

# Supreme Court sides with charities in battle against disinherited daughter who was written out of her mother's will

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The two women had been estranged for many years (Source: Getty)

**The Supreme Court today ruled in favour of three animal charities arguing a lower court had been wrong in reassigning money left to them to the deceased's disinherited daughter.**

The Court of Appeal previously decided Heather Ilott should be handed over £163,000 of her late mother's wealth, [despite the two having been estranged for over two decades](#) and her mother, Melita Jackson, opting to leave the bulk of her £486,000 estate to three charities – the Blue Cross, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Jackson, who died in 2004, explicitly instructed her executive her daughter should refrain from challenging her decision.

Of the amount granted by the Court of Appeal under the Inheritance (Provision for Family and Dependents) Act 1975 for reasonable financial provision, £143,000 plus associated costs was intended for Ilott to use to purchase her housing association home.

The Court of Appeal took into account the fact that Ilott, Jackson's only child, had made attempts to reconcile with her mother, even though they were unsuccessful, and had children of her own to support.

Today marks the first time the Supreme Court has considered the 1975 Act.

"It was never intended that the legislation should act as a spring board for disgruntled adult children to challenge their parents' testamentary freedom, just because they consider a will's dispositions to be unfair," said Gareth Ledsham, partner at Russell-Cooke. "The Supreme Court justices have confirmed this is the case.

"The Supreme Court has also clarified that in the case of children, any alteration to the will can only be for the purposes of maintenance. It will not usually be appropriate to award them an appreciating asset such as a house."

Jonathan Fowles, a barrister from Serle Court, added: "The court also acknowledged the significance of Jackson's choice of charities, even though she had no connection with them during her lifetime. For those who desire to make a charitable gift on death, this aspect of the judgment support their freedom to choice regardless of any previous involvement with those causes."

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