



R N I B

See differently

Writing Wills for people with sight loss





This guide contains practical advice, explaining what you can do as a professional adviser to make life a little easier for clients who are blind or partially sighted. Some of the information in this guide may seem obvious, but it can be easy to forget and it will make a big difference to someone writing their Will.

Will writing can at times seem complicated and may make people feel anxious, particularly people with sight loss.

This guide is designed to help you to help them.



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Meeting clients

If you are visiting a blind, or partially sighted, person in their home or at your office, you may wonder how to behave. Here are some practical suggestions, made by blind people themselves, to put both you and them at ease:



Introductions

Client's home:

- Clearly introduce yourself when the front door is opened. Allow the client to show you into the house. If they have a guide dog always seek permission before petting it. It is likely they will not be working within the home, but you should always check. A guide dog in harness is a working animal and should never be distracted.
- Once you have been shown where to sit, clearly explain what you will be doing during your visit, e.g. going through their requirements for a Will, etc.

Solicitor's office:

- Meet the client at the entrance and clearly introduce yourself. If they have a guide dog always seek permission before petting it. A guide dog in harness is a working animal and should never be distracted.
- Be sure to clearly explain where key things are around the office such as fire exits and bathrooms and offer assistance if the client needs help getting to a particular place in the building. Guide the client to your office and show them where to sit. The easiest way to guide someone is to offer them your elbow and walk a half step ahead of them.
- Once you are both seated, outline what you will be doing during the meeting e.g. going through requirements for their Will.

During the meeting

Office and Home

- Check if they have made any notes in preparation for your visit. Please note that these could be in audio – recorded into a Dictaphone or writing over several pages in large print. You may need to allow a little more time to take these down in your instructions.
- If you need to leave the room for any reason, tell the client that you are leaving and let them know when you return.
- Once you have taken their instructions, clearly explain what the next steps will be in order to finalise their Will, including when they can expect to receive it. If you don't already know, check if they require a copy of the Will or Will execution instructions in an alternative format (large print, audio or braille).

N.B. You should explain that this will always have to accompany the print version of the Will, as braille and audio versions of the Will are not legally binding as they can easily be altered, and the meaning changed. Ask if there are any final questions at this point.

End of meeting

Client's home:

As you stand to leave, thank the client and ask if you should show yourself out, though it is likely they will want to show you out themselves.

Solicitor's office:

As the client stands to leave, thank them and offer to walk them to the exit.



General notes – in conversation

When approaching a blind person, say who you are in case they don't recognise your voice.

During the meeting avoid addressing your remarks to a companion, as though the blind person were not there.

Talk naturally. Don't be afraid of using visual language i.e. "nice to see you". Just relax and be yourself. You'll feel awkward if you try to censor yourself.

Try to verbalise your actions and give precise instructions. If you have given them any papers, for example, explain where you have put them down. If you need to leave the room, tell them – everyone feels foolish talking to an empty space.



To request braille and audio versions you will need to ensure that the final draft of the Will is sent – password protected – to our team at RNIB transcription: **Businesslink.Mailbox@rnib.org.uk**



Knowing what's in the Will

If your client is unable to read a Will, one of the witnesses should read it aloud. It must be stated clearly that "I (name of witness) certify that before execution the Will was read over by me to (name of testator) and I further certify that I am satisfied that he/she appeared to understand it perfectly."

Incidentally, blind people cannot witness Wills as they would be unable to see that the testator actually signed it.





The importance of print and design

Print is still the usual medium for more than six in 10 people with sight problems. You can do a great deal to help by producing documents that are clear and easy to read, not just when it comes to preparing a Will, but in all your written correspondence.

Here are a few tips:

- Use a larger font size – we recommend a minimum of 12 point, but 14 or 16 point is ideal.
- Use a plain typeface, such as Arial or Universal.
- Always ensure photocopies are crisp and clear.
- Don't use glossy paper as this can create glare and is difficult to scan.
- Avoid italics, underlining and large blocks of capital letters as these are difficult to read.
- Use short paragraphs wherever possible. Put extra spacing between lines and paragraphs if you can.
- Solid blocks of text are particularly daunting for readers with sight problems.



RNIB is the leading UK charity for everyone who is, or could be, affected by sight loss.

We are immensely grateful to everyone who chooses to support us in this way. Legacies help to create a world that concentrates on what people with sight loss can do, not what they can't.

Together, we can transform the lives of blind and partially sighted people, giving them the help, support and tools to ensure their future is full of opportunities to achieve their potential.

Visit rnib.org.uk/legacies to find out more, call 0303 123 9999 or email: legacy.services@rnib.org.uk



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