

# Your guide to including a gift to Blue Cross in your Will



**You can be there to change pets' lives,  
even after you're gone**



# Contents

Changing lives since 1897	3
How we help pets and people	4
The impact of gifts in Wills	5
Things to consider when making your Will	6
How to make your Will for free	7
Commonly asked questions	8
Planning for your pet if they outlive you	9
Suggested wording for including a gift	10



**Thank you for requesting our guide.**

**Including a gift to Blue Cross in your Will is a wonderful way for your love for pets to live on. Thank you so much for considering supporting us in this special way.**

Through your gift, you can continue to be there, changing the lives of pets and the people who love them for years to come. You can help shape a world where all pets enjoy a healthy and happy life with those who love them – and in fact, a gift in your Will can help us work towards this. As a charity, we rely heavily on donations, and over 50% of this money comes from gifts in Wills.

As well as being a chance to remember causes that you care about, having an up-to-date Will is important for everyone, as it is the only way to guarantee your wishes are carried out after you're gone. Without this, the legal system will step in and manage your estate. So making a Will not only provides peace of mind for you, but also for your family and friends.

In this guide, you'll find some useful information to help you with the process, whether you need to make or update your Will. Thank you again for thinking of Blue Cross – I hope you'll join us in our mission to help pets and people thrive together, long into the future.

Warmest wishes,

**Chris Burghes**  
Chief Executive



Chris Burghes with puppy, Moley

# We've been changing the lives of pets and people since 1897

**Our charity goes back a long way and, as you can see, we've achieved so much.**

In 1897, a group of animal lovers, concerned about working horses on the streets of London, set up Our Dumb Friends League. The name Blue Cross first appeared when the League created The Blue Cross Fund in 1912, to care for horses during the Balkan War. The charity grew, helping more and more sick, injured and homeless animals. In 1958, Our Dumb Friends League was officially renamed to Blue Cross.

## Blue Cross in the future

Throughout our history, many of our achievements have only been possible thanks to kind gifts made by people who care about pets as much as we do.

With the help of gifts in Wills, we'll never stop working to create a better future for pets – for as long as it takes. Your gift, whenever it arrives, will have the power to transform lives, helping to create a world where all pets enjoy a healthy and happy life with people who love and care for them.



Over **50%** of our work is funded by gifts in Wills

That's one out of every two pets who count on us to find them loving homes; more than half of all sick or injured pets who receive our expert veterinary care; and over 50% of the lifelong care and support that changes the lives of pets and the people who love them.

**72p in every £1 donated goes directly to helping pets in need.**

**For every £1 invested in fundraising, we receive £6 back.**

Data source: Blue Cross 2024 Impact Report



**1897**

Our Dumb Friends League was founded to care for working horses on the streets of London.



**1906**

We opened our first animal hospital in Victoria, London, thought to be the first of its kind in the world. It has never once closed its doors to animals in need since.



**1912**

We launched The Blue Cross Fund to help animals during the Balkan War. We also took care of animals in the First (1914-1918) and Second (1939-1945) World Wars.



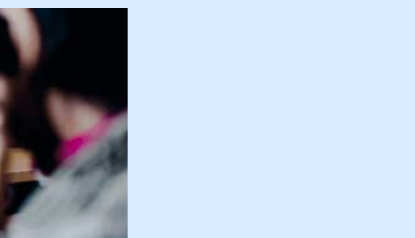
**1958**

We officially became known as Blue Cross.



**1995**

We launched our Pet Loss Support service, helping people to cope with the loss of their beloved pets.



**2005**

We launched our education service, which includes giving talks at schools and youth groups as well as behaviour support for dog owners.



**2022**

As we celebrated 125 years of changing pets lives, we launched our Pet Food Bank initiative, to help pets and their people stay together during difficult times.



**2025+**

We're continuing to work tirelessly to change pets lives. We know pets and people will need our care, expertise and support long into the future – a gift in your Will can help us continue to be there for them, whatever the future holds.



## Gifts in Wills help us be there for pets and people

**Pets have relied on Blue Cross since 1897, and demand for the support we offer continues to rise as time goes on. Here are our key services that so many pets and people rely on every single day.**

### Rehoming

We believe all pets deserve a loving, happy home. A gift in your Will could ensure we're there to care for future generations of homeless pets who need our love, care and specialist support to prepare them for their perfect new home.

