



**BLANDY & BLANDY**  
solicitors

**Your family**

**Your home**

**Your wealth**

**Your employment**

**Your land & property**

**Your business**

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**Our Family Team**

Representing you in  
life & business





**"Blandy & Blandy's wealth of experience in Family Law is second to none."**

Chambers UK Guide

**"Without a doubt the top family law firm in the Thames Valley."**

The Legal 500

THE WORDS MOST USED BY CLIENTS IN THEIR FEEDBACK \*

Professional Pleasure to deal with Highly recommended  
**Would use again** Excellent  
 Fantastic Kept informed Knowledgeable  
 Direct contact with my solicitor Went smoothly Honest  
 Efficient Refreshing approach Brilliant  
 Responsive Easy to understand Supportive  
**First-class service** Communicative  
 Helpful Proactive Tenacious

# Why choose us?

It goes without saying that any issues affecting your family - from a relationship breakdown and divorce to those involving your children, home and living arrangements or financial position - can be complex, as well as emotionally and financially challenging for you.

At every stage, we aim to provide you with the information, advice and support needed to make informed decisions and to achieve the best outcome for you and your family.

## 1. LEADING REPUTATION

We are widely acknowledged as one of the leading and longest established firms of solicitors in the Thames Valley, with conveniently located offices in Reading, Henley-on-Thames, Wokingham and London.

were named as a finalist in the 'Family Law Firm of the Year - South' category at the national Family Law Awards and we were highly commended in 2022.

## 2. APPROACHABLE SERVICE

Listening carefully to your needs and aims, we are committed to providing clear, practical and effective legal advice, a responsive and highly personal service and, crucially, value for money.

## 4. A JOINED-UP APPROACH

You can rely on our specialist expertise in areas other than Family Law, ranging from Wills and estate planning to residential property, if needed.

## 3. RANKINGS AND RECOGNITION

We are recognised as a top tier firm for Family Law in the UK's leading guides to the legal profession, Chambers UK Guide and The Legal 500. In 2018, we

## 5. OUTSTANDING CLIENT CARE

As a firm, we actively seek and carefully listen to our clients' feedback. This helps us continuously improve the legal services and client experience that underpin our leading reputation. All clients are invited to share their experiences directly or through platforms such as Google Reviews, Review Solicitors, and Trustpilot.

### Our Rankings



### Review Solicitors



4.9 | 662 Reviews  
EXCELLENT

### Google Reviews



4.9 | 310 Reviews  
EXCELLENT

### Trustpilot



4.5 | 18 Reviews  
EXCELLENT

**99%**  
Recommend Us\*

**99%**  
Satisfaction\*

**98%**  
Value for Money\*

\*Review Solicitors

# Choosing a solicitor to represent you

## DO YOUR RESEARCH

By far the best way of finding a good Family Law solicitor to represent you is to obtain a personal recommendation. Speak to friends, family and colleagues to see if they have personal knowledge.

Compare and find out more about firms by taking a look at their websites. Are they informative and up to date? Is Family Law a core part of their offering and expertise? Pay particular attention to feedback and reviews from clients, including via platforms like Google Reviews and Review Solicitors.

## ARE THEY A SPECIALIST FAMILY LAWYER?

The area of Family Law is fast moving and only a solicitor who spends all their time working in this field can stay abreast of all the developments. Free to access online, Chambers UK Guide and The Legal 500 provide details of leading firms and Family lawyers.

**“From the most senior partner to the most junior solicitor, they ooze class throughout their team!”**

The Legal 500

## LOCATION

Don't necessarily limit yourself to firms within your locality. Most work can now be done remotely, via telephone, email and video conferencing. Solicitors are often willing to travel to see you for an initial or subsequent meetings. Many regional firms can offer the same quality of advice at half or even one third of the rates of London lawyers and they often instruct the same barristers and other experts and appear in the same courts.

## FIND A SOLICITOR WHO WILL ADOPT A CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH

Solicitors who are members of Family Law body Resolution are committed to resolving disputes in a non-confrontational way where possible.

