



## WHAT IS THE STEP CODE FOR WILL PREPARATION IN ENGLAND & WALES (THE CODE)?

The Code comprises a set of principles that are in place to benefit you. These principles openly demonstrate the standard of transparency and service you can expect from a STEP member preparing your will.

The Code is not exhaustive, but it does provide you with a list of considerations that your will drafter should factor-in during the process.

## HOW DOES THE CODE BENEFIT YOU?

The Code outlines a set of standards that are required of the STEP member preparing your will. STEP members are expected to demonstrate the following:

### Openness and transparency

- They must remain open with you regarding their qualifications, cost implications when using their services and tax implications of your will, and provide you with a draft to approve before your will is executed.
- They are obliged to take steps to ensure you are not the victim of any fraud by confirming your identity before drafting a will for your estate.
- They must have no doubt in your mental capacity to make an informed decision and must not take any action that could cause a negative outcome for you should they believe you have a diminished mental capacity.
- They should hold an appropriate level of professional indemnity insurance.

### Integrity

- A will drafter is required to work with sensitive personal information when preparing your will. The STEP Code sets clear boundaries on how a member must handle this information to best protect you: they must not share your information with other parties without your permission and must meet a series of requirements surrounding the storage of your confidential information.

- They may not benefit from the terms of your will and are expected to decline drafting your will and arrange for a qualified practitioner to assist where there is any conflict of interest.
- They may not refuse to prepare your will based on your age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

### Competency

- They must have a sound knowledge of the main areas of law relating to wills.
- They must give you advice that is compliant with the law and taxation regulations and advise on how to avoid risk associated with your will.
- They must manage your requests for meetings, new wills, your queries and final execution of your will promptly.

## HOW DOES THE CODE APPLY TO A STEP MEMBER PREPARING MY WILL?

The Code applies to all members of STEP in England & Wales who prepare wills for clients. If your will drafter is a STEP member, you can trust that their work will be in accordance with the Code.

## COMPLAINTS

If you feel your will drafter is not acting in accordance with the Code, you can contact STEP to make a complaint. All complaints are taken seriously and will be investigated and dealt with according to STEP's disciplinary processes.

You can download a formal complaint form at [www.step.org/professional-standards](http://www.step.org/professional-standards) or call **020 3752 3700** and request a form be sent to you.

The STEP Code for Will Preparation in England & Wales is available to download in full at [www.step.org/will-code](http://www.step.org/will-code)  
For further information on the Code and on the importance of making a will, visit [www.step.org/for-the-public](http://www.step.org/for-the-public) where you can find a short video, explanatory leaflets and a find-a-member search facility.