Note to Photo Editors: Photographer Marc O'Sullivan will issue photos – for reproduction free of charge – to photo desks on Sunday, 1st September.

PRESS RELEASE

Sunday, 1st September 2024

New survey finds tax break a key to encouraging charitable gifts in Wills

More than a third of Irish people would include a gift to charity in their Will if a tax break were available to their beneficiaries, a new survey for My Legacy has found.

Published today (01.09.24) on the launch of My Legacy Month, the poll reports that only 27% of over 18s in Ireland have made a Will, with only 14% of that amount saying they plan to make a charitable gift from their estate.

However, 35% of respondents said they would consider a bequest to charity if it meant there was a tax break available.

Niall O'Sullivan, Chairperson of My Legacy, said: "The report shows a strong public interest to know and understand more about both the process of making a Will, and including a gift to charity. We know that Ireland is one of the most generous nations in Europe and the report states that 40% of people regularly support a charity.

"However, that figure jars significantly with the current low uptake of legacy giving, especially compared the UK, where pro rata, people leave three times as much in their Wills to charities. This demonstrates the huge potential to increase legacy giving in Ireland.

"In our pre-Budget 2025 submission, My Legacy calls on the Government to incentivize and encourage legacy giving. The findings support this – 35% of those that either don't have a will or have one without a gift to charity in it say they would be open to including a gift in their Will if a tax benefit were available."

Key findings

The nationally representative survey of 1,007 adults carried out online by RED C Research & Marketing between 6th and 11th August 2024 on behalf of My Legacy, also found that:

- Over half (51%) report that including a gift to charity in their will has never occurred to them. However, the same percentage said they would feel comfortable talking to a solicitor about doing so.
- Only 14% of those who currently have a Will have included a gift to a charity.
- Only a third (36%) said cost was the main reason why they didn't have a Will.

- Just over one-in-four (27%) of all adults in Ireland aged 18+ have a will, with a further 5% saying they are in the process of arranging one

Commenting on the results, **Solicitor and My Legacy Board Member, Bernadette Parte** said: "We all know the importance of having a Will and this survey suggests people know they should, and wish to, make one.

"However, it's important that Government and the legal community heed the report findings; over two-thirds say the greatest barrier preventing them from making a Will is uncertainty about how to do so, while almost half report they think the process of drafting a Will would be complicated and overwhelming.

"The fact is that making a Will is normally a simple, straightforward experience and it's in society's interest that everyone has one. People should feel comfortable and confident that they can put their affairs in order, look after loved ones and, if they wish, support a cause close to their hearts by including a gift for a charity."

Where there's a Will, there's a way
As part of My Legacy Month, Irish charities are encouraging people to make a Will. My Legacy says there are three simple steps involved:

1. Make an appointment with a solicitor to discuss your wishes and decisions for the future.
2. Look after loved ones: a Will provides for those close to you, assigns guardians, protects assets, and can help reduce inheritance tax.
3. Consider a legacy gift to charity: if you have a cause close to your heart, consider including a gift to that charity in your Will. A gift may be big or small and is tax free to the charity.

For more information about Will-making and legacy giving, visit www.mylegacy.ie.

ENDS

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Notes to Editors:

- Niall O'Sullivan and Bernadette Parte are available for interview.
- The RED C report is available here.
- Images, taken by photographer Marc O'Sullivan, are available here.
- At present, figures from the Dublin Probate Office show that between €8 billion to €10 billion is currently being transferred annually at probate. But, according to charity watchdog the Charities Regulatory Authority, annual charitable bequests from individuals in Ireland are a fraction of that amount and total €94.7 million.

About My Legacy

My Legacy was established in 2006 by a small group of notable Irish charities who knew the great impact legacy gifts can have on the future capacity of a charity. They also realised that, unlike other countries, many Irish people do not have a will despite how vital a life document it is and how difficult it can be for beneficiaries where there is no will.

My Legacy has grown to an umbrella group of 90 Irish charities working together to make legacy giving the norm in Ireland. We ask people to consider including a legacy gift to a favourite charity, once family and friends have been taken care of and all other important personal decisions have been made. Legacy giving is vital for a sustainable, shock-proof future for Irish charities and benefits our future society.

For more information, visit www.mylegacy.ie.