

The Legal Basics Everyone Puts Off

(But really shouldn't)



A simple guide to protecting your family, your assets and your legacy.



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Why This Guide Exists.

Most people don't avoid legal planning because they don't care. They avoid it because it feels complicated, uncomfortable, or "something to do later".

The problem?

Later often comes too late.

This guide walks you through the essential legal foundations everyone should have in place, clearly, simply, and without jargon.

This guide is for information only and does not constitute individual financial or legal advice.

What you'll learn:

- The legal basics that protect your family
- The mistakes people make by putting things off
- When professional advice really matters



The Legal Basics Everyone Puts Off

Wills.



Why a Will Matters.

Creating a Will isn't just about paperwork. It's an act of love that protects your family and gives you peace of mind. Without one, you leave the most important decisions in life to chance, risking confusion, unintended hurt, and added stress for those you care about most. Taking the time to produce or review your Will means you're making sure:

- Your wishes are honoured
- Your loved ones are looked after
- Your legacy is truly yours

Don't let tomorrow come too late.

If you don't decide, the law will.

If you don't have a Will, it's not just your wishes that are left behind – it's your voice.

Without a Will, the law steps in and decides who inherits your home, your savings, and even belongings with sentimental value, **often following strict rules that may not reflect what you truly want.**

What you'll learn:

- What happens if you die without a Will
- Who decides where your assets go
- Impact on partners, children and dependants
- Why even "simple estates" need planning



What happens if you die without a Will.

Imagine leaving everything you care about up to chance. Without a Will, the law decides who receives your home, savings, and treasured possessions. This can mean your loved ones face confusion, delays, or even disappointment at a time when they need comfort and clarity most. Making a Will is your chance to speak up for your family, giving them certainty and peace when they need it most.

Who decides where your assets go.

If you don't set things out in a Will, it's not you who chooses what happens but the legal system. This means your assets may end up with people you hadn't intended, leaving your family facing unnecessary stress and sometimes even disputes. Having a Will puts you in control, so you can provide for those who matter most to you.

Impact on partners, children and dependants.

Without clear instructions, those closest to you – partners, children, and dependants – may be left in limbo. The absence of a Will can make it harder for them to access what they need, just when support and stability are crucial. A Will is your voice, guiding and caring for loved ones even after you're gone.

Why even “simple estates” need planning.

It's easy to think, "My situation isn't complicated, it'll sort itself out." But even modest estates can unravel without a Will, causing delays and confusion. By planning ahead, you save your family hassle – no matter the size of your estate, a Will brings clarity and peace of mind, ensuring your wishes are followed.

“A Will isn't about money
– it's about control and clarity.”



Common Will Mistakes.

The mistakes we see all the time.

Many families lose out not because of bad intentions, but because of innocent assumptions – an old Will, a missing guardian, a belief that "it'll sort itself out." These small oversights can have big consequences. The good news? They're easy to fix once you know what to look for.

What you'll learn:

- Assuming everything passes automatically
- Outdated Wills
- Not accounting for blended families
- No guardians named
- DIY templates without advice



Assuming everything passes automatically.

It's easy to believe that your home, savings or treasured possessions will simply pass to your loved ones without a Will. But the reality is often far more complicated, and can leave families tangled in confusion and uncertainty. Taking control with a Will means you decide who gets what, and spare those you care about from unnecessary stress.

Outdated Wills.

Life never stands still – families grow, relationships change, and new priorities emerge. An old Will may not reflect your wishes today, leaving important people or assets overlooked. Reviewing your Will ensures your intentions are honoured and your loved ones are protected, so nothing is left to chance.

Not accounting for blended families.

Modern families come in all shapes and sizes, with step-children, new partners and complex relationships. Without a clear Will, those you love most might not receive what you intended or could even be left out entirely. Creating a thoughtful Will brings peace of mind and fairness for everyone in your family.

No guardians named.

