

# **Becoming a Life Changer**

## **Introduction**

This document contains every part of the printed version of the Life Changer Pack in the same order as that used in the print edition. This information will cover how to write or change your Will, what a gift in your Will does and why we need your help.

## **Lynette and Pippa**

Lynette was diagnosed with Nystagmus, a serious eye condition, at birth. When she was 19 and at university, her sight suddenly deteriorated. As a result, she was forced to move back home. Depending on friends and family to help her get around, she lost all her confidence. “I was treating each day as if it were a chore”, says Lynette. “I had no dreams or goals. That all changed when I met Pippa. She is more than my guide dog, she is my best friend. With Pippa by my side I know I can do anything. Travelling the country in a job I love, spending time with family because I want to rather than I need to. I’m so grateful to those I’ve never met who chose to help me.” Lynette now has her life back thanks to Pippa, and you could do the same for someone else with sight loss by leaving a gift to Guide Dogs in your Will. Thank you.

## **Leaving a life-changing gift in your Will - A simple guide**

Writing or updating your Will starts here.

This information will hopefully answer some of the questions you may have about writing or amending your Will.

There’s no legal requirement for anyone to write a Will. But having one means you can be sure that what you care about most is looked after when you’re gone. If you don’t make a Will, dying intestate could mean your wishes may not be carried out.

Thankfully, arranging your Will - and leaving a legacy to Guide Dogs if you choose - is usually straightforward. If you use the Free Wills Network it needn’t cost you anything, either.



## National Free Wills Network - your Will written for free

Guide Dogs supporters can have a simple Will made or amended free of charge through the National Free Wills Network.\*

You can use this free service in three easy steps:

1. Request your Free Wills pack by calling on freephone 0800 953 0113 or follow this link for [guidedogs.org.uk/freewills](https://guidedogs.org.uk/freewills)
2. Receive your pack and choose a local participating solicitor
3. Book an appointment within 90 days

\*Geographical exclusions apply - contact us for further details.

## How would you like to change a life?

Once you choose to support Guide Dogs in your Will there are a few ways you can do it. A popular and straightforward way is to leave a percentage of your estate, known as a residuary gift. It protects the other parties in your Will and remains unaffected by inflation and other changes. Or you may want to leave a fixed sum of cash, called a pecuniary gift.

Finally, you may want to leave a specific gift which could be an item of jewellery, or some shares, or a piece of artwork, etc.

## A great place to start

List your assets and liabilities

Before you meet your solicitor it can be useful to list the things you have to consider. The main things to consider are:

- Your home and property (including any mortgages)
- Your car (including any loans and agreements)
- Furniture and other household items
- Jewellery and other individual items of worth
- Stocks and shares
- Cash in bank or building society accounts
- National Savings and/or other savings schemes
- Insurance policies and pensions
- Online assets - often overlooked, these can include digital photographs and music

## Frequently asked questions

Nothing can replace the advice of a qualified solicitor or financial advisor. But here are some answers to questions you may have about gifts in Wills.

**Q. Does Guide Dogs really need a gift from me?**

The short answer is 'Yes'. We are almost entirely funded by our supporters - and a large percentage of that comes from gifts in Wills. So you can see how important your gift will be in changing the lives of people with sight loss.

**Q. Will my gift actually make a difference?**

Nearly two out of every three guide dogs are made possible by gifts in Wills, however most of these aren't funded by just one person - it's a number of gifts put together that means we can create another partnership and change someone else's life.

**Q. Do I need to use a solicitor?**

You can write your own Will. However, to ensure it is legally binding and covers everything, we would always recommend a solicitor, as a professionally written Will is more likely to accurately convey your wishes after you've gone.

**Q. I want to leave a gift to Guide Dogs. What are the charity's details?**

Firstly, thank you! These are the details to include in your Will: The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, Hillfields, Burghfield Common, Reading RG7 3YG.

A charity registered in England and Wales (209617), Scotland (SC038979) and Isle of Man (1334).

**Q. What if I change my mind?**

Including a gift to Guide Dogs in your Will does not make it a binding commitment while you are still alive. So you are free to change your mind - and change your Will again - at any time.

**Q. If I do leave a gift, how will you find out?**

Your Will is private and we won't know if you have left us anything unless you tell us - or until the time comes for your Will to be read.



However, if you have included a gift to Guide Dogs in your Will, we would like to know so we can say thank you, and stay in touch in the way that suits you best.

Q. I've just written my Will. Do I have to go over everything again if I want to leave Guide Dogs a gift?

Not at all. Rather than rewriting everything you can instruct a solicitor (by letter or email) to add an amendment to your existing Will - which they will then prepare.

Q. I already have a trusted solicitor. Can I use them to leave a gift to Guide Dogs?

Yes, you can use your own solicitor to draw up your Will, although it's unlikely to be free to do so. Simply tell them you want to include a gift to Guide Dogs in your Will and they will arrange it for you.

Q. What about Inheritance Tax?

Leaving a gift to Guide Dogs - or any other charity - may lower your overall Inheritance Tax Liability. If you leave a certain percentage of your estate to charity, you may be eligible to pay a reduced IHT rate. Every case is different so it's best to speak to a solicitor.

Q. What is an Executor?

An Executor is someone (typically a friend or family member, though it could be a solicitor) whom you trust to carry out your wishes once you have gone.

Q. What is the process of writing a Will?

Most Wills are straightforward but it depends on the individual circumstances. The process begins with an appointment with your chosen solicitor. After your wishes have been set down, it will then be professionally drafted and sent to you to be signed in the presence of a witness. After signing, the Will is usually returned to your solicitor.

Q. Do I have to leave Guide Dogs a gift in my Will to use the Free Wills Network?

No. Leaving a gift to us, or any other charity, is not a condition of using the Free Wills Network. Your Will is your business so it's entirely up to you whether you choose to leave us a gift or not.

**Thank you for your support**

## **Make the Will you've been meaning to make - free online with Bequeathed**

Guide Dogs has partnered with the online Free Will service, Bequeathed, to ensure our supporters not only have the option to create a free Will face-to-face with a solicitor but also online, from the comfort of your home. With Bequeathed, you get all the support and guidance you need to make your Will online.

Bequeathed online Will service also includes a free 30 minute appointment with a legal firm. Choose phone or video call, your home or their office. For most people, that will be all they need. Should you require further legal advice, the firm will provide you with a quote. It's up to you whether to accept.

Leaving a gift in your Will to Guide Dogs is not a condition of using Bequeathed's service but we would be grateful if you could consider remembering Guide Dogs in your Will. Nearly two in every three guide dogs are only here because of gifts in Wills.

To make your Will online, follow this link for [guidedogs.org.uk/bequeathed](https://guidedogs.org.uk/bequeathed).



If you have any questions about leaving a gift in your Will, or want to know more about how these gifts change the lives of people with sight loss, we're always happy to chat. Just give us a call or come and meet us - we'd love to show you the difference gifts in Wills make throughout the UK.

Tel: 0800 953 0113

Email: [giftsinwills@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:giftsinwills@guidedogs.org.uk)

Follow this link for [guidedogs.org.uk/lifechangers](https://guidedogs.org.uk/lifechangers)

## **Guide Dogs Company information**

The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, Hillfields, Burghfield Common, Reading RG7 3YG. Guide Dogs is a working name of The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association. Registered Office: Hillfields, Burghfield Common, Reading, Berkshire, RG7 3YG. A company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (291646) and a charity registered in England and Wales (209617), Scotland (SC038979) and Isle of Man (1334).

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