



**Supporting Families
and Relationships**



If you have to face a life-changing event such as divorce or separation, or deal with the complexities of pre-marital or living together agreements, you need help from experts who will put your interests first.

Our highly regarded Family team promises *the expert hand with a human touch*, to help you achieve the best outcome for you and your family.

All our clients are unique and our commitment to developing relationships means we're not only here to give specialist advice, but to work with you and reassure you that we're best placed to overcome the potential challenges you face.

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Your help has been instrumental in achieving this outcome and has given me the confidence to pursue the matter, resulting in an improved settlement for myself and the children.

Carol

Our client

Working Together for You and Your Family

We specialise in providing expert advice in all areas of family law, from high profile international divorces and financial settlements to children matters, civil partnerships and living together agreements.

We've taken on the toughest of legal challenges for our clients and won. We've changed the law to protect the future interests of others in the same situation.

Our Family team has extensive experience in guiding people through the complexities of their case, offering a sensitive but no nonsense approach.

Our Family team covers:

- Divorce and financial settlements
- Unmarried families
- Marriage and civil partnership agreements
- Children matters
- International family law
- Fertility and parenting
- International tax issues
- Jurisdiction disputes
- International child abduction
- Relocation.





Children, Divorce and Financial Settlements

Children

For many parents whose relationship has broken down, their children are their biggest concern. Parents splitting up can mean significant upheaval for children, both emotionally and in their day-to-day lives.

Discussing the practical issues relating to children with a former partner can be difficult, especially if you disagree about what's in your child's best interests. With extensive experience in legal issues relating to children, our Family team can help you successfully resolve all issues such as arrangements for where a child will spend their time, moving abroad and child maintenance.

Divorce and financial settlements

The breakdown of a relationship can be stressful enough without the added complications involved in separating property and finances. As experts in the financial aspects of divorce, we can guide you through the process of reaching a financial settlement that ensures the protection of your best interests.



Agreements, Disputes and Unmarried Families

Pre and post-nuptial agreements

It's becoming common for couples getting married to make agreements about what will happen to their assets if their relationship breaks down. A pre or post-nuptial agreement helps provide certainty about how finances and property would be dealt with on divorce. As specialist family lawyers, we can prepare these agreements and, if necessary, negotiate their terms to ensure that your best interests are protected at all times.

Dispute resolution

Lawyers are often associated with going to court, but that isn't the only option for resolving family issues. With experience and expertise in all forms of family dispute resolution, we can help you resolve your problems without standing in front of a judge.

As well as being expert litigators we're skilled negotiators. We work with mediators when it's appropriate, and several members of our team are also specialist collaborative lawyers.

Members of our team are also qualified in arbitration, a method which is relatively new to family law, but offers significant advantages, particularly in high-profile cases where maintaining privacy is key.

Unmarried families

It's still a widely-held belief that unmarried partners who live together hold the status of a common-law wife or husband, giving them the same legal rights and obligations on separation as if they were married. This isn't true. Unmarried couples who live or have children together, can face difficult

legal challenges if they later decide to separate.

We can provide you with specialist legal advice and services to help protect your position in ongoing relationships and on relationship breakdown. That includes advising on living together agreements, the extent of ownership in property, and whether either party may have potential claims over the other's property.

Alison's Story

Under our guidance, Alison Sharland asked the Supreme Court to set aside her divorce settlement on the basis that her husband had been dishonest to her and the courts during the original hearings.

We believed that Alison was misled into accepting a smaller settlement than she may have been entitled to. We worked through the complexities and challenges that Alison faced to see this case through to success.

Alison's case was heard at a three-day hearing in June 2015. All Supreme Court judges unanimously ruled in her favour.

Her husband denied the dishonesty and hid behind highly technical arguments to avoid the consequences. However, the Supreme Court saw through those arguments to expose the true picture.

Ros Bever, our National Head of Family Law, said "It's the first time in a generation that the highest court in the land heard a case on the issue of non-disclosure in divorce proceedings.

We're pleased that the judges have taken the opportunity to state clearly that spouses can't mislead the courts, and it sends out a clear message that dishonesty won't be tolerated."

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I'm relieved and delighted that the Supreme Court judges have ruled in our favour. I hope this decision sends out a message to everyone going through a divorce that they can't lie in the family courts and get away with it.

Alison Sharland
Our client



Fertility and Parenting

We provide expert advice and representation on all aspects of fertility and parenting law including surrogacy and adoption.

Our clients come to us from a range of backgrounds and situations. We advise married and unmarried opposite-sex and same-sex couples, as well as single people.

Where alternative routes to parenthood are being considered, it's critical to obtain legal advice at the earliest possible stage to minimize risks and ensure the process can run as smoothly as possible.

We'll advise you on the options available, and help you take the most appropriate action for your circumstances.





International Family Law

Family law is complex, and can also vary greatly from country to country even within Europe. Seeking specialist legal advice quickly is critical to helping to secure a successful outcome and to safeguard your interests.

With a wealth of experience advising on international issues arising in a variety of contexts, we can help you resolve all overseas family law issues. This includes divorce and financial claims necessary to divorce, child relocation, child abduction and international surrogacy arrangements.

Divorce and separation

Filing for divorce can be straightforward if you both agree the marriage is over. Difficulties can arise when you, or your spouse or partner, have connections to more than one country.