If you have children, naming a guardian is one of the most important decisions you'll ever make. Without your guidance, the courts could decide who cares for your children, regardless of your wishes. A Will gives you the power to choose, ensuring your children are looked after by someone you trust.

DIY templates without advice.

While it might be tempting to download a Will template, without expert support you could miss vital details that affect your family's future. Professional advice guarantees your Will is robust, legally sound, and truly reflects your wishes. Your loved ones deserve the comfort of knowing everything is taken care of.

Speak to Gemini about
Reviewing or Creating a Will



The Legal Basics Everyone Puts Off

Powers of Attorney.



What happens if you can't act for yourself?

It's a common misconception that Powers of Attorney are only for the elderly or those facing dementia, but the truth is, anyone can find themselves unexpectedly unable to handle their own affairs due to illness, accident, or even a temporary medical crisis. Life can change in an instant – a sudden hospitalisation, a serious injury, or an extended trip abroad can all leave you needing someone you trust to step in and make decisions. Setting up a Power of Attorney isn't about expecting the worst; it's about being prepared for whatever life brings, no matter your age. By having this legal protection in place, you ensure your wishes are followed, your finances and health are managed by someone you choose, and your loved ones are spared confusion and heartache during difficult times.

What you'll learn:

- What a Power of Attorney is
- Difference between health and financial powers
- Why spouses can't automatically act for each other
- The cost and stress of not having one



What a Power of Attorney is.

Imagine suddenly being unable to make important decisions for yourself – who would step in to help? A Power of Attorney gives you the peace of mind that someone you trust will stand by your side, handling your affairs if life takes an unexpected turn. It's not just paperwork; it's your personal safety net for the future.

Difference between health and financial powers.

When you create a Power of Attorney, you can choose someone to make decisions about your health and your money separately. That means your loved ones can focus on caring for you, while someone responsible manages your bills and assets. Clear choices now prevent confusion – and heartache – when it matters most.

Why spouses can't automatically act for each other.

Many people assume their husband or wife will be able to make decisions if they can't, but the law doesn't work that way. If you haven't named them with a Power of Attorney, they could be left helpless while the courts decide what to do. Don't risk leaving the person you love most powerless in your time of need.

The cost and stress of not having one.

Without a Power of Attorney, your family could face lengthy delays, expensive legal fees, and endless worry. Instead of supporting you, they're tangled in red tape. Setting one up now saves your loved ones from unnecessary hardship – and means you stay in control, no matter what happens.



Why Putting It Off Is Risky.

What you'll learn:

- What happens without POA
- Court involvement
- Delays and loss of control
- Why early setup is easier and safer

Too late means too complex.

If someone does not have a Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) in place and suddenly loses the ability to make their own decisions, their loved ones may not automatically have the legal authority to manage their affairs.

In many cases, family members will need to apply to the Court of Protection to be appointed as a deputy so they can make financial or welfare decisions on the person's behalf. This process involves submitting detailed forms, medical evidence, and notifying other relatives.

Deputyship applications can take several months to be processed. During this time, access to bank accounts, property decisions, or other financial matters may be limited, which can make it difficult to manage bills or important arrangements.

The process can also involve court fees, medical assessment costs, and sometimes legal fees, which can add to the financial pressure at an already stressful time. In some situations, if there are disagreements or no suitable family member is available, the court may appoint a professional deputy to manage the person's affairs.

Putting a Lasting Power of Attorney in place in advance allows you to choose people you trust to act on your behalf if you ever lose capacity, helping your loved ones avoid unnecessary delays, costs, and uncertainty.



Delays and loss of control.

If the right legal arrangements are not in place and you become unable to make decisions for yourself, your loved ones may not automatically have the authority to act on your behalf.

In many cases, they would need to apply to the Court of Protection before they can manage finances or make certain important decisions for you. This process can take time and may involve paperwork, fees, and formal approvals.

