

## Frequently asked questions about will-writing and legacy gifts

Writing a will is your opportunity to provide for the people and causes you love. Here are our most frequently asked questions about making a will:

### Why should I write a will?

A will is one of the most important documents you will write. It gives you the opportunity to clearly state what you would like to happen to your belongings and name the people and causes you want to benefit.

Not having a proper will can result in “intestacy”, meaning the estate is divided according to certain rules set out in law. Dependents not formally recognised as family (such as an unmarried partner or stepchildren) do not have automatic rights under these laws.

Not having a clear will can cause confusion and upset for those left behind, at an already difficult time. This can be avoided by having a will written with a professional to ensure that all eventualities are covered.

### How much does it cost to write a will?

Many people worry about the cost of writing a will, but it is a good investment in your family’s future. A simple will can cost as little as £70 and a mirror will (for couples) can be written for around £120.

We would not advise you write your will on your own. A professional can help you consider all eventualities. It is all too easy to overlook something or make a mistake that could invalidate your will or cause delays and upsets when the time comes to administer the estate.

### How should I word my will to include a gift to Refugee Support Europe?

When including a legacy to charity it is important to specify the charity’s registered name, address, and charity number.

For Refugee Support Europe these are:

Registered name: **Refugee Support Europe**

Registered address: **14 Hollingbury Park Avenue, Brighton, BN1 7JF**

Registered charity number: **1174070**

You can also print off our suggested wording for different types of legacy gift to take to your solicitor.

### **What do I need to think about when writing a will?**

- Here are some of the key things to consider:
- List your assets
- Make a list of everything you own of value (e.g. property, vehicles, investments, savings, and collectibles.)
- List your liabilities
- Work out what you owe at the time of writing your will (e.g. mortgage, loans, credit cards.)
- List the people and causes you want to remember and what you want to leave them
- Write down the full name and address of people you intend to include in your will and be specific about what you want to leave them. If remembering a charity, you should include the registered details. You will find Refugee Support Europe's registered details in the section above.
- Choose your executors - the people you want to carry out your wishes
- Executors can be professionals, such as solicitors or banks, or they can be relatives or friends. If nominating someone who is not a professional, check they are willing to take on this responsibility. You may also find our information and advice for executors helpful.
- Double check your document and make sure you sign it
- Once your adviser has drafted your will, read it through carefully and make sure it says exactly what you want it to say. When you are happy with it, the will must be signed and dated by you and two witnesses.
- Keep your will safe
- Once you have made your will it is important to store it safely. Review it regularly to ensure it reflects your circumstances and wishes.

### **What if I just want to make small changes to my existing will?**

Minor alterations to a will can sometimes be covered by writing a codicil, which works in addition to your full will. A codicil should only be used for straightforward gifts, such as a cash gift or item, not a residuary share.

### **Will a legacy to charity affect Inheritance Tax?**

Inheritance tax (IHT) is applied to estates worth more than £325,000 (known as the nil rate band). IHT is charged at a rate of 40% on anything above the nil rate band. For example, an estate worth £400,000 would result in a tax bill of £30,000 (40% of £75,000).

Charities are exempt from paying IHT, meaning that gifts to charity in your will do not count towards the nil rate band. So, using the example above, a charitable legacy of £75,000 would mean that an estate worth £400,000 would not attract any inheritance tax.

You can reduce tax on your estate if you leave 10% or more to charity in your will: Inheritance tax reduces from 40% to 36%. You should speak to your adviser to ensure the wording of your will takes advantage of this.

For more information about inheritance tax, visit the government website [www.hmrc.gov.uk/inheritancetax](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/inheritancetax)

### **Can I decide where my legacy will be spent?**

Legacies are usually unrestricted gifts, allowing us to use the funds wherever the need is greatest at that time. If you have a specific area of interest that you would like your gift to go to, please contact us to discuss your intentions. We'll always try to accommodate people's wishes but sometimes leaving a gift to a specific project or country can cause difficulties, especially if the project has finished or if we've stopped working in that country by the time the gift is received. If you let us know what you would like to achieve through your gift, we will do our best to help you.

### **How will my gift be honoured?**

Because we work hard to make every gift go as far as possible - and because our supporters have told us that's the way they'd like things to stay – we don't erect benches and plaques in the name of our benefactors. In many of the countries we work in, that kind of tribute would not be possible or appropriate.

This does not mean that we do not value those who leave a legacy: quite the opposite. Those who leave us a gift have made sacrifices to help the people and causes they cared about. So, we make sure their last and most special gift is used wisely to help as many people as possible.

### **Do I have to tell Refugee Support Europe of my wishes and plans?**

Your will is a personal document, and you are under no obligation to tell us anything. But if you do feel comfortable sharing your intentions with us, we would really like the opportunity to say thank you! Knowing that people are including us in their wills gives us added confidence for the years ahead. To let us know you've included a gift to Refugee Support Europe in your will, or that you intend to do so, please contact Paul Hutchings on 07768 815472 or email [paul@refugeesupport.eu](mailto:paul@refugeesupport.eu)

### **How to word your will** *(download and print this information to take to your adviser)*

If you would like to include a gift to Refugee Support Europe, you may find this suggested wording helpful:

Leaving a share of your estate in your will:

“I give fraction / % share / all of the residue of my estate to Refugee Support Europe, registered charity number 1174070 of 14 Hollingbury Park Avenue, Brighton, BN1 7JF, to be used for its general charitable purposes, and I direct that the receipt of the treasurer or duly authorised officer shall be a sufficient discharge to my executors.”

Leaving a cash gift or a specific item in your will:

“I give to Refugee Support Europe, registered charity number 1174070 of 14 Hollingbury Park Avenue, Brighton, BN1 7JF, the sum of **£amount** / **specific gift** of my item to be used for its general charitable purposes and I direct that the receipt of the treasurer or duly authorised officer shall be a sufficient discharge to my executors.”

### **Different types of legacy gifts**

There are three main kinds of legacy gift – a share of your estate, a cash amount, or a specific item.

A share of your estate to be paid after any debts, funeral costs and cash gifts are paid (also known as a residuary legacy)

A cash sum which can be index-linked to safeguard its future value (also known as a pecuniary legacy)

A particular item to be used or sold by the beneficiary (also known as a specific legacy)  
If you are worried about providing for your family but don't want to turn your back on your favourite causes, ask your adviser about a "reversionary legacy", which allows you to leave assets to a named individual for their lifetime while deciding who should benefit after they have passed away.

### **Get in touch**

If you have any questions about writing your will and how your legacy gift can help refugees rebuild their lives, call Paul Hutchings on 07768 815472 or email [paul@refugeesupport.eu](mailto:paul@refugeesupport.eu)