



St Luke's
Hospice Plymouth



LEGACY AND END-OF-LIFE PLANNING GUIDE





“A LEGACY IS MORE THAN A DONATION. IT’S A FINAL GESTURE OF KINDNESS THAT LIVES ON THROUGH EVERY PATIENT WE SUPPORT.”

- SARAH, STAFF NURSE

WELCOME AND PURPOSE

Thank you for taking the time to open this guide. It has been created to help you think about the future - calmly, practically and with a touch of warmth.

Planning ahead may not sound cheerful, but it is one of the kindest things you can do for those you love.

Inside you will find straightforward guidance on how to record your wishes, write a will, leave a legacy, and plan your farewell in a way that truly reflects who you are. There is also space to think about what matters most to you - from your care preferences to the small details that bring you comfort.

At St Luke’s Hospice Plymouth, we believe every life is precious and deserves to end with dignity, compassion and peace. Your kindness, through planning and legacy giving, ensures that our care continues for others long into the future.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

You do not need to read this all at once. Take your time. Each section is designed to stand on its own, so you can focus on what feels most relevant right now.

Tip: Keep this guide somewhere safe and mark the pages that matter to you. You can return to it as your plans, wishes or circumstances change.

There is no right or wrong way to prepare - only your way.

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ABOUT ST LUKE'S

We are an independent local charity caring for adults with progressive, life-limiting illnesses such as cancer, motor neurone disease, heart failure, multiple sclerosis and chronic lung disease.

Our vision is simple but powerful: A community where no one dies alone, in pain or distress.

Our holistic approach means that every patient receives medical, emotional, practical and spiritual support that respects their dignity, beliefs and individual wishes.

We work in partnership with healthcare professionals across Plymouth, South West Devon and East Cornwall, ensuring patients and families have the care they need, wherever they are.

Our education team also trains professionals and community groups, promoting compassionate care across all settings.



THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

St Luke's relies on community spirit. Fundraising and legacies are vital to keeping our doors open.

Events like Tour de Moor, Midnight Walk, Men's Day Out and Open Gardens bring people together and raise essential funds for hospice care. Donations, sponsorship and gifts in wills all play a part in ensuring that no one faces the end of life without support.

When you support St Luke's, you are not just funding care - you are helping build a community where compassion endures.



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“EVERY LEGACY WE RECEIVE IS A QUIET ACT OF LOVE THAT HELPS SOMEONE ELSE SPEND THEIR FINAL DAYS IN COMFORT.”

- SARAH, CLINICAL LEAD

IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU

Planning is not about giving up – it's about taking control and helping those you love when it matters most. This guide is here to help you record your wishes, reduce stress for your loved ones and ensure your voice is heard.

You may wish to use a notebook to jot down ideas, notes and instructions. Keep it somewhere safe, but let people know it exists.

Your Care Plan – Making Your Wishes Known

Your end-of-life care plan allows you to express what is important to you – from the type of care you would like to the environment you feel most at peace in. It removes the burden of decision-making from those closest to you and ensures your care reflects your values.

HELPFUL POINTERS

- Be open with loved ones – awkward at first, but deeply reassuring later.
- Ask for professional advice if needed.
- Be specific about what matters to you.
- Keep things up to date as your circumstances change.
- Skip anything that doesn't apply to you – there is no right or wrong way to plan.

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THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

WHEN PLANNING YOUR CARE, IT HELPS TO JOT DOWN WHAT TRULY MATTERS TO YOU.



1. People You Trust

Who are the important people in your life? Think about who you would want to make decisions for you if you could not do so yourself.



2. Your Daily Comforts

What small things brighten your day? Whether it is fresh flowers, your morning coffee, a walk by the sea, or keeping your hair and nails just right – note what brings you comfort and a sense of normality.



3. Organ Donation

You may wish to donate your organs, contribute to research, or decide not to. Whatever your choice, write it down so that your wishes are clear and respected.



4. Medical Preferences

What are your thoughts on pain relief, life support and resuscitation? If there is something you feel strongly about then consider a Living Will or Advance Care Plan.



5. Emotional, Cultural and Spiritual Needs

Who would you like around you for comfort and support? Are there spiritual, cultural, or personal rituals that matter to you?



6. Legal and Medical Choices

A Medical Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) and Financial LPA gained through a solicitor or will writer allows you to appoint someone you trust to take decisions on your health and welfare as well as the responsibility for financial matters should you become unable to do it yourself.

You can request our Advance Care Plan booklet by calling 01752 401172 or visiting the St Luke's website.