## DO THEY OFFER VALUE FOR MONEY?

It is important to ensure that you can tap into the knowledge and experience of a more senior solicitor. However, some of the work can be done by someone who may be less qualified and have less experience and who therefore charges less. Choose a firm which has a reasonably large family team, with lawyers across a range of levels.

Don't be tempted to choose what might appear to be a less expensive solicitor at the expense of expertise and quality. A good solicitor might be able to do the same job in half the time. In any event, a poor job could cost you more in the long run.

## ACCESS TO OTHER AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Divorce can lead to issues in other areas of law, for example in relation to property, Wills and estate planning and any business interests. Choose a firm that offers a range of services so you and your lawyer will have easy access to the expertise of solicitors in other fields.

# Finding the right approach for you

Recognising the need to find the right approach for you, a member of our team can discuss and help to assess your individual situation and provide clear and practical advice on a way forward which will achieve the best outcome for you and your family, while helping to carefully manage costs.

All of the lawyers in our Family Law team are members of Resolution and are committed to its ethos of adopting a constructive approach to resolving family disputes.

As such, we offer several alternatives to court litigation, providing you with the opportunity to deal with matters in this way and without the need to attend court. All options are voluntary.

## COLLABORATIVE LAW

Collaborative Law is a means of resolving family disputes by avoiding the need to go to court. The process works by putting the couples in charge of the process, and involves a series of four way face to face meetings at which both parties and their solicitors are committed to working together to resolve the issues without going to court. Other financial or therapeutic professionals can also be involved to provide on-hand expertise. Collaborative working aims to limit confrontation and to help couples reach a satisfactory resolution. Our team includes trained collaborative lawyers.

## MEDIATION

Mediation is a voluntary process in which a qualified independent third party works with a couple to help them arrive at a mutually acceptable settlement. Mediation can take place at different stages following a relationship breakdown and can prove quicker, cheaper and less contentious than other methods. Importantly, however, the mediator doesn't provide advice and so you may wish to retain a lawyer to advise and support you outside of the mediation sessions or, in some circumstances, join you in the sessions themselves. A family mediator can facilitate discussions on both

financial matters and those relating to children. Our team includes trained mediators.

## ARBITRATION

Family arbitration is a private adjudication process which replaces courtroom proceedings. Those who engage in arbitration exercise more choice and control than in litigation because they can choose which arbitrator (judge) to appoint and agree the format of proceedings. An arbitrator can decide financial or child-related disputes and makes a binding 'award' at the end of the process. The award is then converted into a court order. Our lawyers have experience in this area and can advise if arbitration is suitable in your case.

We are also experienced in using other out of court methods including round table meetings, private financial dispute resolution hearings (PFDRs) and Make Evaluation Evaluations.

## SEPARATING TOGETHER - ONE COUPLE, ONE LAWYER

Generally, both you and your partner will need independent and separate legal advice for family law matters. In some circumstances however, it is possible for us to act for both of you at the same time. Through a series of meetings with your appointed lawyer, you and your partner can discuss divorce, finances and child arrangements as necessary, obtaining advice and support from one lawyer who will guide you both to reach agreement where possible. In the right case, this method of working can be both cost and time efficient. If you would like to understand more about this way of working, please contact our Family Team.

# Divorce & financial matters

Obtaining a divorce can be straightforward, particularly if you and your spouse agree that the marriage is over. Any difficulties that arise tend to relate more to resolving the practical issues, such as how to separate, where to live, arrangements for any children and financial matters. Specialist legal advice on these areas is recommended, and we can guide you through the divorce process to make it more streamlined.

## WHO CAN START DIVORCE PROCEEDINGS?

Anyone who has been married for over a year can start divorce proceedings, provided that they can satisfy one of the criteria below. It does not matter where the marriage took place.

