



## **WILLS ESTATE PLANNING AND PROBATE**

Recent surveys demonstrate that nearly 70% of the UK population have not made a will.

Research conducted on behalf of The Law Society shows that thousands of people risk leaving loved ones with nothing after their death because they don't know the contents of their own will or have not made a will.

Making a will with provision for your family is no longer the preserve of the rich. Due to the rise in property prices over the years, the inheritance tax laws are catching out increasing numbers of people.

Many of us rule out making a will because we don't believe we have anything significant to leave our loved ones. But often, when the value of property and life insurance are taken into account, the sums involved can be significant and attract the interest of the Inland Revenue.

A will is a legal document that ensures that when you die, what you leave (after paying tax and debts) is distributed in accordance with your wishes. Even though you may feel that you do not have a great deal to leave, a will ensures that your property goes to the individuals you choose. A will can also minimise tax liabilities for your estate.

Preparing a will can also ensure you address any special circumstances such as a disabled child, step-children, co-habitees and same-sex partners. Making a will means that you are in charge - and you will be able to arrange your affairs as you would like.

By making a will you avoid the 'intestacy rules' that apply when a person dies without leaving a will, and which often result in the estate being distributed in a way that a person would not have wished. This is particularly true where a spouse and children are left and the estate is of a significant size, as the intestacy rules produce a very complex and inconvenient result. Sadly, if there are children under 18 who can't consent to any rearrangement of the estate, the position is even worse as the intestacy rules may trigger an inheritance tax liability which cannot be avoided by deed of variation.

Making a will doesn't have to be costly or take up a lot of time and it will provide you and your family with real peace of mind.

We offer a caring and efficient service that can include home and hospital visits if required and sympathetic administration of the estate after a death.

We can undertake the obtaining of valuations of all the assets of the estate, calculate any inheritance tax liability, apply for the grant of probate (or letters of administration in the event that there is no will), and then deal with the gathering in of the assets of the estate, and administer the estate in accordance with the will or the intestacy rules, as the case may be.

In summary our services include:

- Making the will
- Preparing joint/individual wills
- Changing your will
- Appointing executors and guardians
- Minimising tax liability
- Powers of attorney

Probate:

- Obtaining grant of probate
- Administering an estate
- Varying the provisions of a will
- Resolving intestacy problems