During this period, access to bank accounts, financial arrangements, or other practical matters may be limited, which can make managing everyday responsibilities more difficult. Instead of decisions being made by people you have chosen, the court may ultimately decide who is appointed to act.

Putting a Lasting Power of Attorney in place allows you to choose trusted people to step in if you ever need support, helping avoid unnecessary delays and uncertainty. Don't leave things to chance – sort it now and keep your life, and your loved ones, protected and empowered.

Why early setup is easier and safer.

It is usually much easier to make these arrangements while you are well and able to make your own decisions.

Planning ahead means everything is already in place if it is ever needed. This can help avoid stress, confusion, and delays for the people closest to you.

Setting up a Lasting Power of Attorney is a straightforward way to plan ahead, giving you and your family reassurance that the people you trust will be able to help manage things if the situation ever arises.

Get guidance on setting
up Powers of Attorney



Trusts and Protecting Assets.



When Trusts Make Sense.

What you'll learn:

- What trusts are (in plain English)
- Who they're useful for
- Protecting beneficiaries
- Controlling how assets are used

Trusts aren't just for the ultra-wealthy.

What trusts are.

A UK trust is a legal arrangement where you give assets – like money, property, or investments – to someone called a "trustee," who manages them for the benefit of others, known as "beneficiaries." You set the rules for how and when these assets are used, so everything is handled according to your wishes. It's a way to keep your wealth safe and help your loved ones, without giving them direct access right away.

A trust is a thoughtful way to look after your money, property, or other assets for the people you care about, both now and in the future. Think of it as a safety net, ensuring that your wishes are respected and your loved ones are supported, no matter what life brings. Setting up a trust means you're taking control and making things easier for everyone involved.



Who trusts are useful for.

Trusts aren't just for the ultra-wealthy – they're a practical solution for anyone wanting to secure their family's financial future. Whether you have children, vulnerable relatives, or simply want peace of mind, a trust can help you protect what matters most. By planning ahead, you're giving your family the gift of stability and clarity during uncertain times.

Protecting beneficiaries.

When you establish a trust, you're shielding your beneficiaries from potential risks, such as financial mismanagement or outside claims. This means your chosen loved ones will receive support exactly as you intend – when they need it, and in a way that's right for them. It's a powerful act of care, offering them protection and certainty in a changing world.

Controlling how assets are used.

A trust allows you to set clear rules for how your assets are managed and distributed, so your hard-earned wealth is used wisely. With a trust, you decide who benefits, when, and how – removing guesswork and ensuring your legacy is handled the way you want. It's about creating a lasting impact and making sure your values carry on for generations.



The Role of Asset Management.

What you'll learn:

- Why assets inside trusts still need managing
- Risks of leaving cash unmanaged
- Aligning investments with legal intentions
- Why legal planning and asset management should work together

A trust protects assets – asset management protects their value.

Why assets inside trusts still need managing.

Establishing a trust is just the first step in protecting your assets – but it doesn't end there. Even once your wealth is placed inside a trust, it needs to be actively managed to grow, adapt, and truly serve your intentions. Without ongoing oversight, your assets could lose value or become misaligned with your goals, meaning your loved ones may not benefit as fully as you wished.

Risks of leaving cash unmanaged.

Leaving money unattended inside a trust can be risky. Unmanaged cash can lose its purchasing power over time due to inflation, and missed opportunities mean your wealth isn't working as hard as it could. By taking action and making thoughtful investment decisions, you can help ensure your legacy is preserved and provides real support for the people and causes you care about.



Aligning investments with legal intentions.

Trust planning is about more than protecting assets – it's about making sure your investments reflect your legal wishes and moral values. Choosing the right investments within your trust ensures your resources are used in ways that honour your intentions and provide lasting impact. This alignment gives you peace of mind, knowing your wishes will be respected now and in the future.

Why legal planning and asset management should work together.

