



Wills in the public eye

18 October 2021

Emily Woods (née Hewlett) and David Whitworth, Senior Associate and Trainee respectively in Payne Hicks Beach's top ranked Private Client department, explore the factors considered by Sir Andrew Macfarlane in reaching his recent judgment to seal Prince Philip's Will in a recent article published in ePrivateclient online on 14 October 2021 and reproduced by kind permission. The clear cut public interest in protecting the 'dignity and integrity of the sovereign' was key to Sir Andrew's minimum 90 years of privacy ruling. However, as the vast majority of Wills remain public documents, these considerations highlight increasing concerns around protecting not just the privacy of testators but also the interests of those named as legatees, particularly those who may be at risk of harassment. Whilst the sealing of Wills is uncommon, they remain public documents: lawyers can advise on Letters of Wishes which enable certain details to be kept confidential.

<https://www.paminsight.com/epc/article/wills-in-the-public-eye> (paywall)

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