- Both spouses are habitually resident in England or Wales.
- Both spouses were last jointly habitually resident in England or Wales and one of them still resides here.
- The spouse not starting the proceedings is still habitually resident in England or Wales.
- The spouse starting the proceedings is habitually resident in England and Wales and has been for the past 12 months.
- The spouse starting the proceedings is domiciled in England or Wales and has been residing here for at least 6 months.
- Both parties are domiciled in England and Wales.

## ON WHAT GROUNDS CAN A DIVORCE APPLICATION BE STARTED?

The only ground for divorce is that your marriage has irretrievably broken down. Whilst this area of law was previously based on a fault based system, new legislation came into effect in April 2022 to allow for 'no fault' divorce. As such, the person seeking the divorce no longer needs to particularise the facts of the divorce by reference to adultery, unreasonable behaviour or a period of separation.

## JOINT APPLICANTS

It is possible to apply for divorce either jointly or individually. You will need to consider what is most appropriate in your circumstances and if you wish to move matters forward jointly, determine how this is to be progressed with your spouse. If you wish to be represented jointly you will need to carefully consider whether you also require advice in relation to dividing your finances, issues relating to any children or any other ancillary issues. In that case you will likely need to instruct independent solicitors who can also provide you each with advice on those issues without any conflict of interest arising.

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

On receiving instructions, we will prepare a divorce application (previously known as the petition) to progress the divorce.

Every application follows the same form. It contains basic information about names, addresses, ages of any children and a statement that the marriage has irretrievably broken down.

The application also contains a section which includes the request for the divorce to be granted and reserves the applicant's position on orders for financial provision. Requesting the full range of financial orders is quite standard and does not necessarily mean that such orders will be pursued (nor does it commence financial proceedings). This should not be viewed by your spouse as a hostile step. It is sensible to try and agree how the costs will be paid/shared before the proceedings are commenced if possible.

The application will then be lodged at court, together with a copy of the marriage certificate. There is a court fee (currently £612) payable on submitting the application. Once the divorce application has been issued (i.e. processed by the court, affixed with the court seal and allocated a case number), the court will serve a copy of the application on your spouse (or both of you if applying jointly) by email and by post. In the alternative you can request that your solicitors be responsible for serving the documents. If you request that your solicitors serve the documents personally, there is no fixed timeframe in which your spouse must be served with the application.

From service of the application, there is a 14 day period in which to return a document known as the acknowledgment of service. The person completing the form confirms they have received the papers and is required to indicate whether they intend to defend the divorce. As a result of the new, 'no fault' system it is now only possible to defend a divorce on the grounds of incorrect jurisdiction or other procedural error.

20 weeks after the application is issued, and provided the acknowledgment of service has been returned, the applicant can apply for the 'conditional order' (previously known as a Decree Nisi). This document confirms the entitlement to a divorce, and allows the court to make financial orders. The 20 week waiting period from the point of application may need to be factored in to other aspects of your case, particularly if you are hoping to lodge a financial agreement by consent. You will not be able to do so before the conditional order in the divorce proceedings has been made.

Six weeks after the conditional order is made the applicant can apply for the final order of divorce. The timing of applying for the final order will need to be considered carefully as the final order can impact provisions of Wills, or other spousal

provisions in insurance contracts or pensions. Full advice on those issues should be obtained as required.

As can be seen from the timeframes set out above, the earliest possible point at which the final order can be obtained is after 26 weeks (i.e. 6 months).

## FINANCIAL MATTERS ON DIVORCE OR DISSOLUTION

In addition to advising on the divorce or dissolution process itself, we can support and guide you when it comes to making decisions about how to arrange your finances post separation. This can feel daunting at first and we aim to break down the process into manageable steps.

We can explore various processes with you to ensure that all financial resources are disclosed appropriately. Whether it is property, investments, cryptocurrency, inheritances, trust assets, share options and incentive schemes, pensions or business assets, we can advise on the extent to which it is possible and necessary to value these assets before deciding how they might be divided fairly. We are well used to dealing with assets based both in the UK and abroad. We can also consider appropriate liabilities and how these might be best dealt with.