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Use this space to start recording your thoughts, contacts and wishes

- Who to contact in an emergency
- Preferences for care and treatment
- Messages or keepsakes for loved ones
- Any reminders or next steps

(Tip: use pencil – plans may change!)

“KNOWING THAT SOMEONE THOUGHT OF OUR HOSPICE IN THEIR WILL REMINDS US THAT THE WORK WE DO MATTERS — TO FAMILIES WE’VE HELPED AND TO THOSE WE’LL HELP IN THE FUTURE.”

- TRICIA, DIRECTOR OF CLINICAL SERVICES

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WRITING YOUR WILL

Writing a will is one of the most caring things you can do for those you love. It ensures that everything you own is passed on exactly as you wish, avoiding confusion or disagreements later.

If you do not leave a will, the law dictates who inherits your estate (intestacy), which may not reflect your wishes. Writing a will puts you in control – these are your decisions, not anyone else’s.

Your Executor(s) are who you choose to carry out your wishes. They may need to apply for Probate, which is the legal process of confirming your will before your estate can be distributed. Executors can handle this themselves, but many prefer to use a solicitor.

Wills can also help reduce tax. Anything you leave to a spouse, civil partner, or charity is currently exempt from inheritance tax, and certain estate values fall below the taxable threshold. A solicitor, regulated will writer or financial adviser can guide you through this.

Your will should include your name, your executors, and any specific gifts or instructions – such as keepsakes for loved ones, or your wishes for burial or cremation.

You might also wish to arrange for a medical and/or financial Lasting Power of Attorney, appointing someone you trust to manage your medical, legal and financial affairs if you become unable to do so. These are simple legal documents that provide peace of mind for you and your loved ones.

If your estate or finances are complex, consider consulting a Financial or Estate Planner for help with tax planning (including inheritance tax), financial directives, trusts, and will preparation.

We always recommend consulting with a qualified professional when writing or updating your will—this could be a solicitor, a regulated financial adviser with expertise in estates, or another suitably accredited will writing practitioner. You can find a solicitor via the Law Society of England and Wales at www.lawsociety.org.uk/find-a-solicitor or use the National Will Register’s postcode search to locate registered will writers and solicitors who can prepare and formally register your Will: www.nationalwillregister.co.uk/find-a-local-will-writer.

For Financial Planners, you can find these through the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales www.icaew.com. According to a 2024 study, approximately 60% of adult population have not yet written a will.

YOUR GIFT TO THE FUTURE

Leaving a gift in your will to St Luke's is one of the most meaningful ways to make a difference.

Legacies currently provide around 25 per cent of the funds needed to deliver our clinical services, helping us provide free, specialist care to hundreds of people every day.

GINNY AND RUSS'S STORY

When Russ was just 37, he was diagnosed with cancer. He spent his final days at St Luke's Turnchapel, surrounded by his family and cared for with compassion and kindness. His wife Ginny recalls:

"When Russ's condition deteriorated, it was an anxious time for all of us. Everyone at St Luke's was so warm and understanding. They cared for him as a person, not just as a patient. They even brought him his favourite fish and chips and made sure he could see the sunset from the garden.

"Lisa, one of St Luke's Family and Children's Support Workers, helped us prepare our daughters Effy, Aria and Indi for what was happening. She suggested Russ record messages for them in teddy bears, so they can always hear his voice reminding them of his love.

"Losing Russ has been heart-breaking, but I will always be grateful to St Luke's for their care. The girls still press their teddies to hear 'Daddy's voice,' and that comfort means the world to us."

Gifts in wills help ensure families like Ginny's continue to receive that care – not just today, but for generations to come.



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FUNERAL PLANNING

BECAUSE FAREWELLS DESERVE PERSONALITY

A funeral can be as unique as the life it honours.

Thinking about what you want now can make things easier for those you leave behind, and ensure your farewell reflects your personality.

Planning your funeral is an opportunity to decide how you would like to be remembered – whether that's with quiet reflection, laughter, or a mix of both. By noting your wishes in advance, you help those you love to celebrate your life in the way you would want.



1. Type of Funeral

You might prefer a traditional service or something more personal, even a DIY funeral. These can involve extra responsibilities such as paperwork, transport and permissions.



2. Coffin and Transport

Your choice of coffin will depend on the type of service you want. Your Funeral Director can guide you through options and arrangements for transport.



3. Ceremony

Services can be religious or non-religious, held in a church, crematorium, garden, hall, beach or even at home. Whether you'd like music, flowers, stories, or a favourite drink shared in your honour – make it personal.



