

Legacy FAQs



Leaving a legacy to any charity is a big decision and one which can raise many questions. We've answered some of the most commonly asked queries here but, if you can't find the answer you are looking for, please get in touch and we'll do our very best to help.

Can I write my Will myself?

Yes, many people successfully write their own Will. However, it is very easy to make a mistake and so the DIY route runs a greater risk of your Will being seen as ambiguous or even invalid.

If you do choose to write your own Will, it is vital that the copy you sign and have witnessed is entirely error-free and has no amendments. Your local Citizen's Advice Bureaux may be able to give you some further advice.

How do I find a solicitor or authorised Will writer?

This is really a personal choice and may be something you can base on recommendations from friends or family. Otherwise, a good starting point is The Law Society website (www.lawsociety.org.uk) or its Scottish counterpart (www.lawscot.org.uk). Both have useful 'Find a Solicitor' tools which will help ensure you find a legal representative that is properly qualified and regulated by an appropriate body.

If you decide to use a Will writing service, check they are members of either the Society of Will Writers or the Institute of Professional Will Writers. Members of these organisations must have adequate insurance cover; follow a code of practice approved by the Trading Standards Institute; and undergo regular training.

How much will it cost to write my Will?

The answer to this will greatly depend on your individual circumstances, the complexity of your affairs, in which part of the country you live and whether you are making a single or joint Will.

If you don't already have a solicitor in mind, it's a good idea to shop around and seek a few quotes. Take a look at the websites recommended at the end of these FAQs for further guidance.

How can I prepare for writing my Will?

Your legal advisor will help you throughout the process but it can reduce the costs if you are prepared in advance of any consultation. Try to gather as much relevant documentation as possible (e.g. life insurance policies/property deeds) and put in the thinking time you need to decide who your beneficiaries are and how you would like your estate to be shared among them.

When making a gift to a charity, do I have to specify an exact sum of money?

No, there are several ways in which you can leave your gift. The two main ways are:

- **A Pecuniary Legacy:** This is a gift of a fixed sum of money. Because the value of your gift may reduce over time, one thing you might want to consider is index linking it. Your solicitor can help with this.
- **A Residuary Legacy:** This is a gift consisting of the remainder of your estate once all other instructions have been carried out and all debts have been paid.

Can I leave an item in my possession to charity?

Yes, this is another form of gift called a **Specific Legacy** where you bequest an item such as an antique or piece of jewellery to your chosen beneficiary. If you do this for the Bishop Simeon Trust, bear in mind that, for your gift to be of maximum use to us, we would most likely have to put it up for auction. Please think about this carefully, especially if it is a treasured possession.

I do not have a lot to leave. Is a small legacy still worth it?

The Bishop Simeon Trust is very grateful for any gift left to us in a Will. Large or small, these gifts are a valuable contribution to our work, helping us to transform communities and change lives in South Africa.

I've already written my Will. Can I still leave a legacy to the Bishop Simeon Trust?

Yes, you can leave a gift to the Bishop Simeon Trust by adding a codicil (a new instruction) to your existing Will. If you have other changes to make at the same time then it may be better to have a new Will drafted. Otherwise a codicil is sufficient. Although it is a fairly simple document, we recommend you use a solicitor or authorised Will writer to prepare it for you. This shouldn't be expensive.

Is it possible to leave a gift towards a specific area of your work?

It is most helpful to us if you request your gift to be used for the *general purposes* of the Bishop Simeon Trust's work. The needs and priorities of vulnerable communities in South Africa can change over time and so your gift will make the most impact if we can use it where the need is greatest at the time it comes to us.

If, however, you wish to leave a gift to a particular area of our work (perhaps towards one specific project) please contact us (or ask your solicitor to call us) to discuss the options available. Telephone 0845 430 1214.

Who should I inform that I have left a gift the Bishop Simeon Trust in my Will?

Your Will is a private and confidential document and it is entirely your decision as to whether you share any of the information it contains with anyone.

If you have chosen to include the Bishop Simeon Trust as a beneficiary of your estate and are happy to tell us about it, please get in touch. We'd love to express our gratitude properly and it will also ensure we don't ask you to support us in this way again!

Isn't it better for me to make a donation now rather than leave a legacy?

At the Bishop Simeon Trust, we are thankful for all gifts, regardless of when or how they are received. Some people choose to support us throughout their lifetime, with a gift in their Will or in fact do both. Ensuring our work continues now and in the future is a big priority so, whether you make a donation now or leave us a share of your assets in the future, your support is important to us.

Can I change my mind about a gift in my Will?

Of course you can. Your Will is there to ensure your wishes are carried out correctly and you are free to change your mind, adding or removing beneficiaries, as many times as you wish. Even if you have already told us about your plan to leave a legacy, you can still change your mind at any time.

Is there recommended wording I can use to make my gift to the BST?

In most cases, your legal advisor will make sure the wording of your legacy to the Bishop Simeon Trust is accurate and legally correct. They will simply need the following information:

Charity name: The Bishop Simeon C R Trust Incorporating The Living South Africa Memorial
Registered address: 6 St Martins Place, London, WC2N 4JJ
Registered charity number: 1016122

If you are writing your own Will, the following are examples of the wording that can be used:

Wording for a pecuniary legacy

"I give to The Bishop Simeon C R Trust Incorporating The Living South Africa Memorial at 6 St Martins Place, London WC2N 4JJ (A charity registered in England and Wales no: 1016122) the sum of £... (free of all taxes) for its charitable purposes, and I declare that a receipt of the Treasurer or authorised officer will be sufficient discharge to my executor/s."

Wording for a residuary legacy

"I give my residuary estate to The Bishop Simeon C R Trust Incorporating The Living South Africa Memorial at 6 St Martins Place, London WC2N 4JJ (A charity registered in England and Wales no: 1016122) for its charitable purposes and I declare that a receipt of the Treasurer or other authorised officer will be sufficient discharge to my executors."

Are there any alternative ways of leaving a legacy to BST?

You can also leave a legacy to BST and any other charities through the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF). When you make your will, you leave your charitable giving to CAF and provide a letter of wishes listing the charities you want to support. You can then make any changes to the amount or your chosen charities at any time free of charge. For more information visit www.cafonline.org.

Are there any tax benefits to leaving a gift in my Will?

Yes, gifts to charities in your Will are exempt from Inheritance Tax and can in fact reduce the rate of Inheritance Tax applied to the rest of your estate. Contact HMRC (www.hmrc.gov.uk) for more information.

How much of my legacy will be used directly in South Africa?

As a small charity, our administration costs are very low and you can be guaranteed that the majority of your legacy will be spent directly helping vulnerable communities in South Africa.

Where can I go for more help?

You can download our free guide to making a Will from our website at www.bstrust.org or contact us directly with any queries. Email info@bstrust.org or call on 0845 430 1214. There is also lots of information available online that also could be helpful. Here are just a few sources:

- HMRC (www.hmrc.gov.uk) – especially useful for information about inheritance tax issues.
- Money Advice Service (www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk) – free and easy to understand information and advice on Will writing in general.
- Remember a Charity (www.rememberacharity.org.uk) – general guidance on writing a Will, finding a solicitor, understanding the jargon etc.