We will consider financial and non-financial contributions to the marriage/civil partnership and your respective ongoing needs which help to determine a fair outcome. We will look at whether it is appropriate for ongoing financial support which may need to be paid by one party to the other in the form of spousal or child maintenance. Separation often involves an adjustment to both parties' lifestyles and we examine what the parties' and children's financial needs are likely to be post-separation to determine suitable future arrangements.

Financial arrangements are often agreed by way of negotiation with the support of solicitors, or through out of court processes such as round table meetings, mediation or the collaborative law process. If this is not possible, court proceedings, Early Neutral Evaluation or arbitration may be an option.

Once an agreement or decision is made about how the finances are to be divided, we can assist you in ensuring that the terms are encapsulated into a 'financial order' which is approved by the court. This provides a legally binding and enforceable document for each party.

"They have fantastic lawyers and such breadth in the team that they can cover things from all angles."

Chambers UK Guide



"They are simply a force of nature, incredibly professional and absolutely a pleasure to deal with."

The Legal 500

# Unmarried couples

## THE MYTH OF THE COMMON LAW MARRIAGE

More unmarried couples are living together ("cohabiting") than ever before, yet many are unaware of the legal status of their relationship and how this can affect one another's rights in the future.

Many cohabitants mistakenly believe themselves to be a part of a "common-law marriage". The reality, however, is that unmarried couples do not necessarily enjoy or acquire any special rights in relation to one another.

Accordingly, should your relationship end, whether through separation or sadly the death of a partner, you would be treated in law as if you are two unrelated individuals, no matter how long you have lived together.

## WE CAN HELP IN TWO WAYS:

- **At the outset of the relationship** - by drawing up legal documents which set out what would happen in the event of your relationship breaking down, to avoid any disputes in the future.
- **In the event of your relationship ending** - on your rights and the available remedies. These include claims on behalf of any children.

## WHAT IS A COHABITATION AGREEMENT OR A DEED OF TRUST?

A Cohabitation Agreement sets out the agreed legal arrangements between unmarried couples living together and covers issues such as routine financial arrangements and what would happen if the relationship should break down. The agreement could also address provision for any children you share.

A separate Deed of Trust may be needed if you co-own, or intend to co-own, a property together.

We can advise on and draft agreements in advance of your decision to live together, or if you are already cohabiting with your partner.

We will discuss the issues that are important for you to consider and include in the agreement, and work with your partner and their lawyer to ensure transparency of financial information before we draft the agreement.

## WHAT FINANCIAL PROVISION CAN BE MADE IF OUR RELATIONSHIP BREAKS DOWN?

When cohabiting couples separate, neither has any special rights by virtue of the cohabitation. The court's powers are limited, being restricted to ascertaining and declaring property interests based on property and trust principles. The court has no power to adjust these interests in order to achieve what is 'fair'.

Where there are children from the relationship, claims can be made under Schedule 1 of the Children Act 1989 for a parent to make provision for the benefit of those children. The application can be made by a parent, step-parent, guardian or any person who is named in a Child Arrangements Order as having a child living with them.

An application can be made on behalf of children who are under the age of 16 (or under the age of 18 if in full time education) for a) Transfer or settlement of property; b) Lump sums; and/or c) Periodical payments.

"The service offered by Blandy & Blandy was exceptional. You've renewed my faith in solicitors!"

Client

# Making arrangements for children

One of the most important parts of dealing with relationship breakdown is to try to minimise the negative effects on any children, by agreeing childcare arrangements as soon as possible and establishing a familiar routine. There can sometimes be different views on how much time a child should spend with each parent, where they should be educated, their religion or health and wellbeing, whether a child should be taken out of the country on holiday or where the child should live.

You may agree a voluntary "parenting plan" to cover these arrangements. If decisions on child arrangements cannot be agreed informally between parents, they can be decided by a court. However, before filing court proceedings, parents are normally expected to try a form of dispute resolution such as mediation or collaborative law, unless there are emergency issues.

