

Making a will is one of the most important decisions that you will ever make.

As a legal document, it ensures that proper arrangements are made for family and friends, and that your estate is distributed in the way you wish after you die, subject to certain rights and conditions.

With so many benefits associated with this important process, the decision to make a will should be straightforward. However, only three in every ten Irish adults have made a will.¹

If your wishes are not expressed in a will, then the law (called Succession Law) determines how your estate is distributed according to strict legal rules. It can also mean that your estate might not be divided in accordance with your wishes.

Why make a will?

There are a number of important reasons why a person should make a will, but the most important reason is that you decide what happens to your estate when you are gone. Your will should be prepared by a solicitor, who is best placed to advise you of the tax and legal implications of your decisions and who will use your outlined instructions to draft your will. Before making an appointment with your solicitor, take note of the following:

- Your assets, their value and their location.
- Your nearest relatives.
- Your executor(s) – this is the person(s) that will administer the estate in accordance with the directions set out in the will. This person should be someone that you trust and who is responsible.
- The proposed division of your estate - which refers to all of the money, property, assets, interests and things of value controlled by a person while alive.

Your solicitor can then take you through any legal restrictions (if applicable), special circumstances, inheritance tax and types of will.

When should you make a will?

To make a will you must be 18 years or older, be of sound mind and acting of your own free will. Your will must be in writing and must be signed by two witnesses for it to be valid.

There are a number of key events in the course of a lifetime that act as a trigger to make a will. These include:

- When you get married
- If you are going abroad
- If you get divorced or separated
- When you buy/inherit a house or become the owner of property or cash
- When you start a family
- Upon retirement, getting older or if suffering from an illness

Remember, you can change your will at any time and as often as you like. In fact, it is highly recommended that you regularly review your will, especially if your circumstances have changed.

Best Will Week is an annual campaign run by My Legacy, a group of almost 80 Irish charities that have come together to highlight the importance of making a will and the enduring legacy of leaving a gift to your favourite charity in your will.

During Best Will Week, participating solicitors across the country offer initial will consultations to discuss making a will. Those who do avail of the will consultations and who go on to have a will made or updated in a subsequent appointment are encouraged to consider leaving a gift to their favourite charity in their will after loved ones have been looked after.

¹ Amárach Research Omnibus: Will Making and Charitable Legacies, September 2015. This information is brought to you by My Legacy. For more see: www.mylegacy.ie

my legacy

Charities

Abbey Theatre
Adi Roche's Chernobyl Children International
Age Action
ARC Cancer Support
Asthma Society
Barretstown
Beaumont Hospital Foundation
BeLonG To
Bothar
Chernobyl Children's Trust
Children's University Hospital Temple Street
ChildVision
Christian Aid
Community Foundation for Ireland
Concern
Croí - West of Ireland Cardiology Foundation
CUH Charity
Cystic Fibrosis Ireland
DIT Foundation
Dogs Trust
Drogheda Homeless Aid
Dublin Simon Community
Educate Together
Epilepsy Ireland
Fighting Blindness
Focus Ireland
Glasnevin Trust
Inclusion Ireland
Irish Cancer Society
Irish Council for Civil Liberties
Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind
Irish Heart Foundation
Irish Hospice Foundation
Irish Jesuit Mission
Irish Society for Colitis and Crohns Disease
Irish Red Cross
ISPCA
ISPCC
Jack and Jill Foundation
LARCC
M.S. Society of Ireland
Make a Wish Foundation
Mater Foundation
Mercy University Hospital Foundation
MSF (Médecins Sans Frontières / Doctors Without Borders)
National Council for the Blind of Ireland
One Family
Our Lady's Hospice & Care Services
Oxfam Ireland
Parkinsons Association of Ireland
Pieta House
Rathfarnham Charitable Trust of the Jesuit Fathers
RNLI
Samaritans Ireland
Share a Dream Foundation
Sightsavers International
Simon Community of Ireland
Sophia Housing
St James's Hospital Foundation
St Patricks Hospital Foundation
St. Vincent de Paul
St. Vincent's Foundation
The Hope Foundation
The Lir
The New Evangelisation Trust
The Red Door
Third Age
Threshold
Trócaire
UNICEF
VSO
Wexford Festival Trust
Wicklow Hospice
Women's Aid
World Missions Ireland
Youth 2000