A trust is only as strong as the partnership between careful legal planning and proactive asset management. When both work hand in hand, your legacy is protected from legal risks and financial pitfalls. By creating a solid framework and actively managing your assets, you can help secure your family's future and give yourself confidence that your values and wishes will endure for generations.

“We don't just help you structure wealth – we help it continue working.”

Speak to Gemini
about setting up a trust



The Legal Basics Everyone Puts Off

Inheritance Tax Planning.



The Inheritance Tax Reality.

What you'll learn:

- Current thresholds (high level, non-technical)
- Why more estates are affected
- Common misunderstandings
- Why pensions & property matter

Inheritance tax catches more families than ever.

Current thresholds.

Inheritance tax (IHT) in the UK is charged at 40% on estates valued above the current threshold, which stands at £325,000 for individuals and £650,000 for married couples or those in civil partnerships. This is known as the "nil-rate band." For those with children and depending upon their circumstances there may be an additional residential nil rate band available of £350,000.

For many, it's easy to assume that their estate won't exceed this, but rising property values, savings and legislation changes mean more families are affected than ever before. If you haven't checked your own position lately, now is the time — don't let a simple oversight cost your loved ones dearly.

Why more estates are affected.

It's heartbreaking to see families surprised by a tax bill they never expected. The number of estates liable for IHT is rising rapidly due to increasing house prices and stealth measures such as unchanged tax thresholds. What feels like a modest home can easily push an estate over the limit. Imagine working hard your whole life, only for a significant portion of what you leave behind to be taken in tax — unless you plan ahead.



Common misunderstandings.

Many believe that inheritance tax only applies to the wealthy, or that certain assets are always exempt. In reality, misunderstandings about gifting rules, the use of trusts, and what counts toward your estate can lead to expensive mistakes. With changes coming in April 2027 that will affect how pensions and inherited assets are taxed, it's never been more important to get the facts straight and review your plan regularly.

Why pensions & property matter.

Pensions and property often make up the largest part of an estate, and new rules from April 2027 mean that some pension pots could become subject to IHT where they were previously protected. If you haven't considered how your home or your retirement savings will be treated, you could be putting your family's future at risk. A thoughtful review now can ensure your hard-earned assets make the biggest possible difference for those you care about.

Common IHT Mistakes.

Small mistakes can cost families thousands.

- Gifting without understanding rules
- Assuming pensions are always outside the estate
- Not reviewing plans regularly
- Not seeking advice early



Gifts without understanding rules.

Giving gifts to your loved ones while you're still here can feel rewarding – but without knowing the inheritance tax rules, your generosity could have unintended consequences. Many don't realize that gifts may still count toward your estate for up to seven years, and exceeding annual allowances could mean your family faces a tax bill you never expected. Careful planning ensures your gifts truly benefit those you care about, without leaving them a financial burden when you're gone.

Assuming pensions are always outside the estate.

It's easy to assume your pension is safe from inheritance tax, but upcoming changes mean that's not always the case. If you don't check the details, your retirement savings could unexpectedly swell your estate's value and leave your beneficiaries facing a hefty tax bill. The peace of mind that comes from understanding how your pension is treated can make all the difference for your family's future.

Not reviewing plans regularly.

Life changes – marriages, children, new homes, or even changes in the law – all mean your inheritance tax plan can quickly become outdated. Failing to review your arrangements regularly might mean your wishes aren't carried out as you hoped, or your family pays more tax than necessary. Taking time now to revisit your plan could save your loved ones stress and money when they need help the most.

Not seeking advice early.

Many wait until it's almost too late to seek financial advice, missing out on valuable options that could protect their estate. Early guidance from an expert helps you spot opportunities and avoid costly mistakes – ensuring your loved ones receive as much of your hard-earned legacy as possible. Don't leave your family's financial future to chance; get informed now, before time and options run out.

Download Gemini's "10 Common Inheritance Tax Mistakes" Guide



When to Get Advice.



