**How to prepare for a divorce or dissolution of your civil partnership**

Deciding that your marriage or civil partnership has ended is one of the hardest decisions you will have to make. You will need emotional support and importantly legal advice.

Many questions arise about finances, child arrangements and how you start the process. The article below will provide you with some guidance on financial arrangements and where to start.

So, what can you do to prepare and how do you start? Here are my top tips to prepare for your divorce or ending your relationship:

1. My first tip is to seek legal advice! You and your partner will need separate lawyers, as a lawyer in England cannot act for you both. I would suggest instructing a solicitor who is a part of Resolution <https://resolution.org.uk/about-us/>, Resolution is a community of family law professions who strive to work with families in a constructive way. Many solicitors offer a consultation for a set fee, we at Leigh Edwards offer a free consultation.
2. Do your research- Your lawyer will need basic information from you so they can advise you on the potential outcome for your case. Spend time gathering the correct information, the most crucial information will be what is the value of the family home, is there an outstanding mortgage, what other assets do you both hold? Do you know the value of these assets etc.
3. How much do you know about your partner’s financial information? Try to collate as much information as possible (without breaching confidentiality);
4. Is the property you live in owed by your partner in their sole name? If you are not sure you can check this information on the Land Registry website <https://www.gov.uk/get-information-about-property-and-land/copies-of-deeds> , if so, you should consider entering a Homes Rights Notice <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/notice-of-home-rights-registration-hr1> to protect your interest;
5. Moving out the family home- you and your partner can both continue to live in the family home, as a separated couple, throughout this process. The court does not expect one party to move out, of course practically speaking this may be hard;
6. If your partner is abusive towards you seek help from a solicitor or charities that specialise in Domestic Violence https://www.womensaid.org.uk/ <https://www.mankind.org.uk/> You should not have to live in fear, there are steps that can be taken through the court to protect you;
7. Consider whether capital gains tax would be applicable, we can refer you to an accountant for further information if required;

1. Are your monthly funds being stopped? If you were used to relying on your partner for monthly support and they stop this income, this is unacceptable, the court would expect you to have enough money throughout this process to meet your reasonable needs. We can apply for an application on your behalf to formalise the amount you receive each month;
2. Payment- Many people ask how they pay for a divorce, the fees depend on the amount of work undertaken each month, we at Leigh Edwards will provide you with a cost estimate of your likely fees. Ideally fees are paid from your savings, if this is not possible we can look into whether your partner has the ability to pay your fees, whether you can borrow funds from friends and family or lastly, you may choose to obtain a litigation loan from a specialist provider;
3. Alarm bells- If there is a sudden change in assets such as a sale of a property or transfer of money, please do get in touch with a solicitor as soon as possible, to ensure we can do all we can to protect the asset in question.

We can guide you through this difficult time and provide you with legal support. We will only contact your partner once you have confirmed that we can, this will allow us to obtain instructions from you and plan our next steps.

Please contact Roz Lidder, Senior Associate at Leigh Edwards on Roz.Lidder@leighedwards.com or on 01865 884436 to arrange a free consultation.

<https://www.leighedwards.com/>