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Memberships

Explore the benefits and safeguards of membership with The National Will Register



The National Will Register

The National Will Register is the UK's Will registration and Will Search service, with over 10 million Wills in the system and exists to ensure that no Will is left unknown or untraced at the time it is needed.

Since our inception in 2006, we have worked in partnership with legal professionals to provide certainty to testators, executors and beneficiaries nationwide.

The National Will Register is the fastest growing service in the UK in the Wills and probate industry, and it is through the support from those in the legal profession and our partners that we are closer to making unknown or untraceable Wills a thing of the past through our Will registration and Will Search services.

Our memberships are built around the needs of Wills and Probate solicitors and firms with cost-neutral pricing, services that can be billed to clients or estates as disbursements, and packed with many more benefits to promote your private client department.

Membership not only provides law firms with a proven range of benefits but also fundamentally protects both firms and clients by minimising the risk of another Will being discovered after the estate has been distributed.

“We feel that it is vitally important that people have a central location where they can search for a Will. With family often living in different geographical regions, it is not always known when and if a Will has been made. By registering Wills with The National Will Register, it provides long term certainty that Wills can be found and ensures a person's wishes regarding how their estate is distributed are fulfilled.”

**Moore & Tibbits
Solicitors**

a member of
QualitySolicitors

Ann Donnelly,
Director, QS Moore & Tibbits

“We believe that The National Will Register enables us to offer a better service to our clients and minimises the risk of a valid Will not being located – it enables us to give something more to our clients.”

Thomas Horton LLP
SOLICITORS

Tina Circus,
Partner and Head of Wills, Trusts and
Probate Services, Thomas Horton LLP

“We have chosen to join The National Will Register as it will allow us to add further value to the service we provide to our clients. The searches will help to mitigate the risks for administrators of estates and Will Registration will provide additional comfort to our clients that their wishes will be followed.”

**hay &
kilner**
LAW FIRM

Alice Clewes
Partner, Hay & Kilner

“We believe that every person should have a Will reflecting their wishes and that those wishes should be carried out. Joining The National Will Register allows our clients the option to register their Will to increase their chances of having their most up to date Will proved to benefit their intended loved ones and/or charities.”

Myerson Solicitors

Bik-Ki Wong,
Partner and Head of Wills, Trusts
and Probate, Myerson Solicitors

Over 10 million Wills registered



The National Will Register is recommended by key organisations and used by solicitors, will writers, the public, charities, storage facilities and financial institutions to register Wills and search for Wills.

One in five found Wills impact estate administration



At least 20% of found Wills using Certainty Will Search results in a Will being located where the estate was presumed intestate (no Will exists) or a later Will being discovered that would supersede the previous Will.

Protecting probate work through registrations



Prevent probate income loss by registering Wills you write and help avoid the estate being distributed incorrectly or the subsequent fee being won by a probate 'specialist' who does not hold the last Will or treats the estate as intestate.

Certainty Will Search

Distributing an estate on an assumed intestacy basis, where a Will may actually exist, or where a later Will may exist, presents a risk. This risk is managed by law firms who use Certainty Will Search by enabling them to demonstrate that a recommended and accredited process was undertaken to ascertain if a Will existed, or confirm that the most recent version of the Will is being used to distribute the estate.

Whether you are dealing with a testate or intestate estate, there are many reasons why a Will search is essential. These reasons are covered in more depth on the 'Will Registration' page but in brief:

- Executors and beneficiaries are unaware of a Wills existence or location
- Executors and beneficiaries believe a later Will exists than the one being used to distribute the estate
- Beneficiaries may state/believe that a Will was never written when one was
- Intentional suppression of a Will by a 'disgruntled' family member/would-be beneficiary

Every day, Certainty Will Search discovers Wills such as these, providing peace of mind and protection to legal professionals and their clients.

Certainty Will Search has located and traced a record number of Wills back to the law firm which wrote and held them.

The search results were impressive. Not only did we find the current Will, found an earlier one held by another solicitor.



Simon Shaffer, Moerans Solicitors
Established 1886

Will Register Search

Checks to see if a Will has been registered with The National Will Register, which currently sits at over 10 million records.

Will Search Combined / Will Search COP

A Will Search Combined consists of:

- a Will Register Search, to look for Wills that have been registered;
- a REACH Search of unregistered Wills held by member and non-member firms and will writers across three geographically targeted areas Wills; and
- a notice on the Missing Will Noticeboard, issued to member firms.

A Will Search COP offers the same service for those still alive and have lost testamentary capacity, to support Deputies and Attorneys acting in their best interests.

Will Search Protect

A convenient way to carry out a Will Search and other items that may be required when distributing an estate. It performs a Will Search Combined, places a Section 27 Notice and obtains a quote for Missing Will/Trustee Indemnity Insurance.