### Veterinary

The vet teams at our hospitals and rehoming centres treat thousands of sick and injured pets every year. Our Veterinary Care Fund also makes affordable pet care accessible to people on lower incomes. A gift in your Will could help extend our services so that no pet goes without treatment.

### Behaviour

When we're preparing a pet for a new home, behaviour support is vital. Our specialists can support homeless pets with issues including recovering from trauma and helping with socialisation. We continue supporting pets once they're in a new home too. And because we can offer this support, we have a very low percentage of pets returned to us once we've found them loving homes. A gift in your Will could help us continue providing this life-changing care.

### Education

We want every pet to enjoy the best possible quality of life and to be loved and cared for by people who understand how to look after them. So education is key. We've given talks to over a million people about responsible pet ownership. A gift in your Will could help us continue offering support, sharing knowledge and shifting attitudes and behaviours – changing even more pets' lives.

### Pet Loss

A gift in your Will could help us reach even more people through our Pet Loss Support service, which provides free, confidential emotional support all year round to people who are struggling to cope with the loss of a pet. A gift in your Will could ensure that no-one goes through the pain of losing a pet alone.

### Pet Food Banks

We believe no-one should have to choose between feeding themselves and feeding their pet. A gift in your Will could help to keep our network of Pet Food Banks open, providing free pet food when people are struggling financially, so they can stay together with their pets.



## Bleu and Amy's story

When Amy, who has multiple sclerosis, was told a dog could help her overcome her depression, she never imagined how her life would be changed. "She has given me a reason to smile every day," Amy says of her beloved dog, Bleu, an ex-racing greyhound who she fell in love with at a Blue Cross rehoming centre. "She quickly became queen of my house."

Together with transforming Amy's mental health, Bleu has even learned to detect when Amy is on the brink of an MS attack. "She just gets me," Amy says. "If we're out on a walk, it's like she can sense it and she'll start to pull us home. She is my world. People say, oh, you've rescued that dog, but she has 100% rescued me as well."

# The impact of gifts in Wills



Because we rely on gifts in Wills for over half of our income, any amount that you leave to Blue Cross will have an extraordinary impact on pets' and people's lives.

During 2023, for example, when the cost of living crisis began to hit people's pockets hard, we fed over 1.4 million pets for a day through our pet food bank network. In 2023, we also helped over 1,300 pets through our Veterinary Care Fund, set up to support people struggling to pay for vet bills across the UK.

In 2024 alone, we helped 34,993 pets across the nation. Without the incredible support of gifts in Wills:

- 3,449 struggling pets could still be waiting for a consultation from our behaviour team
- Just under 4,000 homeless pets could still be looking for loving new homes
- Over 13,592 sick and injured pets could still need veterinary care

# A gift of any size can make a huge difference

Your gift, no matter what size, could be the change that a sick, injured or homeless pet desperately needs. Long after you're gone, you will be there to give pets and the people who love them the support and happiness they deserve.



Here are some ways your gift could help:



If **12 supporters each left £500**, it could pay for an **anaesthetic machine costing £6,000** – and help vulnerable pets through vital surgery



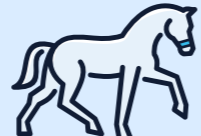
If **30 supporters each left £1,000**, it could pay for an **ultrasound machine costing £30,000** – and help our vets diagnose serious conditions



A gift in your Will of **£850** could cover the total cost of rehoming a cat (£849)



A percentage of your estate worth **£1,400** would be enough to cover the total average cost of rehoming a dog (£1,382)



A gift of **£3,400** would cover the total average cost of rehoming a horse (£3,321)



A gift of **£60,000** could pay for lifesaving surgery for 50 pets needing urgent treatment

Costs and stats correct as of 2024

# Why making a Will is important

Having a Will is the only way you can be sure of what will happen to your money and personal possessions.

## Remembering family and friends

Without a properly drawn up Will you will be declared 'intestate'. The legal system will then step in to manage your affairs and your assets may be divided up contrary to what you wanted.