When DIY isn't Enough.

What you'll learn:

- Complex families
- Significant assets
- Business owners
- Blended families
- Future planning, not just now

Some decisions need professional guidance.

Navigating estate planning, whether it involves drafting Wills, setting up powers of attorney, or tackling inheritance tax, is rarely as straightforward as it first appears. The UK's legal landscape is constantly evolving, and what seems simple now can quickly become complicated by changing legislation, family circumstances, or the nature of your assets. Professional advisers bring expertise that goes beyond ticking boxes, helping you interpret the rules, avoid costly pitfalls, and structure your affairs so your intentions are honoured and your loved ones protected.

Seeking guidance early means you can take advantage of opportunities you might otherwise miss, and ensure your plans reflect current laws and best practice. With specialist support, your estate planning is not only compliant but also tailored to your unique wishes – giving you peace of mind and sparing your family unnecessary stress and financial strain down the line. In a world where mistakes can be expensive and time-consuming to fix, professional advice is a wise investment in your legacy.



For those with complex family structures, such as blended families, second marriages, or dependants with special needs, professional advice is essential to ensure fairness and clarity. The intricacies of modern relationships mean that inheritance wishes can easily become muddled or contested without clear legal guidance. An adviser can help navigate the sensitivities and legal requirements, making sure your intentions are properly documented and your loved ones are protected from potential disputes.

Significant assets like property, pensions, investments, or valuable possessions – can quickly push an estate above inheritance tax thresholds. Professional help is crucial here because the rules around tax reliefs, exemptions, and the treatment of different asset types are complex and constantly changing. An expert can help you structure your estate efficiently, making sure allowances are used wisely and your wealth is passed on as you intend, rather than lost to unnecessary tax.

Business owners face unique challenges in estate planning, with issues such as succession, valuation, and potential tax liabilities often requiring specialist knowledge. Professional advisers understand the nuances of transferring business interests, ensuring that your company's future is secure and that your beneficiaries aren't left with unexpected tax burdens or operational headaches. They can help you plan for a seamless transition, whether your business is to be sold, passed on, or wound up.

Blended families where there may be stepchildren, ex-spouses, or multiple generations involved – bring additional layers of complexity to inheritance planning. Professional guidance helps ensure that everyone's interests are considered and that the risk of disputes or unintended consequences is minimised. By working with an expert, you can achieve a balance between fairness and your personal wishes, providing clarity for all parties and safeguarding your legacy against future misunderstandings.



Why a Joined-Up Approach Matters.

What you'll learn:

- Legal structures.
- Asset management.
- Tax planning.
- Ongoing reviews.

Legal planning works best when everything connects.

At the Gemini Wealth Group, clients benefit from a truly joined-up approach to estate and inheritance tax planning. With our in-house Legal team, wealth managers, and investment specialists working seamlessly together, we provide coordinated advice that addresses every facet of your estate, from legal structures and tax strategies to investment solutions and wealth preservation. This integrated model means you have a single trusted partner who understands your full financial picture and can anticipate how decisions in one area may impact another.

By offering all these services under one roof, we eliminate the hassle of juggling separate advisers and ensure your plans are not only comprehensive but also flexible enough to adapt as your life, assets, and family circumstances evolve.

Our collaborative approach is designed to give you peace of mind, knowing that your legacy is being managed with the utmost care, foresight, and expertise now and for generations to come.



Next Steps.



Take Control: Without Overwhelm.

**You don't need to do everything at once.
But doing nothing leaves too much to chance.**

Next Steps:

- Review your Will
- Consider Powers of Attorney
- Understand how your assets are managed
- Get clear, professional advice

Book your Legal Planning
Review with Gemini

Speak to Gemini's Legal
& Wealth Management team



**Ready to take control of your finances
or require further information?**

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The value of your investments can go down as well as up, so you could get back less than you invested.