

Solicitor's conduct found 'reckless and dishonest' in Reeves v Drew



In the recent case of *Reeves v Drew and ors* [2022], the family of Kevin Reeves disputed his 2014 will on the grounds that he had been unduly influenced and lacked knowledge and approval of its content.

Mr Reeves' will left 80% of his £100 million estate to his daughter Louise Reeves and only 20% to his daughter Lisa Murray. This division differed dramatically from Mr Reeves' previous will which had divided the estate more equally among his family members.

Following a three week trial and after hearing evidence from over fifty witnesses, the court ruled that deceased had not understood the terms of his 2014 will and had not intended to alter his testamentary disposition. The court found that the will had not been read through to Mr Reeves and, as such, Louise Reeves had exploited her father's poor literacy.

The judge also made several findings in relation to the conduct of the solicitor, Mr Curnock, which he described as 'reckless and quite possibly dishonest'.

The court found it extraordinary that Mr Curnock made amendments and deletions to Mr Reeves' 2012 will while it was still valid and considered him a 'most unsatisfactory witness' such that Mr Curnock's evidence could not be relied upon.

While the involvement of a solicitor can strengthen the presumption of validity of a will, in this case the situation was 'quite the reverse' due to the court's concerns surrounding Mr Curnock's evidence. The claimant had failed to prove that the deceased knew and approved the contents of the 2014 Will and the undisputed previous Will



was found to be the deceased's last valid Will.

How we can help

If you need help or advice on any aspect of your will, including [disputing a will](#) contact our specialist team on +44(0)1892 515121 or [contact us](#).