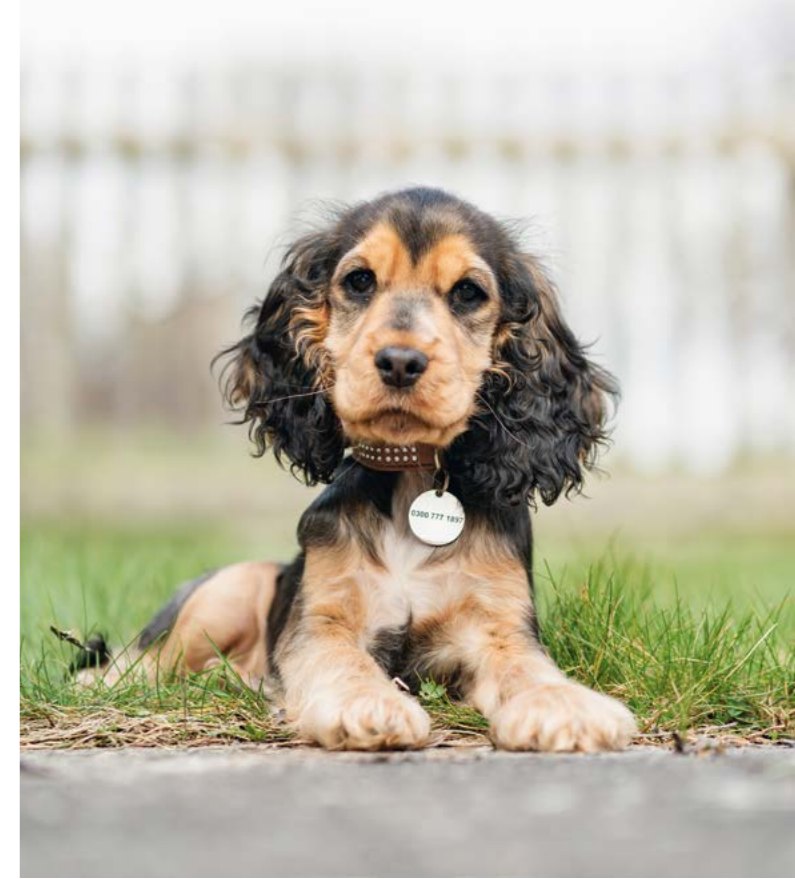
Therefore, having a Will is important not only to you, but to your family and friends. You can determine who you would like to benefit from your money, property and personal possessions. If you care for children under 18 years of age, you can appoint guardians to make sure their future is safe and secure. Putting your affairs in order with a Will should simplify the legal process for your loved ones at what may be a very difficult time.

**Your Will is also an opportunity to remember causes that mean something special to you, such as Blue Cross. Through your gift, you can be there to change pets' lives, even after you're gone.**

## Inheritance tax

If your estate is going to be affected by inheritance tax, you can legitimately reduce the amount that is taxable by:

- Including a gift to a charity like Blue Cross. The amount will be taken from your estate before any tax liability is worked out
- Leaving 10% or more of your net estate to a charity like Blue Cross. This would reduce your inheritance tax from 40% to 36%



**"In the world today, animal neglect is increasing, so we need people who care. I will always help and care for all animals as much as I can. But when I'm gone, I hope the legacy I leave will help Blue Cross carry on its excellent work for years to come."**

Mr P Wyatt, Blue Cross supporter

On average, we help around **36,000 pets each year** through Rehoming and Veterinary services



Figure based on 2018-2024

# Things to consider

Here are some of the main points to think about when you're making your Will:

## Your assets

Most people have more than they think. As well as the obvious ones such as property and savings you may have foreign assets, own a copyright or have digital assets, including domain names, that may be valuable.

## Your beneficiaries

When you know what you have to leave, make a list of the people you'd like to benefit. If you want to remember Blue Cross, we have included the details your solicitor will need on page 10.

## Appointed guardians

You can appoint guardians for a child in the event of a parent's or carer's death, so that they're cared for in the future.

## Your pets

It's worth thinking about who you would like to take care of your pets should they outlive you. Our Pet Peace of Mind service is a way to ensure that they find a loving, happy new home should the worst happen – see page 9 for more details.

## Your executors

These are the people you choose to make sure your wishes are carried out. They can be friends, relatives or a solicitor, and can still benefit from your Will. Whoever you choose, we recommend you talk to them to check they are willing to act.

If you have included a gift to Blue Cross in your Will, our Legacy Administration team can work with executors to make the process as straightforward as possible.

## Choosing a solicitor

If you would like to use a solicitor to make your Will, the Law Society can find one local to you at [www.lawsociety.org.uk](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk) You can also make your Will for free, either with a local solicitor or online – see the details on page 7.



