

FREETHS

Family Law

Fixed Fee Divorce

We hear from many clients considering a divorce who want to know how to deal with the divorce process in the most cost efficient and amicable way.

Our clients are unique and we find that some need more support and guidance than others. Where clients can prepare initial paperwork themselves, this can often reduce their costs.

With this in mind we have developed 3 fixed fee packages. These are our "Checking Service", "Fixed Fee Divorce Service" and "Fixed Fee Financial Consent Order".

So what are these, what are the options for minimising costs and what do the packages cost?

Divorce explained...

Step 1: Beginning proceedings

You'll need to complete and send to the court a divorce petition, the court fee of £550 and your original marriage certificate.

Step 2: Acknowledgement of Service

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 attached it to an application form. You will need to complete this and send it to the court to apply for your Decree Nisi. This is the first formal stage of divorce.

Step 4: Final Stage of Divorce – Decree Absolute

6 weeks and one day from the date that the Decree Nisi is 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 until the financial issues have been resolved.

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 not, then the judge will return the paperwork and it may have to be resubmitted. In that case, Steps 1-3 may have to be repeated again.

Clients can minimise costs by completing much of the paperwork themselves. 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 will offer the support and assistance our clients need, when they need it.

Our packages and costs:

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 the paperwork for them. This service costs £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, this service costs £600 plus VAT plus a Court fee of £550.

We usually ask for half of our costs to be paid at the start and the other half at the end of the divorce proceedings.

Whichever option our clients choose, we 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.

Divorce made simple

3. Fixed Fee Financial Consent Order

The other important issue to deal with when going through a divorce is a 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.

Our costs for this service are £600 plus VAT together with a court fee of £50. The court fee is payable when the order is sent to the court.

If you are not able to reach an agreement with your spouse then we are experienced in exploring other options to deal with finances and we can explain the different ways they can resolve your financial situation.

These options include: mediation, collaborative Law, arbitration, 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."

"I cannot thank you enough for going the extra mile."

If you would like to discuss this guide and the services mentioned, please contact Tom Burgess.



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