



## WILL SIGNING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

During these unprecedented times many of our clients have asked how they can execute their will in order to make it a proper legal document whilst still observing proper social distancing. This brief guide contains some options available to you which comply with the government's guidelines of remaining a minimum of two metres apart at all times, whilst ensuring that you can still create a valid will.

It is essential that two witnesses watch you sign your name on your will. They must then sign their names and write their names and addresses on the will as well in the space provided following your signature. The law does not allow wills to be signed electronically.

We understand that it may be difficult to comply with these legal requirements and maintain social distancing, particularly if you're self-isolating. However, we have a few suggestions to help you.

### Will signing at home

1. Plan ahead. Contact your witnesses by telephone, email or social media to agree a place, time and strategy for the will-signing.
2. If you're living with someone who is not a beneficiary in your will, or if you're visited by a carer who is not a beneficiary, they can witness your signature if they're happy to do so.
3. Your witnesses must be physically close enough to see you sign your will. If your home does not contain a room of sufficient size for you all to maintain social distancing, they can stand in a hallway or an adjacent room provided they can still see you clearly. If it is desirable that your witnesses don't enter your premises at all, position yourself beside a window, with your witnesses standing outside and at a safe distance from one another but still able to see you. Use mobile phones to speak to one another if you can't hear clearly through the window. You can all be out of doors, even on opposite sides of a garden fence, if that's more convenient.
4. Once you've signed your will, step away while your witnesses take turns to step forward, sign and write their details on the will. If your witnesses are outside your window, they step back to a safe distance while you open the window or your door and place the will within their reach. When you've closed the window or door, your witnesses take turns to step forward and sign, as before.
5. We suggest that you and your witnesses each bring your own pen to sign your names. Wear disposable gloves and masks if you wish.
6. If you're self-isolating, you might ask one of your witnesses to put the signed will into the stamped addressed envelope and to post it to Rohan Solicitors, rather than handing it back to you to do so.



## WE CAN HELP YOU!

The Government recognises solicitors acting in connection with the signing of wills as 'key workers' in the current emergency. Ideally your solicitor should be one of your witnesses. To make this easier, we will facilitate the witnessing of your will in one of the following ways:

- A. Make an appointment to come to our office. We will ensure that two members of our team are in attendance. We will maintain social distancing by keeping 2 metres apart at all times and asking you to remain on the opposite side of our glazed front door. We can communicate via mobile phone. The will can then be signed by you and passed through our letterbox for our two members of staff to witness it.
- B. Alternatively, you can remain in your car in our car park. We will witness your signature through the window, one standing each side the car. Once you have signed, place the will on the adjacent table or chair we will have ready placed for you, and we will then add our signatures.
- C. If you live locally, one or more of our staff members may be able to visit you at home to witness your signature, following one of the procedures outlined above.

We will retain your original will, storing it in our secure deeds storage facility for safe keeping and send a certified copy to you via post.

### Any questions?

If you have any questions in regards to facilitating the signing of your will, please remember that we are here to help. Please call us on 01444 450 901 to discuss the logistics of your will signing and facilitating a method that best suits your needs.

Above all, please remember that the safety of our team and clients is of the utmost importance to us. For this reason, if you do experience any of the widely publicised symptoms, please let us know.

Many thanks for your patience during this time.

*Rohan Solicitors.*