



Resolving children issues on separation

The impact of a parents' separation on children can be profound, particularly if matters are dealt with in the wrong way. When a decision has been taken to separate, there are many issues which will need to be addressed regarding children.

There will be issues such as how the separation should be communicated to the children, where they should live, how often they will spend time with the other parent and other family members, what will the arrangements be in terms of birthdays, Christmas, and holidays. Other issues may involve communication and dealing with any differences moving forwards, education, health care, religion, and emotional well-being. There will also be financial issues such as what level of maintenance should be paid, and how any school fees or university fees are to be met.

Parents may be able to agree these matters between themselves, but frequently they need assistance or some formal structure to address these in a constructive way. Quite often parents will find that there are disagreements or that they struggle dealing with or engaging the other parent. Others may feel that it is impossible to address such issues with the other parent and the prospect of doing so fills them with dread.

A family law specialist will be able to help you provide you with invaluable advice to help you navigate issues concerning children on separation. They can also assist if a particular issue has arisen since separation. They will assess your unique position and offer you advice which is tailored to your needs.

Our Family Department has the skill and expertise to guide parents through the various options and resources that are available. Our solicitors will assess your needs and recommend what is suitable for you to achieve the best possible outcome.

If you are about to separate, contemplating separation or have separated and you need advice on issues concerning children, speak to an expert in our Family Department on 020 7631 4141 or at family@bishopandsewell.co.uk

Warnings

- It is important to meet with a legal specialist as early as possible so that they can assess your situation, address any concerns you have and explain what options and resources are available to support you in addressing any issues concerning children.
- If the wrong approach is taken to resolve issues concerning children, this may have a fundamental and devastating impact on future relationships and arrangements.
- Assessing the personality of the other parent is important when deciding how to address any issues.
- You may, for whatever reason feel that direct discussion between the other parent will be impossible or unworkable in which case specialist advice is essential.
- It is important that you are aware of what you are entitled to or what your liability will be in terms of any financial issues so that you are equipped to address these.
- Dependant on age, parents may wish to give their children an opportunity to express their feelings in a non-pressured, non-partisan environment. There are different ways to give a voice to children without their feeling pressured or awkward.
- If you have tried and failed to resolve issues with the other parent, there are alternatives to court to consider and resources available, which will often depend on the substance of the disagreement.
- The reasons for your separation may impact upon welfare issues concerning children such as coercive, controlling behaviour and it is important to obtain specialist advice how these can be addressed and or managed, so you are not exposed to criticism.
- There may be emergency situations which arise which compromise the safety and welfare of children in which case specialist legal advice is essential.

Consider

- Accessing resources such as publications, parenting programmes or specialist coaching.
- Engaging a family law specialist as early as possible.
- Obtaining therapeutic help, whether individually, for the children or the whole family.

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