

Making a will is a really good idea whatever your age

Lawyers at an Edinburgh legal firm have observed a huge spike in the number of requests to make wills, as people look to protect themselves and their loved ones over the coronavirus pandemic.

Despite Gibson Kerr having to adopt unprecedented measures by dealing with all requests by video calls in light of lockdown restrictions, it handled double the normal monthly average of new wills in March.

The firm is also revealing that one of the most active groups are young people in their twenties.

Head of Personal Law, Lindsay Maclean, said: "The coronavirus pandemic has sadly brought into sharp focus the need to have a will in place.

"With the country in lockdown and many offices closed as a result, people may be wondering if it's still possible to put a new will into place or change an existing will. The answer is yes.

"And although we are working remotely and not able to have traditional face-to-face meetings, we in fact have seen a spike in new wills being made since lockdown.

"In March, the number of new will cases that we dealt with was around double our normal monthly average.

"While we don't have statistics for whether there's any group

who have been most proactive, I have noticed a few more young people, in their 20s and 30s, doing wills. These might be young people who have fairly recently bought properties, or couples with young families.”

Lindsay said they have been easily able to hold virtual meetings with existing and new clients, although they can hold the meeting via telephone, but will make extra arrangements to ensure it is complying with relevant requirements, such as checking your identity.

She added: “During the video or telephone meeting, we will discuss your circumstances with you and discuss what you would like to say in your will. We will ask you questions about your assets and which beneficiaries you wish to leave assets to.

“After the meeting, we will draft the will for you and will send a draft to you either by email or in the post. You will then have the chance to make any amendments or additions to the draft will. Once you are happy with the will, we will finalise it for signing and then hold another video call meeting with you to arrange the signing.

“The Law Society of Scotland have recently issued guidance confirming that we can act as a witness to the signing of a will if we watch you signing it via video link. This means that you will not need to ask an independent witness to visit you to watch you sign the will, which would potentially put you at risk during the pandemic.

“Again, if you do not have access to video call facilities, we will agree with you the best arrangements for signing your will during the lockdown.”

Although some changes to the lockdown rules in Scotland have been announced recently, it looks likely that remote working and non-face to face meetings are going to remain the norm for some time to come.

Anyone interested in making a will, or changing an existing will, should contact one of the personal law solicitors at Gibson Kerr on 0131 202 7516.

Operating from two Edinburgh city centre locations and specialising in personal law, family law and property, Gibson Kerr is led by its three partners Scott and Fiona Rasmusen, and Lindsay Maclean.

Fiona is Head of Family Law, the Property team is headed by Scott, while Partner Lindsay, who joined the firm in 2007, is Head of Personal Law.

The team at Gibson Kerr understand that taking the first step in consulting a family lawyer can be daunting – and so offer a fixed fee of £300 plus VAT for a basic will.

To book, call 0131 202 7516 – or fill out an online enquiry form on their website www.gibsonkerr.co.uk