

# Divorce made simple

Gemma Nicholls and Elizabeth Marsh, Solicitors from Henmans LLP's experienced family team, explain the divorce process and their new packages for minimising legal costs.

The team itself are highly ranked in legal directories and are noted for their innovative approach in developing solutions when dealing with all consequences of relationship breakdown. They aim to resolve issues with discretion and sensitivity.

We hear from many clients considering a divorce who want to know not only about the divorce process, but also how to deal with matters in the most cost efficient and amicable way.

Whilst all our clients are unique, with some needing more support and guidance than others, some clients are happy to, or may have already, prepared some of the initial paperwork. This is just one of the ways that our clients can minimise their costs.

With this in mind Henmans' Family Team have developed two new packages to help clients deal with their divorce in the most cost effective manner. The first is our "Checking Service" and the second is our "Fixed Fee Service".

So what is the process, what are the options for minimising costs and what do the different packages cost?

Divorce explained...

### Step 1: Beginning proceedings

You'll need to complete and send to the Court a Divorce Petition and any other relevant divorce paperwork including the court fee of £340 and your original marriage certificate.

### Step 2: Acknowledgement Form

The papers will be posted by the Court to your spouse and they will normally have 8 days to complete and return an Acknowledgement form to the Court.

### Step 3: Decree Nisi Application

The Court will send you a copy of the completed Acknowledgement form and you will have to send a form, attaching this to the Court when you apply for your Decree Nisi.

### Step 4: Final Stage of Divorce – Decree Absolute

6 weeks and one day from when the Decree Nisi has been granted, you can apply for the final stage of the divorce. This is known as the Decree Absolute. Sometimes it is not in your interest to apply for Decree Absolute straight away, as there may be financial consequences

The whole process can take between 4-6 months.

It is only at Step 3, that a Judge will first carefully look at the paperwork and it is vital that it is completed accurately. If it isn't, then the Judge will return the paperwork and it may have to be resubmitted. In that case, Steps 1-3 would need to be repeated.

By clients completing much of the paperwork themselves, they can minimise their costs. It is important to bear in mind that a divorce can become more complicated and there may be other things which you need to do along the way. Instructing us means we can help to ensure that the paperwork is all in order before it is sent to the Court. That way the process will not be delayed.

We offer the support and assistance our clients need, when they need it.

Each case is unique. Some clients prefer to prepare paperwork themselves and others would much rather we do it for them. To cater for this we have launched our new checking service and fixed fee divorce service. So, how does it work and what does it cost?

### 1 Checking Service

For clients who complete all of the divorce paperwork themselves and want us to ensure there will be no problems with it when the Judge looks at it at step 3, then we can check all your paperwork for you. Our costs for this service would be £250 plus VAT.

### 2 Fixed Fee Divorce Service

For clients who have agreed with their spouse that they both want a divorce, but would like us to prepare all the divorce paperwork for them, then our costs would be £600 plus VAT and the court fees.

We would ask that half of our costs be paid to us at the start and the other half at the end of the divorce proceedings.

Whichever option our clients choose, we would always review matters with them as they progress. Should anything change (for example, if their spouse does not agree the paperwork) or, should they need more support, then we can tailor an alternative package.

### But what about your finances?

The other important issue to deal with when going through a divorce, is the couple's finances.

Couples do this at the same time as the divorce. The divorce itself does not automatically end each spouse's financial claims against the other.

The most cost effective way of dealing with financial matters is if our clients are able to agree directly with their spouse what they want to do about their financial situation.

However, to ensure what they agree is legally binding, it needs to be recorded in a document called a "Financial Consent Order". We can prepare that agreement. Once signed by both our client and their spouse, this would be

sent to the Court for a Judge to approve and rarely would anyone need to attend Court.

If we are to prepare this document, we can do that for a fixed fee of £600 plus VAT together with a court fee of £45, which is payable when the Order is sent to the Court.

If, however, our client is not able to reach an agreement with their spouse then we are experienced in exploring other options to deal with finances and can explain the different ways they can resolve their financial situation.

These options include: Mediation, Collaborative Law and Solicitor led negotiation or litigated court proceedings.

We help our clients to decide which is the right option for them.

### What our clients say:

*"Very professional, yet friendly and approachable"*

*"I felt well advised throughout and was particularly impressed by the friendly and supportive manner"*

*"You made the whole process easier than it could have been"*

*"I am so appreciative of the fact you realised quickly that this is a case of two balanced individuals seeking a sensible, sensitive and skilful management of a non-too-easy process by an empathic legal professional"*

If you would like to discuss this article and any of our new services mentioned in it, please contact either Gemma or Elizabeth by telephone or email using their details below.



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