# How to remember Blue Cross in your Will

You can include Blue Cross in a new Will, or you can add Blue Cross to your existing Will (with a codicil).

Before you make any changes, consider what type of gift you would like to leave (see below) and the amount or the specific details.

## Types of gifts:

### A share of your estate (sometimes called a 'residuary' gift)

The remainder of the estate once other gifts and payments have been made. This type of gift is popular with our supporters because it remains proportional to the value of your estate. Remember, even leaving just 1% of your total estate could make a huge difference.

### A cash sum (sometimes called a 'pecuniary' gift)

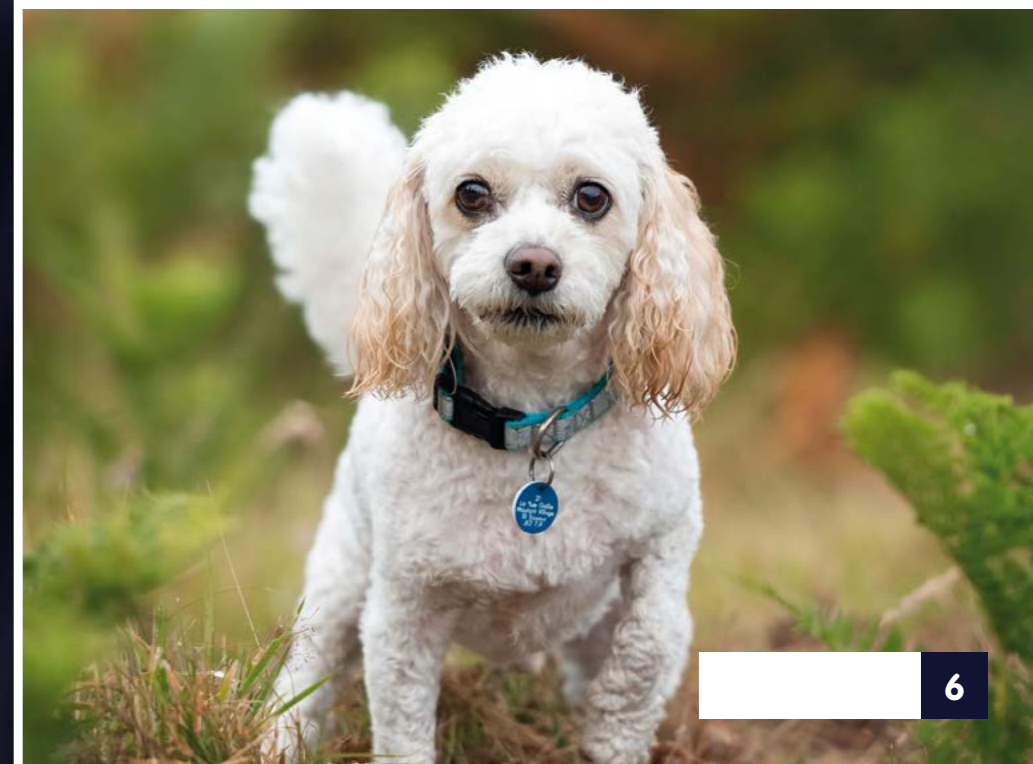
A fixed sum of money. The value of pecuniary legacies could decrease over time, as the cost of living increases.

### Something you own

A particular named item, for example a piece of jewellery, property, artwork or digital assets.

### Residuary or pecuniary after a loved one dies

Allows you to leave assets for the care of a loved one for the duration of their life. When they die, your legacy will then go to your chosen recipient.



# We can help you make your Will for free



## Online with MyIntent

Blue Cross has teamed up with MyIntent, an online Will-writing service. It's quick and easy to make a Will, and good legal advice is always included.

Start your Will any time by completing an online interview at [myintent.life/bluecrosswp](https://myintent.life/bluecrosswp). You'll immediately receive tailored online advice to review. You can set up a free video appointment to discuss that advice further. Or, if a free basic Will is suitable, you can request it straight to your inbox.

### Next steps:

To start making your free basic Will visit [myintent.life/bluecrosswp](https://myintent.life/bluecrosswp)

**My Intent**

## Or with a local solicitor

Blue Cross has also partnered with the National Free Wills Network, who is teamed up with over 1,100 solicitors around the UK. On average, there is a participating solicitor within 3.5 miles from where you live. The network will send a list of participating solicitors in your area for you to choose your preferred specialist.

