



New – the “no blame” divorce. Do you know about the new 2022 divorce laws which ended the blame game?

After the school holidays we often get a lot of enquiries about relationship breakdowns. But this year, there are fundamental changes to the divorce process.

Now, you don't need to give a reason to get a divorce. You still have to be married for a year before you seek a divorce, but now you don't need to give a reason or provide evidence. You just need a statement of irretrievable breakdown of the marriage to obtain a judicial separation. You won't need any evidence to back up this statement.

What else is new?

Well, for the first time, couples can make a joint application for divorce or separation. There is also a new overall timeframe of 6 months from the start of proceedings to 'Final Order' (or what used to be called the 'Decree Absolute'). This allows couples more time to agree practical arrangements for the future. It has also become more difficult for one of the couple to challenge a divorce.

Take Ashley and James*, for example

Our advisers saw Ashley and James together during an appointment after they decided they wanted advice about how to "consciously uncouple". It just wasn't working anymore and they wanted to separate after 9 years of marriage to protect their two children before the inevitable destructive rows started. We advised Ashley and James to agree about how to divide any money they shared, what would happen to their home and where their children would live. We also identified the benefits they could claim after they separated to help them secure a more positive future for both of them and their children.

We explained to Ashley and James how to make a joint application for divorce and that they would be charged a fee of £593 fee to apply. Our advisers explained that, if they were on a low income, they might be able to get help with the fee.

We are continuing to provide practical advice and support to Ashley and James at each stage of the divorce proceedings to help them move forward with their lives.

Our national Citizens Advice website pages provide clear and straightforward advice about how to separate and divorce: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/family/how-to-separate1/getting-a-divorce-or-dissolution/>. But we are also very happy to speak to you on the telephone or in person at one of our local offices.

But what if your partner becomes aggressive?

Ashley and James wanted to part on relatively amicable terms. Remember, though, if you need to speak with someone about your partner because they make you feel anxious or threatened, you should get help. You will find details of your local domestic abuse service below.

* Indicative story of the sort of help we can provide.

CITIZENS ADVICE MOLE VALLEY CONTACT DETAILS:

Both **Dorking and Leatherhead Citizens Advice** offices are currently open for limited appointments, please either telephone our adviceline **0808 278 7930** or email

leatherhead@camv.org.uk / dorking@camv.org.uk

Contact East Surrey Domestic Abuse Services on **01737 771350** or email:

support@esdas.org.uk

Surrey Domestic Abuse 9am-9pm Helpline – **01483 776822**

In an emergency always dial 999

South West Surrey Domestic Abuse Outreach Service: 01483 898884 Email:

swr@swsda.org.uk

www.swsda.org.uk