sure that your will is valid. Without the help of a Solicitor, there's a real risk you could make a mistake, which could cause problems for your family and friends after your death.

What we will need to know:-

Details of what you own, including property, cars, personal valuables, stocks and shares, bank accounts, insurance policies, any businesses you own, and pensions.

Who gets what? Who do you want to leave these assets to? How do you want to divide your property between your loved ones, friends or charities?

Details of your family and status - are you divorced or have you remarried? Or are you living with someone without being married to them? Do you have any children or any other dependants? Anyone who depends on you financially can challenge your will if they feel you have not provided properly for them. If you give us the details, we can tell you about any legal pitfalls.

Guardians - If you have any children under 18, you may need to name someone as their legal guardian.

Executors of your will - You must also name the people you want to appoint as 'executors'

of your will - the people who carry out the administration of your will after your death. These could be friends or family members, or a professional such as your Solicitor. A good combination would be a friend or family member and a professional.

Other wishes - Do you have any particular wishes for your funeral? Do you want to be buried or cremated? Are there any other instructions? For example, if you want to be an organ donor this can be included in your will.

Please ask us for one of our Wills questionnaires to take home and complete

Signing the will -

Once the will has been drawn up it is not effective until it has been signed. There are several rules affecting the signature process which, if not followed correctly, will make your will invalid. For example, witnesses and their spouses cannot benefit under the will. Many people use staff at their solicitor's office to act as their witnesses to avoid this problem.

Where to keep the will - It is important to keep your will in a safe place and tell your executors or a close friend or relative where it is. We will store your will for free, and we will also store your title deeds to your property for you for free.

You should review your will at least every five years and after any major life change such as getting married, divorced or separated, having a child or moving house. It is best to deal with any major changes by getting a new will drawn up. It is also possible to make minor changes (codicils) to your existing will. In both cases it is best to consult a Solicitor. If you would like any further information or a free initial consultation please contact Lauren Gillespie or Teresa Andrew.

Charges for making a Will: from £125.00 plus VAT

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