

No-fault divorce

Resolution [has welcomed](#) the Government's Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Bill, which will provide for no-fault divorce and has just had its second reading debate in Parliament.

During the debate, a number of speakers, including the Lord Chancellor and the Shadow Minister, highlighted Resolution's work on this campaign, with many more using points from [our briefing](#). The Bill received overwhelming support across party lines and passed second reading without a vote.

The Bill now moves into Committee stage, and Resolution will continue to brief MPs about the benefits of the Bill. You can help by writing to your MP, encouraging them to support and speak in favour of the Bill. We've provided a [template email](#) for you to adapt and send to your MP.

Show your support for no-fault divorce with [our Twibbon](#) overlay for Twitter or Facebook.

Domestic Abuse

The [final report](#) of the Joint Committee on the Domestic Abuse Bill was informed by [written](#) and [oral evidence](#) from Resolution.

We [welcome this report](#), particularly the recommendation to extend the mandatory prohibition on cross-examination by a perpetrator where there are other forms of evidence that would satisfy the requirements for the legal aid gateway. We are in discussions with MoJ officials about how this and other provisions in the Bill will work.

We also welcome the recommendation to 'future-proof' the definition of domestic abuse, while at the same time including specific abusive behaviours; as well as expanding the definition of harm in the Children Act to include the trauma caused to children by witnessing coercive control between two adults in the household.

A [review has been launched](#) into how the family courts protect children and parents in cases of domestic abuse and other serious offences. This three-month project aims to ensure that the family court works first and foremost to protect the explicit interests of the child. The [Review Panel was announced](#) on 21 June, and Resolution will be responding to the public call for evidence.

Cohabitation

The National Conference workshop [Running Cohabitation Claims with Confidence](#) (Andrzej Bojarski and Rhys Taylor) is now available to listen to on Learn Resolution. The audio and presentation complement Resolution's new edition of [Cohabitation Claims](#), which provides comprehensive practical guidance, as well as an introduction to current law and procedure.

Court modernisation

Jo Edwards, Chair of Resolution's Family Law Reform Group, [gave oral evidence](#) to the Justice Select Committee in June on the Courts and Tribunals Reform inquiry. This complemented our [written evidence](#) and was followed by the [debate on court closures and access to justice](#), which we fed into. Resolution's evidence was based on the results of our [2019 spring regional courts survey](#). A second survey will run this autumn to build our evidence base of what practitioners and their clients experience in family courts across England and Wales. Resolution will use this information in our communications with the government and HMCTS on their progress going forward.

We will share information in our member bulletin and on social media on how you can get involved in the next survey, or [let us know](#) you are interested and we will get in touch when the survey is live.

HMCTS have provided information on [signing up](#) for the Online FR consent order pilot.

HMCTS is expected to begin the family part of its Flexible Operating Hours pilot in the Manchester Civil Justice Centre on or around 4 November. Members have queried whether legal representatives will be able to opt out of the pilot scheme. Under the pilot it will be for one or both parties to opt out and if a legal representative or someone else within a firm simply cannot attend, they will have to instruct an external advocate or ultimately advise the client to seek other legal representation. We will seek to ensure that the evaluation questionnaires for both parties and legal representatives tease out what happened and why, and the impact on those attending and for the firm.

We continue to raise issues for members and their clients on the day to day operations of the family court and about the reform programme through the Family Court User Association.

Other news:

- The President recently addressed Resolution's Regional Liaison Committee. The audio from this session is [available on Learn Resolution](#). The [latest view from the President's Chambers](#) was published in May and touches on the forthcoming closure of Regional Divorce Centres, on which Resolution recently [commented](#).
- The President also recently issued [guidance on forms of orders in children cases](#).
- On 20 June, Justice Mostyn [announced the successful extension of the financial remedies project](#) from its single original pilot zone to eight new zones.
- Our Pensions, Tax and Financial Remedies Committee has provided comments to the senior judiciary on a draft Financial Remedies Courts Good Practice Guide.
- [Amendments to existing Practice Direction 28A](#) emphasise that a failure to openly negotiate reasonably and responsibly in proceedings relating to financial remedies will amount to conduct in respect of which the court will consider making an order for costs, including in a 'needs' case where the applicant litigates unreasonably resulting in the costs incurred by each party becoming disproportionate to the award made.
- We wait for further news on Brexit, you can still access our [Brexit roundtable](#) and all the guidance and briefings prepared to date on Learn Resolution with your password or use the temporary password **brexit**. Our International Committee continues to engage with government officials on developments.

New resources:

- The Litigants in Person (LiPs) Working Party has recently [launched new resources](#) to support practitioners working in a case where a LiP is involved.
- [Mental wellbeing for family lawyers: making the case](#) this workshop was run at our National Conference by YRes co-chair Matthew Richardson.
- [Presentations from our May Family Finance Forum](#) including sessions from Kate Heart (Roffe Swayne), Keith Churchouse (Chapters Financial Limited) and Mary Waring (Wealth for Women Limited).

Get involved

The **President's Working Group on Medical Experts' Symposium** will be held at the Royal Courts of Justice, London, Court 33 on Thursday 4 July (5- 8pm). Space is limited - contact Rebecca.Leharne@judiciary.net by 28 June to book your place.

On 12 July **The Law Commission is holding a consultation event on surrogacy** to discuss the Law Commission of England and Wales and the Scottish Law Commission's joint consultation paper [Building families through surrogacy: a new law](#). For further details or to register visit <https://surrogacylondonconsultationevent.eventbrite.co.uk> (use the password **LawCommission1**).

Have you considered becoming an accredited specialist? Our [specialist accreditation scheme](#) is a badge of excellence recognised by clients, firms and government, with a number of benefits including marketing support and appearing as a specialist on Resolution's public-facing "Find help" webpage. Open to lawyers and financial advisers this autumn, we will be accepting applications until 16 September.

On 27 September Resolution is holding a [specialist development day](#) on **Transparency and Family Courts**, examining the benefits and dilemmas of more openness in family proceedings. The session is developed and led by Chair of the Transparency Project Lucy Reed and award-winning family law journalist Louise Tickle.