



## Qualification is another STEP up for Caroline

*Pictured left: Caroline Bates, head of Wills and Probate at  
Newsome Vaughan LLP*

Caroline Bates, head of Wills and Probate at Newsome Vaughan LLP, has become one of the first solicitors in the Coventry region to obtain the new STEP Will Writing qualification.

Caroline is already a full member of STEP - The Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners - and this additional qualification confirms her expertise in this area.

She says everyone should make a will and that specialist advice is vital to ensure the will is effective and does what is intended.

"Unfortunately, anyone can make or advise on making a will as this area of law is not currently regulated," she said. "This can leave consumers vulnerable and unclear about their advisor's qualifications. Membership of STEP - including the STEP Will Writing certificate - reassures consumers that they are in safe hands.

"Solicitors are under a legal duty to act in their clients' best interests. If this means the appropriate type of will for a client's circumstances is relatively inexpensive this is the type of will they will have."

Many organisations and individuals offering will writing services are not governed by this 'best interests' principle, adds Caroline. It is not often clear what their level of experience or expertise is and consumers should be alert to whether or not they are merely dealing with a 'sales representative' or someone with proper qualifications.

"Consumers should make sure that whoever is advising them is qualified and, more importantly, insured if things go wrong. Only solicitors are regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority and consumers should look for this phrase or ask the question to confirm their advisor's status."

Caroline is also a member of the Private Client Section of the Law Society and Solicitors for the Elderly.