NWR Financial Profile Premium

Estatesearch Financial Profile Premium provides a comprehensive financial asset & liability search, offering an unparalleled level of due diligence, identifying live, online & dormant accounts, including a NWR Register Will Search, Experian UAR, Companies House & OPG searches.

Search over 10 million registered Wills

The National Will Register is recommended by key organisations and used by solicitors, will writers, the public, charities, storage facilities and financial institutions to register and search for Wills.

One in five found Wills impact estate administration

20% of Wills found through our Certainty Will Search service is one either thought not to exist or superseding the one held. In each case, had a Will not been found, they could have been open to probate disputes.

Searching both registered and unregistered Wills

We not only search for registered Wills but also in geographically targeted areas for Wills that have not been registered to widen the search as far as feasibly possible and provide peace of mind.

Certainty and confidentiality combined

To ensure confidentiality and security for testators, executors and beneficiaries, when a match is made the searcher's details are passed directly to the law firm that holds the Will for them to authenticate and discuss the probate matter with the searcher.

Cross-border Will Searches supported

The National Will Register now provides the capability to search law firms and Will writers to see if a Will exists in Scotland or Northern Ireland.

Searches are allowable as disbursements

A Certainty Will Search is allowable as a disbursement to the estate and is therefore completely cost-free to the law firm; search from £49 plus VAT.

Will registration

Will Drafting and Estate Administration work are key elements of client service for several thousand law firms across the United Kingdom.

The full potential of a firm's forecasted Wills and probate income can be threatened if a Will is not registered:

- Original Wills, safely stored by law firms, are missed when they should have been found because executors and beneficiaries are unaware of their existence or location
- Beneficiaries may state that a Will was never written when one was
- Estates may be administered or distributed incorrectly because those handling the estate are unaware of the existence of a Will or later Will
- Intentional suppression of the Will by a 'disgruntled' family member

These are daily occurrences that can be resolved by the registration of a Will. Negative outcomes not only exist for the testator and their beneficiaries, but also for the law firm:

- Client wishes are unfulfilled and the estate is distributed incorrectly
- Potential for claims and reputational damage
- Probate work and income is lost

Reducing client's risk and ensuring professional negligence is avoided... continued use of The National Will Register's services helps you to avoid the risk of negligence.



Gill Steel, Director of LawSkills and one of the UK's leading private client specialists

Registering Wills with The National Will Register protects the testator, executors and beneficiaries by ensuring that the Will can be located upon death.

98% of law firms surveyed said their 'Will Bank' included Wills where the testator had died and they had not received the probate work. Some law firms believed that this was because the testator had made a later Will elsewhere. This highlights the importance of law firms checking for a later Will and not just proceeding with the Will they are presented with.

Typical Will Search Time Line

	9.09am	The deceased's next-of-kin were unable to find a Will and performed a Certainty Will Search
	9.11am	The Will search identified a law firm as the writer and holder of the registered Will
	9.12am	Law firm receives search notification for registered Will match and the searcher's details
	9.30am	The law firm contacts the searcher to authenticate the enquiry
	next day	The searcher attends the firm's office and instructs law firm to carry out the probate

Without the Will being registered the deceased's estate could have been dealt with as intestate and the law firm would not have received the probate fee.



Significant size and growing rapidly

The National Will Register provides access to over 10 million Will records and is growing rapidly - at its fastest rate, 103,000 Wills were registered in 72 hours.



One in five found Wills impact estate administration

One in five Wills found through our Certainty Will Search service is one either thought not to exist or superseding the one held. In each case, had a Will not been found, they could have been open to probate disputes.



Quick and easy to register without seeing the Will

The National Will Register does not see or store a copy of the Will - it registers and records its 'location'.



Certainty and confidentiality combined

The National Will Register does not disclose the existence of a Will - when a search takes place it provides the searcher's details to the holder of the Will (the firm which registered the Will). The firm then verifies the searcher's entitlement in order to discuss the Will with the searcher.



Safeguarding probate income

Registering your 'Will Bank' maximises its potential as the valuable and ever-increasing 'probate fee asset' it should be. Ensuring the Will and you as the holder of it can be found, results in you being able to intercept the probate.



Re-engage your Will bank client base

Providing your 'Will bank' clients with Will registration may organically re-ignite your relationship with your client and produce new business.

Why join?

Thousands of solicitors already use The National Will Register to protect themselves and their clients against unnecessary risk.

The National Will Register is proven to help law firms of all sizes to grow a profitable Wills and probate practice by increasing Will writing business and helping to ensure firms receive the probate work from the Wills they write.