Simply complete our referral form and we will pass your details to the network who will send you everything you need.

### Next steps:

Complete the form at the back of this guide or on our website at: [bluecross.org.uk/the-free-wills-network](https://bluecross.org.uk/the-free-wills-network)



If you have any queries regarding remembering Blue Cross in your Will, please contact our Gifts in Wills team. Call **0300 777 1945** or email [legacy@bluecross.org.uk](mailto:legacy@bluecross.org.uk)



## Widget's story

"Widget and her siblings were sadly rejected by their mum when she couldn't feed them. So our team stepped in to give the kittens around-the-clock care. It's very tiring hand-rearing kittens – but so rewarding.

"After weeks of TLC, bottle feeding, toileting and weaning onto solids with help from all the team, the kittens were thriving and were soon reserved. The siblings were very

close, so the team were keen to find them homes where they could stay in pairs – and they have found just that.

"They are all doing fabulously in their new homes and were a pleasure for us to have. We're so glad we could change the story for them and give them a happy ending."

**Amy Kneale, Animal Welfare Assistant**



## Q&A

### How will my gift be used?

Your gift will be used to change the lives of pets and people for many years to come. It could help pay for essential veterinary care for sick and injured pets, or help find new caring homes for homeless pets across the UK. It could also help provide emotional support after the loss of a beloved pet, educate more people on how to care properly for their pets, or help to feed hungry pets through our Pet Food Bank network.

### What type of gift is best?

Every gift, large or small, means you will be there to help change pets' lives, even after you're gone. One consideration could be that your gift may not come to us for many years. Leaving a share or percentage of your estate as a residuary gift means the proportion remains constant. You could ask your solicitor about this.

### Is making a Will different in Scotland?

Yes, but it is still permissible to leave a legacy to Blue Cross in a Scottish Will. As in England and Wales, Blue Cross should be correctly identified and the nature and extent of the legacy described in sufficient detail. Whilst the suggested wording found on page 10 is still appropriate for use in Scottish Wills in relation to leaving a gift in your Will to Blue Cross, we strongly recommend that independent professional advice should be sought when drawing up a Will in Scotland.

These are our most commonly asked questions. If there's any other information you'd find helpful, call us on **0300 777 1945** or email [legacy@bluecross.org.uk](mailto:legacy@bluecross.org.uk)



## Doolittle's story

Miniature Shetland pony Doolittle came into our care when he was rescued along with his mum. But all was not well. As Jess Hall, Horse Welfare Assistant, explains, "We noticed he was struggling with movement. The ligament which usually releases as the horse moves its leg was getting stuck, so his legs would get stuck in place."

After an urgent operation at Blue Cross to correct the problem, Doolittle was soon back to trotting happily around his paddock. Once he was ready to be rehomed, it wasn't long before this adorable, fluffy foal caught the eye of a new family. After 173 days in our care, Doolittle joined another Shetland pony in his new home, where he is thriving and loved.





## Love and care for your pets, peace of mind for you

Your pet means the world to you, but what would happen if you passed away before them? Apply for Pet Peace of Mind, and we'll do everything we can to find them a loving, happy new home should the worst happen.

You can register up to four pets per household, including dogs, cats, horses and small pets like hamsters and rabbits. We consider all applications on a case-by-case basis, and you don't need to leave us a gift in your Will to use this service. For more information or to request an application pack, complete the form at the back of this guide and return to us using the freepost envelope enclosed, call **0300 777 1910** or visit [bluecross.org.uk/pet-peace-of-mind](https://bluecross.org.uk/pet-peace-of-mind)



### Muffin's story

14-year-old cat Muffin was brought to our rehoming centre in Southampton following the passing of his owner. He needed lots of love from our team to help him cope during this sad and confusing time.

Thankfully, he was registered with our Pet Peace of Mind service, which ensured that relatives knew exactly where to bring Muffin.

He arrived at Blue Cross with a number of health issues which he needed to overcome before we could start the search for his new home. Muffin's kidney condition was soon under control thanks to medication, the right

diet and the specialist care provided by our team.

Before long, the gorgeous Muffin was adopted by a caring lady called Cynthia.

After losing the person who cared most about him, and being all alone, Muffin's life has been transformed. Thanks to Pet Peace of Mind, he found the love, security and happy home he truly deserved.

By signing up to the Pet Peace of Mind service you can be sure your pet will be cared for after you've gone.

