

# Peter Gate Leaves and Legacy Presentation May 2026

## **Dying Tidily, Not Leaving a Mess**

Insights from Peter Gate, Meridian Private Client

At our recent **Live & Legacy event**, solicitor Peter Gate shared a simple but powerful message:


**“More people than ever are dying messily - and it’s causing real problems for the families they leave behind.”**

Not the most cheerful topic over a drink... but one of the most important.

## **Why “messy deaths” are on the rise**

Peter sees this every day in his work - and it’s getting worse. The key drivers:

- **Families are more complex**  
Second marriages, stepchildren, blended families and shared assets make things less clear-cut
- **There’s more money involved**  
Rising house prices and pension values mean estates are larger - and the stakes are higher
- **Inheritance matters more**  
For many younger families, inheritance is essential (e.g. getting on the property ladder)
- **Mental capacity issues are increasing**  
Dementia and later-life vulnerability can lead to disputes and accusations
- **DIY wills and “cheap fixes”**  
Poorly drafted or template-based wills are a major source of litigation

 The result:

**More disputes, more stress, and more cost for families at exactly the wrong time.**

## **The real cost of getting it wrong**

One case Peter shared:

- Estate value: **£6.5 million**
- DIY will created by copying from the internet
- Outcome:
  - Multiple disputes between family members
  - Government involvement
  - **£550,000 in legal fees**

A professionally drafted will could have reduced this dramatically.

👉 The takeaway:

**Trying to save money upfront can end up costing your family hundreds of thousands later.**

### 📊 The growing tax pressure

- Inheritance Tax receipts have **more than doubled in 10 years**
- Thresholds have been frozen since 2009
- Property values continue to rise

And from **2027**:

- **Pensions will fall into scope for Inheritance Tax**

👉 For many families, this creates:

- Larger tax bills
- More pressure to find cash quickly
- Greater risk of forced decisions at a difficult time

### 🔑 The 3 things that make the biggest difference

Peter boiled it down to three essentials:

#### 1. 📄 Have a clear, professionally drafted will

- Without one, **the government decides who gets what**
- Partners (if unmarried) may get **nothing**
- Children could inherit **at 18 automatically**

👉 A good will gives you control - and removes ambiguity.

#### 2. 📋 Get your affairs organised

- Know what you own (including pensions and online assets)
- Understand what sits **outside your will** (e.g. death-in-service, pensions, nominations)
- Document everything clearly

👉 Many problems come from assets people simply forgot about.

#### 3. 💬 Talk to your family

- Expectations matter
- Surprises create disputes

- Silence creates assumptions

👉 Even imperfect conversations are better than none.

### 🧠 **The Lucent view**

This isn't really about death. It's about **making life easier for the people you care about.**

Good planning means:

- Less stress
- Fewer disputes
- Lower costs
- Better outcomes for your family
- Talk to your family! You love them... it's difficult to discuss death etc and no one wants to do it. But, if everyone knows, there's no ambiguity or surprises.

### ✅ **A simple test**

Ask yourself:

- Do I know exactly what happens to everything I own?
- Would my family understand my intentions?
- Is my plan clear, documented, and up to date?

If there's any doubt - it's worth a conversation.

### **Lucent Financial Planning**

Helping you live well - and leave things well