

Making a Will - Frequently asked questions

Why make a Will?

Making a Will gives you peace of mind. It doesn't matter how old you are or how much you own, having an up-to-date, professionally written Will ensures your wishes are carried out after your death. If you don't leave a Will, the law will decide who inherits your property and this may not be as you would have wished.

Do I have to get professional advice to write a Will?

We always recommend using a solicitor or specialist Will-writer to prepare your Will because they will know how to make it legal and valid.

Where can I find a professional to write my Will?

The Law Society can help you find a solicitor in your area. Go to www.lawsociety.org.uk and search for specialists in the "Wills and Probate Section" or call 020 7320 5650. If you would prefer to use a local and fully insured Specialist Will Writer who can visit you in the comfort of your own home, you can find one via the Institute of Professional Will Writers www.ipw.org.uk or call 0345 257 2570.

Is there a minimum of maximum amount that I can leave to charity?

The amount you choose to leave to Burrswood or to any charity will depend on your own individual circumstances, and will usually be something you consider after making sure that your family and loved ones are taken care of. We are always grateful for any amount, large or small.

What are the different types of gifts I can leave in my Will?

A residuary bequest - a percentage of what is left after all other gifts, debts and expenses have been paid. By leaving a gift of this kind rather than a specified sum, you won't have to worry if your circumstances change and its value won't be affected by inflation – so you are less likely to need to amend your Will in future.

A pecuniary bequest - a specified amount of money

A specific bequest - a particular item such a painting, property or shares

A reversionary gift – allows you to leave all or part of what you own to someone while they are still living, on the understanding that it will pass to us when they die. This means that you can ensure that your spouse/partner is taken care of during their lifetime.

What wording should I use if I want to leave a gift to Burrswood?

Your solicitor can advise about the correct wording depending on the type of gift you wish to make. You will need to have our registered name, address and charity number, which is: The Dorothy Kerin Trust; Burrswood, Groombridge, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 9PY; Charity number 1095940

I already have a Will – how can I make an amendment to it?

If you have already written a Will and want to add a gift to Burrswood, it is a simple process for a solicitor to draw up an amendment called a Codicil to attach to your existing Will. It is important not to make changes to your Will yourself or you could invalidate it.

What is Inheritance Tax and how might it affect me ?

When a person dies, the assets he or she leaves behind make up their estate. If the value of the estate after settling any outstanding debts exceeds a certain threshold, then inheritance tax is due on the balance and is paid to the government. Donations to charity are exempt from tax so if you leave a gift in your Will to Burrswood, its value will not be included in your estate for inheritance tax purposes and we will receive the full amount of the gift.

Current legislation means that if you leave 10% or more of your estate to charity, in certain circumstances this will reduce the amount of inheritance tax you will have to pay. Of course, everyone's financial circumstances are different and there may be other issues which affect the level of your inheritance tax. We always recommend you discuss your particular circumstances with your solicitor or financial advisor.

Can my family and friends contribute?

When writing your Will you might like to leave a note for your executors to say that donations in your memory would be greatly appreciated by Burrswood.