4. Funeral Director

If using a professional, choose one registered with the National Association of Funeral Directors or the Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors, and always check their credentials first.



5. Guest List

Decide whether you'd prefer an intimate gathering or an open invitation – you may be surprised who wishes to attend to say goodbye.



6. Your Story

Your funeral is your story's closing chapter – a time for those who loved you to come together, share memories, and find comfort in one another. It can even be fun – humour at funerals and in legacies isn't disrespectful – it's deeply human. It reminds us that life was lived fully, weirdly, and wonderfully.



“EACH LEGACY CARRIES A STORY OF GRATITUDE AND COMPASSION. IT BECOMES PART OF THE ST LUKE’S STORY, TOO.”

- DAWNE, STAFF NURSE

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THE DEAD SERIOUS CHECKLIST

Even after we're gone, a little planning now can make life easier for those we leave behind.

Your Executor/Family/Solicitor – the person or people you name in your will – will make sure your wishes are carried out. They may also arrange your funeral and handle the practical details that follow.

This checklist gives an idea of what may need to be done and might also help you to decide on who that person or people may be.

PRACTICAL STEPS

- **Notify family, friends and dependants, as well as your employer if you're still working.**
- **Register the death at the local registry office within five days. Multiple copies of the certificate are often needed.**
- **Arrange care for pets or dependants and secure your property and valuables.**

FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

- **Check for a will or funeral plan, as these may include your wishes.**
- **If not already chosen, appoint a funeral director and plan the details – burial or cremation, date, music, readings and any personal touches.**
- **Publish notices or obituaries if desired.**

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS

- **Notify official bodies such as HMRC, DWP and DVLA – one call often updates several.**
- **Contact banks, insurers and utility providers to close accounts and stop direct debits.**
- **Locate the will or appoint an administrator if none exists.**
- **Apply for probate and manage any inheritance or capital gains tax with help from a solicitor if needed.**
- **Close or memorialise online accounts to protect privacy and prevent identity theft.**

PROPERTY AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS

- **Manage real estate – property may need to be sold, transferred to beneficiaries, or tenancies ended, depending on what is written in the will. Vehicles should also be transferred or sold accordingly.**
- **Chattels, meaning personal possessions and keepsakes, should be distributed as directed in the will or memorandum of wishes. Safeguard important documents and sentimental items, then donate, sell or recycle what remains.**

A MESSAGE TO LOVED ONES

- **A personal message can be one of the most treasured gifts you leave behind. It offers comfort and a reminder of your love, humour and care. Write something simple, honest and heartfelt.**

You might share a memory, express gratitude or encourage them to live fully. If you have dependants or pets, include details of who should care for them. Even in death, a little preparation brings comfort – helping loved ones focus on remembering your life, rather than managing paperwork.

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LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

If you would like to know more about leaving a gift in your will or supporting St Luke's in another way, our Legacy Team would love to hear from you. Your enquiry will be handled in complete confidence and with no obligation.

☎ 01752 494327

✉ legacyinfo@stlukes-hospice.org.uk

🌐 stlukes-hospice.org.uk/legacy

We will always treat your details with the utmost confidentiality and never share them without your permission.

USEFUL CONTACTS AND RESOURCES

These organisations and services can offer further help, information or support as you plan for the future.

St Luke's Hospice Plymouth

For advice on hospice care, fundraising, volunteering and legacy gifts.

☎ 01752 401172

✉ info@stlukes-hospice.org.uk

🌐 stlukes-hospice.org.uk

Government Wills, Probate and Inheritance

🌐 gov.uk/make-will

The National Association of Funeral Directors

🌐 nafd.org.uk

Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors

🌐 saif.org.uk/find-a-member

Age UK

🌐 ageuk.org.uk

☎ 0800 678 1602

Citizens Advice

🌐 citizensadvice.org.uk

Cruse Bereavement Support

🌐 cruse.org.uk

☎ 0808 808 1677

The Law Society

🌐 lawsociety.org.uk

Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales

🌐 icaew.com

The National Will Register of Will Writers

🌐 nationalwillregister.co.uk/find-a-local-will-writer

By planning ahead, you give your loved one's clarity, comfort and peace of mind – and you leave behind something that truly matters with care, kindness and dignity.

Your story matters.

Thank you for letting St Luke's be part of it.

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With heartfelt thanks to Nicki Wheeler, Sophie Gilford and Tim James for their thoughtful contributions, guidance and support in preparing this guide. Their care and attention have helped ensure that every word reflects the warmth and compassion that define St Luke's Hospice Plymouth.



HospiceUK

