

HOW TO PLAN YOUR ESTATE

Consider Working with a Financial Advisor

The financial advisor you choose is a key component in shaping your financial future. You need to entrust this person with your most personal information, hopes, dreams, and goals. That's why the advisor you choose needs to not only be someone you can rely on, but someone you can talk openly with about your long-term plans.

Make a Will

If you die intestate (in other words without a will) you run the risk of leaving behind a trail of stress, cost and even family feuds. The business of making a will can be quite straightforward and it won't cost the earth provided you are aware of the major pitfalls. Here are some pointers to consider:

- Choose who draws up your will wisely.
- Choose your executors well. Consider appointing a default or substitute executor.
- Appoint guardians.
- Appoint trustworthy trustees. Trustees will be responsible for managing and investing money, or looking after property until it passes to the beneficiaries, so make sure they are people with a good grasp of financial matters – and that they are still young enough so they don't die before you do.
- Make specific legacies and make sure you leave a residual legacy. The 'residue' is what is left over in

your estate after you have made specific legacies. The gifts and legacies would pass according to the will, but the residue would be subject to the laws of intestacy.

- Sign your will. If you don't sign it in front of two independent witnesses, it will not be valid. A witness cannot be anyone mentioned in the will or married to anyone mentioned in the will.
- Update your will. It is always possible that a number of factors in your life will change. If this means you need to amend your will, it is important that you don't waste time in doing so.
- Get it stored safely. Whatever you do – don't hide your will. Your will is no good to anyone if it cannot be found after your death.

Reference:

70 Answers You Need to Know about Personal Financial Management, Citi-Tsao Foundation Financial Education Programme for Mature Women (2009).