

## **Making a Will**

Now that summer is over and autumn is upon us, perhaps you might think about making a Will.

If you do not make a Will, the Law of Intestacy dictates where your Estate (your Estate being everything that you own in terms of your home, savings, investments and personal possessions after payment of all outstanding debts) is to go when you die and that may not necessarily be in accordance with your wishes. In the absence of a Will you may find that the very people whom you wish to benefit do not and that relations, whom you have little or no contact with, receive your Estate in its entirety.

Making a Will ensures that your wishes are complied with and that your spouse/partner and children are properly provided for. Your Will should appoint Executors: these are people whom you trust implicitly to carry out your wishes and can be your spouse/partner, family members or a close friend. Alternatively, our firm would be happy to act as one of your Executors. In your Will you can appoint Guardians to care for your young children before they reach the age of 18. Guardians can be family members or very close friends who may have a young family of their own, with whom your children are familiar and comfortable and who they would be able to go and live with. You might make specific gifts of sentimental items in your Will that you wish to be kept in the family or give cash legacies, perhaps to your favourite charity, special friends or local projects.

After any gifts and legacies have been made and after paying your funeral expenses, debts and taxes what remains is called your "Residuary Estate". Quite often married couples give this to each other initially. However, there may equally be valid reasons for not doing so. Following the death of your spouse/partner, you may wish to pass your Residuary Estate on to children (if you have any), nieces and nephews, friends or your favourite charities. There are many ways of dividing your Estate and the solicitor drafting your Will will go through the options with you.

Making a Will need not be expensive and some charities operate "Will schemes". Will Questionnaires, details of our charity Will Scheme and Fact Sheets are available, free of charge, from our offices or can be downloaded from our website.

Making a Will should be viewed as sensible advanced planning to save worry and heartache for those you leave behind.

For those who already have a Will now might be a good time to review it to ensure that it continues to reflect your wishes.

Please contact our Wills and Probate Department to discuss the possible options available to you.