

## Sorting things out

**Taking small but simple steps, such as figuring out what really matters to you when you die, can help you and your family prepare emotionally, practically and financially so you can get on with living life as fully as you can.**

This information leaflet will cover things you can do to sort your affairs out, including:

- write a will (or update an existing one)
- plan a funeral personal to you
- list your important details and documents
- consider the legacy you want to leave behind
- create a list of things you'd really like to do before you die
- help set out how you want to distribute your personal belongings in your will
- have a conversation with loved ones

Planning ahead can be difficult especially as you may already be struggling to cope with fears and uncertainties about the future. Talking about death, and your plans, can help you feel less anxious alleviate the anxiety, so you can enjoy the time you have knowing your wishes will be taken care of, whatever may happen in the future.

### **Making a will**

Whatever your age, having an up-to-date and valid will is important. Dying without a will means that your wishes about who you would like to leave your estate to (property, personal possessions and money) can't be guaranteed. Writing a will isn't as expensive or difficult as you might think, but it is a legal document and must be prepared properly. We recommend you use a solicitor who will be able to help with the wording. They will make sure your wishes are clear and that they are carried out exactly as you want. Macmillan also has a Discounted Will Writing Service. Further details on this can be found [here](#).

### **Plans for your funeral**

For family or close friends, arranging a funeral can be stressful if they don't know what type of funeral service you would like. If you tell your family and friends what you want, your funeral is much more likely to reflect your wishes. It may also be one less thing for your family or friends to worry about.

**For information, support or just someone to talk to, call 0808 808 00 00 or visit [macmillan.org.uk](http://macmillan.org.uk)**

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Here are some things you may want to consider when discussing how you'd personalise your funeral:

- if and how you would like people to celebrate your life
- burial or cremation
- type of service
- location
- music, readings and speeches
- flowers or donations to charity
- what you would want to wear

## Important details and documents

You may find it helpful to make a list of your documents. This includes your will, your funeral plan, bank and building society details, insurance policies and details of your accountant and solicitor. Write on the list where to find this information and make sure that your partner or the executor of your will (the person you have chosen to sort out your will when you die) knows where it's kept.

## Your legacy

Consider the legacy you would like to leave behind. This could be as simple as writing down advice and life lessons to pass on to your loved ones. You could record videos or write letters to be given to people who are important to you after you die. When thinking about your lasting legacy you could consider including a charity or cause that means something to you in your will.

## Your must-have experiences before you die

Making sure you live those must-have experiences before you die is about living the life you have to the fullest, in the time that you have. Recording a list of experiences can help you work out how you can make some of them happen. It doesn't have to be things that push you out of your comfort zone, as long as it has meaning to you it should be on your list. The smallest achievement can give us the feeling of a great accomplishment.

## Your personal belongings

You may have an idea about who you would want your belongings to go to. If you're married, these may go straight to your spouse. If you're not, then it would be a good idea to write down who and what you would like to be given your personal effects. On the list could be your photos, pets, jewellery, clothes and furniture. As they form part of your estate you should refer to this list in your will. If your executors have this list to go by, it can make it easier for them to make sure your belongings go to the people you wanted to have them.

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## Talking to loved ones

Talking about death lets you get on with living, knowing that you've shared your wishes and that vital paperwork is sorted and easy to find. A talk about death with your loved ones is something we should all do as soon as we can. And if you have been diagnosed with cancer, we are right here for you to help you with this and any other support you need to live life as fully as you can.

## Other sources of support

Our advice pages have further information on what to consider when sorting things out [here](#). Remember that there are many professionals who can help you, as well as your family and friends.

You can also speak to our cancer support specialists on **0808 808 00 00**.



Dying Matters is a group of people and organisations working to improve awareness of death, dying and bereavement. Its aim is to help people talk more openly about these important issues, and to encourage people to make plans for the end of life. Find out more about [the work of Dying Matters](#).

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