

JARGON BUSTER

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When it comes to making or amending your will, you may come across some legal jargon. This page should help you to make sense of it all.

Administrator: someone who is appointed to arrange a person's affairs if they leave no will.

Beneficiary: an individual or organisation who receives a gift in a will.

Codicil: a document which enables a simple update or alteration to an existing will.

Chattels and moveables: personal possessions, including furniture and car.

Estate: all a person's possessions at the time of their death, including money and property.

Executor: the person appointed to carry out the instructions in a will.

Intestate: you are intestate if you die without making a will.

Legacy: a gift left to a person or organisation in a will.

Life interest: a two stage legacy, where the first beneficiary is given the use of an asset (e.g. a house) during their lifetime. After their death the asset passes to the second beneficiary.

Pecuniary legacy: a gift of a fixed amount of money.

Probate: the legal procedure to decide whether someone's left a valid will.

Residue: the sum left from an estate when all debts, charges and gifts are deducted.

Residuary legacy: a gift consisting of the residue or part of the residue of an estate. This is a particularly popular way to leave a gift to a charity.

Specific legacy: a gift of a particular item eg jewellery.

Testator (male) or testatrix (female): the person who is making the will.

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Macmillan Cancer Support, registered charity in England and Wales (261017), Scotland (SC039907) and the Isle of Man (604).