# My legacy

Leaving a gift in your Will is such a wonderful way for you to continue being there for pets and people, changing lives long into the future. Over half of our income comes from gifts in Wills, so we really do rely on them to continue our important work.

To ensure your wishes take effect, we strongly recommend that you take independent professional advice. Your solicitor will ask you for our details which are as follows:

**Blue Cross, Registered charity number: England and Wales [224392] and in Scotland [SC040154] Registered office: Shilton Road, Burford, Oxfordshire OX18 4PF.**

**We recommend that you take our suggested wording set out below to your professional advisor for their information.**

## To leave a residuary legacy (to include a share of your estate):

I give to Blue Cross, registered charity number 224392 (England and Wales) and SC040154 (Scotland), of Shilton Road, Burford, Oxfordshire, OX18 4PF **[enter percentage]** per cent of my residuary estate and I express the wish (but without imposing any binding obligation) that such estate be used for the general purposes of Blue Cross.

**OR**

the benefit of **(insert specific area of work/name and address of centre)**  
The receipt of a Duly Authorised Officer of Blue Cross shall be a good discharge to my trustees for the gift.

## To leave a pecuniary legacy (cash sum):

I give to Blue Cross, registered charity number 224392 (England and Wales) and SC040154 (Scotland), of Shilton Road, Burford, Oxfordshire, OX18 4PF the sum of **[insert amount in figures and words]** and I express the wish (but without imposing any binding obligation) that such estate be used for the general purposes of Blue Cross.

**OR**

the benefit of **(insert specific area of work/name and address of centre)**  
The receipt of a Duly Authorised Officer of Blue Cross shall be a good discharge to my trustees for the gift.

Any questions? Please call us on **0300 777 1945** or email [legacy@bluecross.org.uk](mailto:legacy@bluecross.org.uk)

Blue Cross is a charity that has been changing the lives of sick, injured and homeless pets, and the people who love them, since 1897.



## Please let us know about a gift in your Will

We realise that your Will is a personal document, but if you have included, or intend to include Blue Cross, we would be very grateful if you could let us know. We don't need to know any specifics about your gift, just your decision to leave one. This helps us to plan for the future and also means we can make sure we thank you appropriately.

As we rely on gifts in Wills to fund over half of our work, knowing that gifts will be coming in the future is important news. It will mean that we can continue to change the lives of thousands of sick, injured and homeless pets who turn to us every day, in increasing numbers, and support the people who love them in the years ahead.

### How to tell us:

1. Complete the 'Share your plans' form attached, then return it in the envelope provided, or
2. Call our Gifts in Wills team on **0300 777 1945** or email [legacy@bluecross.org.uk](mailto:legacy@bluecross.org.uk)

**"I am happy to know that I will be helping animals even after I'm gone"**

C Hillan, Blue Cross supporter

## Share your plans with us

It would help us enormously with our future planning if you are able to let us know your intentions. It also means we'll be able to thank you properly and send you relevant updates on our work – if you choose to hear from us.

Name

Address

Town

City

Postcode

Email

Phone number

### My intentions

- I have already included Blue Cross in my Will  
 I intend to include Blue Cross in my Will

### I'd like to hear more about Pet Peace of Mind

- Please send me more details on your Pet Peace of Mind service

### Please refer me to the National Free Wills Network

- Yes I am interested in making my Will through the National Free Network. Please pass my details to the network who will use them only for the purposes of administering this scheme and will not pass them on to any other individual, organisation or company.

### Other communications

Blue Cross would like to tell you about the vital work we do for pets and people, and the different ways you could support us. This may include fundraising activities, appeals and merchandise.

**Please tick below if you are happy for us to contact you by:** Phone  Email

**If you DO NOT wish to hear from us by post please tick this box**

We hope that you enjoy the communications that we send you and if you ever want to change how you hear from us, please contact our customer care team on **0300 790 9903** or by emailing [preferences@bluecross.org.uk](mailto:preferences@bluecross.org.uk)

To see more about how we will use your information visit [bluecross.org.uk/privacy](https://www.bluecross.org.uk/privacy)



## We're here for you

If you have any queries about including a gift in your Will to Blue Cross, please contact our Gifts in Wills team on **0300 777 1945** or email [legacy@bluecross.org.uk](mailto:legacy@bluecross.org.uk)

[bluecross.org.uk/gifts-in-wills](https://bluecross.org.uk/gifts-in-wills)

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