

Testators give more to charity when prompted

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A trial run by the Behavioural Insights Team, a part of the Cabinet Office, has found that testators who leave a gift to charity doubles from 5% to 10% if the will-writer asks them if they wish to do so.

The trial was split into three groups, the 'Plain Ask' group, the 'Social Norm' group and a control group. Will-writers in the Plain Ask group would ask the testator whether they wanted to donate money to charity in their will, whilst will-writers in the Social Norm group would apply extra pressure by telling the testator that many people left gifts to charity in their wills and then asked if there were any causes they were passionate about. Those in the control group were not reminded about charitable giving at all.

The results of the trial were that just fewer than 11% of those in the Plain Ask group made a charitable bequest, and over 15% of those in the Social Norm group did so. In comparison, of those in the control group only 4.9% left a charitable gift in their wills. It was also found that those in the Social Norm group left a higher average donation than that of the control group.

The trial demonstrates that when prompted about charitable giving during the drafting of a will, a testator will react more positively to the suggestion of a charitable legacy depending on the precise way the will-writer frames the question. There are now calls for will-writers to always remind testators about leaving a charitable legacy when drafting their wills.

For the report on the trial see: [Applying behavioural insights to charitable giving](#)

Source: Cabinet Office & STEP Journal, 28 May 2013

Meanwhile, research conducted by Aviva, suggested that 25% of over-75s and 21% of over-55s have given a cash loan to family members instead of leaving an inheritance. Nearly 8% of over-55s regularly give money to family to avoid inheritance tax while 20% said they would do the same in the future.

Source: Govtoday, 29 May 2013

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