Good practice

We're referenced in Practice Notes, Guidance Notes, Legal Opinions and books supporting the use of The National Will Register as a risk management and good practice tool by Lexis Nexis, Practical Law Company (Thomson Reuters), King's Counsel Opinion, the Law Society's Probate Practitioner's Handbook and Tolley's Administration of Estates.

Endorsed, affiliated and recommended by the legal profession

We have many endorsements and affiliations with key organisations in the legal profession including:



We're also featured on PII forms and guidance, used by the Government Legal Department (Bona Vacantia Division) as well as The Official Solicitor website.

Benefits

Register your Will bank for free

As part of your initial onboarding, we invite new members to register their entire Will bank without utilising any of the credits.

Instant register search

Members looking for a Will Register Search can now call in and access a Will Register Search instantly while you wait.

Will bank digitalisation discount

The National Will Register is part of Advanced and members can take advantage of a discount with our document digitalisation product to organise your historical Will bank.

Firm profile on our website

NWR members have firm profiles on our Find a Solicitor page used by thousands of website users in order to win wills and probate work, as well as contentious probate work.

Free marketing material

You have access to printed material for our Will registration and Will Search services, as well as a range of digital materials including logos, images, copy and articles for your business.

Dedicated account manager

When you join as a member you will be assigned a dedicated account manager who will provide tailored training and knowledge transfer sessions throughout the year.

Member-exclusive webinars

Members have access to our full calendar of monthly webinars from experts in the private client industry including those with Gill Steel of LawSkills and Professor Lesley King.

Exposure opportunities

As part of our goal to drive work to our members, you can have relevant articles shared to our network and present a webinar to our audience subject to availability and topic.

“For us, The National Will Register is an issue of good and best practice.”

DEBENHAMS OTTAWAY SOLICITORS Nick Turner, Consultant, Debenhams Ottawa

“The National Will Register provides protection and produces income. It's easy.”

myers&co solitors Stephen Myers, Managing Director, Myers & Co.

“The National Will Register has provided an invaluable service to our probate department.”

Heselwood&Grant SOLICITORS Ian Grant, Director, Heselwood & Grant

“I use the Certainty Will Search and S27 notice in all my probate/intestacy matters. Along with basics such as client ID / Anti-Money Laundering checks, it's at the top of my standard actions to take.”

CLAIRE NASH SOLICITORS Claire Nash, Director, Claire Nash Solicitors

“As a result of our archived Wills being registered with The National Will Register, we were notified of a match from a Certainty Will Search and received the valuable probate work.”

b Bonnetts Graeme Black, Director and Head of the Probate Department, Bonnetts Solicitors

Will management

TOUCH is the 'back office' of The National Will Register and is solely for the use of its members. It is a bespoke and unique Will management system with integrated marketing capabilities and much more, including: solicitor checklists, precedent letters, marketing literature and industry news.

When you join The National Will Register your firm will receive unlimited FREE access to TOUCH for unlimited users (we do not charge license fees). TOUCH not only connects you directly to The National Will Register but also acts as your own internal Will register.

You are also able to take advantage of its marketing functionality to add more marketing power into your private client work. In a world of competition, TOUCH helps law firms to profile and communicate with clients in order to build and drive revenue, as well as strengthening client loyalty and encouraging client retention.

You can use TOUCH to manage your registered Wills, perform a Will search and link to The National Will Register. It also enables you to cross-fertilise clients from other areas of your law firm - for example, for some firms, it becomes the 'glue' between Wills and probate and conveyancing.

TOUCH is the professional access area of The National Will Register. It unlocks the potential in your Will Bank and allows you to protect the lifetime value of each of your clients, new and historic.



Professor Ian Cooper,
International Author and Speaker; Marketing
& Business Development for Law Firms



Reignite, reinvigorate and retain clients whilst driving revenue and best practice

There's a function in TOUCH which allows your law firm, at a push of a button, to send out Will review reminders to your clients via email every 3 to 5 years.

This helps to ensure that you're reminding your clients to keep their Wills up to date.

All of these features are free to use for The National Will Register's members.



Centrally connected

TOUCH connects your firm, fee earners, marketeers and anyone else you want to have access to a host of resources including The National Will Register.



Resources Hub

Download useful guides to give to your clients, read case studies and articles about The National Will Register and industry topics.



Access probate services

Conduct Landmark Financial Asset Searches, place Section 27 Notices and obtain insurance quotes with Trust & Probate Insurance and more.



Easy account overview

With our new easy to use interface, it is now even easiest to view your remaining account credits, Will Registrations and Certainty Will Searches on your TOUCH account.



Will management and marketing

Download our media pack, access client facing letters that can assist you when discussing Will Registration and Certainty Will Search and more.



Missing Wills Noticeboard

A real-time noticeboard of missing Wills in your selected region that you can use to identify Will searches that have recently been conducted in your local area.