Choosing or having the wrong jurisdiction imposed on you for a divorce can have a serious impact on the outcome of your case.

Jurisdiction disputes

Securing the jurisdiction where the divorce should be filed can become complicated if you have close connections to more than one country. For example, if you were born or married in another country, or have lived there during your marriage, you may potentially be able to divorce there. We can advise on which jurisdiction would offer you the most favourable outcome.

Anti-suit injunction

We can act to prevent the other party from pursuing a divorce in another country so that you can proceed with the divorce in the jurisdiction that best protects your interests.

Confidentiality

To ensure the financial aspects of the divorce and the divorce itself are kept confidential, we can secure a non-disclosure agreement to prevent anyone talking to the press or other parties.

International treaties

England and Wales are signatories to various international conventions. This guarantees respect for our laws in certain other countries. We work with a wide network of foreign lawyers to ensure these treaties operate to protect our clients.

Interaction with concurrent foreign proceedings

Even if you're divorcing abroad, you may still need specialist family law advice on how the financial aspects of the divorce would be dealt with in England and Wales, as it may be possible to pursue claims in this jurisdiction after a foreign divorce. You may also want advice on what would happen if your children come to live here.

Financial aspects of divorce

Often the first issue in an international case is to secure jurisdiction and ensure that the case is heard in the most appropriate country. This can have a significant impact on the financial award or settlement.

To secure the court's jurisdiction requires swift action to protect your interests. Court proceedings may need to be issued as a matter of urgency. Our lawyers will be able to help you understand the process of separating assets in different countries and territories

Complex international trust and corporate structures

Our international cases often involve complex international trust and corporate structures.

Freezing injunction

It's increasingly common to encounter suspicious activity by the other party such as the disposal or hiding of assets during the divorce proceedings. We've had notable success in finding and freezing undisclosed assets both in this country and abroad in order to ensure a fair outcome.

International tax issues

It's essential when dealing with foreign property and assets to consider the tax consequences and, if tax needs to be paid, where this money will come from.

Mirror orders

If you're dealing with the transfer or sale of foreign property on a divorce, it's often advisable to obtain a court order both in England and Wales (if the divorce is taking place here), and also in the country where the foreign property is situated.



My lawyer was excellent; available at all times with honest and straightforward advice. She brought her considerable experience in family law helping to guide me through the difficult court environment.

Mellissa
Our client

Pre-nuptial agreement

If you or your finances have links with another country, or you have foreign property, choosing which jurisdiction will apply in your pre-nuptial agreement is essential. We'll liaise with our extensive network of foreign lawyers to ensure the agreement will have your desired effect, in England and Wales, and abroad. Our family specialists have drafted pre-nuptial agreements involving numerous jurisdictions with hundreds of millions of pounds of assets.

Children

We understand that situations involving children can often cause great tension in the family. Whether this involves relocating a child, adoption, parental orders or even child abduction, cases involving children need a caring and sensitive approach, as well as the expertise needed to act quickly in times of urgency.

Fertility and parental orders

Parental orders are designed to resolve the issues of parenthood following surrogacy. A parental order confirms legal parental status for both of the intended parents, and releases the parental responsibilities of the surrogate.

International child abduction

Where a child is abducted or wrongfully retained abroad, this can be extremely distressing and requires an immediate response. We frequently deal with this specialist area, obtaining emergency orders from the High Court, and applying the relevant international conventions to secure a child's return.

We can also help clients who need to defend these applications, for example because the children doesn't want to return, or because there are issues regarding their safety.

Relocation

Many families have personal or business interests around the globe which require them to relocate abroad. For those whose relationship breaks down, the children are often caught in the middle. One parent may wish to take the child to live in another country. To do this they'll ordinarily need the consent of the other parent, or a court order giving permission.

We have extensive experience in acting for parents who want to relocate and those who oppose their child's relocation. We can also help to negotiate contact arrangements where relocation is going ahead.





Why Choose Us?

Our Family team is the largest specialist team in the UK, and has the broadest geographical reach.

We can help you decide the approach best for you, make the process easier, and ensure your best interests are protected at all times.

You can trust us to deal with urgent calls and no appointment is required.

Our dedicated family team has won many awards, both regionally and nationally and our experts achieve high rankings in independent guides to the legal profession.

We provide cost-effective solutions tailored to your situation. We'll give you clear information about costs, allowing you to manage your outgoings.

Our extensive network of foreign legal experts means you get the representation you need, wherever you need it.

We work closely with expert counsel and mediators and have specialist collaborative solicitors for an alternative approach to family law.

What Else Can We Help You With?

Whether it's business or personal we understand that everyone's situation is different.

If you need legal advice or support with financial planning, we're here to offer *an expert hand with a human touch*, so you're able to focus on what really matters.

We're here to help you with:

- Buying or selling a house
- Financial planning and wealth management *
- International and cross-border matters
- Personal injury services
- Resolving disputes
- Support with your business and employment issues
- Social, education and healthcare provisions
- Tax and trusts
- Welfare and healthcare matters
- Wills, Trusts and probate services.

* Financial planning and wealth management services are provided by IM Asset Management Limited which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Its Financial Services Register Firm Reference Number is 402770.



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