

Wills and estate planning

Making a will is one of the most important legal processes every adult should consider. A properly drafted will is the only way to ensure that your wishes will be legally binding after your death.

Hill Dickinson's wealth management team is experienced in all aspects of will drafting and estate planning, assessing each client's circumstances and advising on the most effective solutions.

Making a will allows you to:

- Appoint guardians for your children
- Choose who should administer your estate
- Express your funeral wishes
- Undertake estate planning to mitigate inheritance tax
- Safeguard your children's inheritance

If you die without a will:

- Your estate will be dealt with under statutory provisions called the intestacy rules - you will not have any say over how your estate is distributed
- Your widow or widower does not automatically inherit everything
- The lack of guidance can cause disputes and possible legal action
- An unmarried partner will not be entitled to anything
- Your estate may pay more inheritance tax than necessary
- Children may inherit large sums of money as soon as they reach 18

As members of the Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners (STEP) we are at the forefront of legal developments and best practice in wealth management. Our team also includes members of the Chartered Institute of Taxation, the Probate Section of the Law Society, Solicitors for the Elderly and Resolution.



WINNER

National law firm of the year
Legal Business Awards 2010

Hill Dickinson's wealth management team specialises in safeguarding and enhancing clients' wealth. Our aim is simple: to deliver a service that allows our clients to protect, develop and ultimately pass on their wealth with complete peace of mind.

Things you should know

- Marriage revokes your will. If you have married since making a will then you must make a new one.
- Divorce does not revoke your will. Only provisions relating to your former spouse will be ineffective.
- Dependants, including adult children and former spouses, may be entitled to claim against your estate on death.
- If you own a business or have overseas assets it is especially important that you obtain specialist advice.
- Your will must be witnessed by two independent adult witnesses. Neither of your witnesses may benefit from your estate nor may they be married to someone who benefits. Your executors can witness your will as long as they do not benefit from your estate.
- After your death, once your executors have obtained a grant of probate, your will becomes a public document and anyone can obtain a copy of it.
- Your will is valid as soon as it has been correctly signed and witnessed, it does not need to be formally registered with a lawyer or the courts before your death.
- You should keep your will safe and make sure your executors know where it is. If you held your will before your death and it cannot be found it may be assumed that you revoked it.

Hill Dickinson is ranked in the Legal 500 and Chambers & Partners independent guides to the UK legal profession for private client services, and team members are invited by Camelot to provide advisory services to lottery winners.

Wealth management | Asset acquisition and disposal | Charities | Foreign domicile and offshore | Powers of attorney and court of protection | Probate and administration of estates | Tax planning | Trusts and settlements | Will disputes and contentious probate | Wills and succession planning | **Family** | Child support and maintenance claims | Children | Civil partnership | Cohabitation claims | Collaborative family law | Divorce | Family finance on divorce | Relationship agreements

Contact



Paul Baker

Head of Wealth Management
+44 (0)151 600 8632
paul.baker@hilldickinson.com



Fionnuala Kenny

Partner
+44 (0)151 600 8614
fionnuala.kenny@hilldickinson.com



Ian Sydenham

Associate
+44 (0)1244 896637
ian.sydenham@hilldickinson.com



Paula Milburn

Partner - family law
+44 (0)151 600 8704
+44 (0)161 817 7335
paula.milburn@hilldickinson.com