An illustration on a yellow background showing two men, one in a brown suit and one in a blue suit, pulling a thick white rope. They are both leaning forward, suggesting a tug-of-war or a shared effort. Their shadows are cast on the floor below them.

Contentious Probate

There is a great weight of evidence from contentious probate specialists that a Certainty Will Search can and does change the outcome of a potential dispute case.

It is crucial to conduct a Will search at the start of a potential dispute to understand if you are dealing with a case based on the last Will and the historic content of any previous Wills.

It can also assist in understanding whether the client that instructed you actually is in a position to proceed with a case by discovering any unknown Wills.

A Certainty Will Search can identify potential contentious probate work by:

- Proving the last Will being used to dispute the estate
- Finding potentially later unknown Wills to assist the case
- Helping to confirm the client's assumed position based on the Will they have presented or if a Will is believed not to exist

A Certainty Will Search helps to establish potential cases for Contentious Probate specialists and provides reassurance that the last Will, and any previous Wills, have been located for the existing dispute.

A Certainty Will Search for Contentious Probate cases can be conducted in your TOUCH account.

Court of Protection

You can search for the Will of a Testator who is still alive but has lost capacity. This search is used by Deputies and Attorneys who have a duty to act in the 'best interest' of the Donor or Patient.

The SRA Ethics Guidance, drafted in conjunction with and approved by, The Court of Protection, Office of the Public Guardian, Legal Ombudsman, The Law Society and the Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners, also states that the Will forms part of the financial affairs belonging to the donor and highlights scenarios of possible adverse outcomes which can occur without knowing the contents of the Will.

The Official Solicitor also recommends that a Will Search be conducted, in appropriate cases, by Statutory Will applicants, in order to establish the existence of any unknown Will(s) and to be satisfied that the Will presented is the last Will of the living Testator.

The National Will Register plays a crucial role in the work of those involved in applying for Statutory Wills, or who need to expedite their Property and affairs, and Welfare deputy and attorney responsibilities with the utmost due diligence.

As a Deputy or attorney, you can conduct a Certainty Will Search via your TOUCH account and the Official Solicitor website.





Next steps

The National Will Register is designed to be cost-neutral for your law firm and increase fee earning revenue.

We will provide a membership proposal based on a monthly subscription including Will Search and Will registration credits, or both, tailored to your requirement or preference.

Subscription is typically £105 plus VAT per month, including Will search and Will registration credits to the same value or more that are recharged to the client as an allowable disbursement.

There are no IT issues or knock-on effects to any systems you currently use; simply join, ask all users to set-up their TOUCH login and take the Kick-Start Training.

For a more 'hands on' approach to getting started, you can purchase the 45-Day Kick Start assist programme, at the one-off cost of £650 plus VAT. The Kick-Start programme will provide you with an account manager, dedicated to your law firm, together with full phone support and assistance, during the first 45 days. This is ideally suited for law firms with 12+ fee earners.

To discuss membership with us and get your firm registering and searching for Wills, contact us in one of the following ways:

- Call 0330 100 3660
- Email info@certainty.co.uk
- Log on to nationalwillregister.co.uk/memberships

FAQs

Does using The National Will Register represent a significant cost to our firm?

The National Will Register can be cost neutral and income generating especially as Will Search is an allowable disbursement. You can join law firms nationwide who use The National Will Register to improve both business revenue and mitigate risk.

Will our clients want or need these services?

Yes, most clients welcome Will Registration and many appreciate the protective measures and clarity a Will register provides. Most clients are unaware of the risk in the 'conventional' process and value the advice given.

Does a National Will Register need to be compulsory in order to be effective?

You may be forgiven for thinking that only a compulsory registration scheme means that a Will can be found and until each and every Will is registered, what is the point?

The National Will Register is so effective because it searches for registered and unregistered Wills. A registered Will can be found instantly, resulting in immediate peace of mind.

Testamentary freedom is important and it is unlikely that the public would ever welcome compulsory registration or that the government would fund such a compulsory register - especially now the legal profession has one.

Does our firm hold any Wills which represent a problem (we have our own 'internal register')?

Most firms accept that a significant percentage of the Wills they hold are no longer valid. Even if you have a good 'internal' register, those records are ineffectual if the executors, family and beneficiaries are unaware of you. Internal recording systems are of little consequence unless they are matched daily against deaths.

Has our firm ever distributed an estate incorrectly?

Without a thorough check, a law firm simply cannot be sure of that. Every day, prior to distributing an estate, solicitors check to see if a Will or later Will exists and indeed find one using Certainty Will Search. Previously, estates may have been distributed where a Will did exist in the case of an apparent intestate estate or a later Will existed. Why take a risk when you can protect against this without cost to your firm?



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