



## **JOHN HODGE SOLICITORS: LEGAL GUIDESHEET – Practical Aspects of Divorce**

Going through divorce is a painful process. If there is any prospect of saving your relationship and remaining together, explore it. Support and counselling is available, including from Relate - a service available locally.

Whilst you are going through so many personal dilemmas it is easy to overlook any children's needs. Put time aside to be available to the children and spend time with them and stay in touch with their feelings. Don't criticise the other parent. Talk to them about what is happening. Try and agree what you are going to say to the children and, if you can, talk to the children together. Even though the emotions may be running high put the children's needs first.

Before separating try and reduce any debts you have. Life does not get any easier after separation, it only gets harder financially. Don't increase your debts or reducing your assets if you can help it, you will be reducing the options for the family in the future.

Financially try to put in place arrangements that can work and are realistic. Everyone will have to tighten their belt. So do not over-commit yourself financially. Communicate early with your bank and building society; they are more likely to be helpful if they know in advance what is going on. See if you can reduce your Mortgage payments, for example, to interest only. Check all household bills are in the right person's name and do not forget to apply for reduced Council Tax for single person occupation.

You may be eligible for State Benefits so establish your position as soon as possible, perhaps with the help of your solicitor or the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Try and ensure that family and friends don't get involved in the conflict. Their involvement and taking of sides can sometimes only make life more difficult for you and your children. You would be sensible to take legal advice which can help you form your own solutions whilst remaining focused on any children's needs and hopefully lead to an agreed settlement for the benefit of all involved.

**This information sheet is designed to give an overview only of this area of law and should not be acted upon without taking professional advice on a particular situation.**