



books

Inheritance & Succession: the Complete Irish Guide

John G Murphy and Jason Dunne. Liberties Press (2008), Guinness Enterprise Centre, Taylor's Lane, Dublin 8. ISBN: 978-1-905483-40-2. Price: €13.99 (paperback).

In his foreword to this book, Mr Justice Robert Barr notes that "the authors have provided the public with an admirable service". *Inheritance & Succession* is indeed a book for public consumption and, though subtitled 'The Complete Irish Guide', should not be confused with being an authoritative academic or practitioner-focused commentary on succession law. Indeed, the book delves into a wide spectrum of fields, both legal and non-legal alike.

The book opens with a lengthy chapter entitled 'Life', which deals with a wide variety of topics from wealth management to the creation of a life plan from infancy to advanced years. The chapter has the feel of a self-help book rather than a legal tome, though there are nuggets of wisdom interspersed throughout.

Subsequent chapters will feel more familiar to the legal reader, with tax, succession and inheritance occupying

the next three chapters. Issues discussed include the minimisation of tax (ever a client favourite), the need for a considered succession plan, family law, and a useful overview of succession law.

Quite helpfully, the book gives guidance for the public on the inherent risks attaching to DIY wills and makes a simple but convincing case for the involvement of a trained professional and the incurring of reasonable fees in the preparation of what "may be the most important document you ever sign".

Beyond the treatment of wills and succession law, the book proceeds to deal with a number of topics that can often be somewhat taboo with

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clients, including care in latter years, nursing home costs and subvention, the potential loss of mental capacity, preparation for death, funeral organisation and administration of the estate.

Seasoned succession law practitioners may take little from *Inheritance & Succession*,

but such practitioners are unlikely to be the target audience. Solicitors returning to the topic following time spent in other fields will find the book to be a very useful refresher tool before weightier consideration of the topic. To the general public, however, *Inheritance & Succession* could be immensely valuable, giving as it does a well-rounded guide to the topics covered in a readily comprehensible format. Whether the book can overcome the public suspicion that 'planning for death invites the Grim Reaper'

remains to be seen, but the book is certainly a worthwhile addition to the reading material in every solicitor's waiting room. **G**

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