We can help and support you to ensure that arrangements for your children are settled quickly and, if possible, in an amicable manner. We offer mediation services, collaborative law and round table options to resolve disputes involving children. If your case requires an urgent application to court, we can assist and guide you through the litigation process. Where you are unable to agree on such arrangements the court can make the necessary decisions, with the child's best interests as their paramount consideration. Generally it is presumed that it will be in the child's best interests to spend time with both parents, unless there is a very serious welfare issue and risk of harm. Court cases often involve the appointment of a specialist social worker to report to the court on the family's unique circumstances.

In emergency situations, it may be necessary to apply for an urgent court order in respect of your child or children. For example, where there is a risk of a child being removed from the country without your consent, or an urgent medical issue. These applications can be made in an expedited fashion where necessary. However, it is unusual for courts to grant orders without hearing from the other parent first.

We are experienced in working for both parents as well as step-parents. We also advise and support grandparents where they wish to spend time with their grandchildren.

**"I can't thank Blandy & Blandy enough for all the help you have given me, not only with my divorce but also with the children, and I will have no hesitation in recommending you to any friends or colleagues."**

Client

## How to tell your children about separation and divorce

We understand that explaining the situation to your children can be a daunting and difficult task. To help and support everyone involved, our top tips are:

1. If possible, aim to tell your children when you are both together. Seek to discuss things properly in advance and agree on what you are going to say.
2. You should both participate in talking to your children. This helps to demonstrate that the decision to separate is a joint decision which you are both comfortable with – but it is a good idea to also make sure that you say this to your children.
3. Tell your children that you are separating because of differences between you both and that your decision is absolutely nothing to do with anything they have said or done at any stage.
4. Be sure you say that your relationship and love for them will not be affected in any way by the separation.
5. Always tell the truth, as fully as possible, but avoid giving detailed information or saying anything that may upset or worry them.
6. Have the conversation over a weekend so they have time to digest the information and talk to you when you are both more likely to be around.
7. Explain that they don't have to ask questions if they don't want to, but that they can come to either of you at any time.
8. Make it clear that you realise how this decision may upset or worry them and that you appreciate that it will have an impact on them long after you have separated.
9. Tell them that you are working together to continue to be the best parents possible.
10. Try to identify a neutral third party or consider a professional child counsellor that they might be able to talk to if they have questions or concerns.



**“Blandy & Blandy have an exceptional reputation. The level of work they undertake and their excellence sets them apart from their competitors.”**

The Legal 500

## Other areas where we can help

### NUPTIAL AGREEMENTS

Nuptial Agreements are drawn up either before (“pre-nuptial”) or after (“post-nuptial”) a marriage, to set out the agreed financial arrangements in the event of a divorce or dissolution of a civil partnership.

Although they are not currently legally binding in this jurisdiction, the courts are becoming increasingly willing to take the terms of such agreements into account and to hold the parties to them. We can advise on and draw up a Nuptial Agreement at any stage in your relationship.

### DOMESTIC ABUSE

If you and/or your children are at risk of or are experiencing domestic abuse, please contact the police and seek legal advice immediately. Domestic abuse can take many forms including physical abuse, emotional, sexual, psychological and financial abuse, as well as coercive control. If you are suffering domestic abuse, you may be able to apply to court for an injunction, which is a form of temporary legal protection, known as a “Non-Molestation Order”. This protects you and/or your children from harm and gives police the power to arrest the perpetrator if s/he breaches the order.

You can also apply for an “Occupation Order”, which asks the court to decide who can and cannot occupy the family home. These applications can be complex, and legal assistance is advisable. Non-Molestation and Occupation Orders usually last between 6 – 12 months but can be extended in the right circumstances. This period of time can give an important reprieve to allow parties to deal with other issues such as financial or child arrangements.

We can advise and assist on preparing the applications for Non-Molestation and Occupation Orders to Court, including drafting the legal forms and a detailed statement of the facts. You will need to attend court, and we can support and assist by

attending court with you. Where appropriate, we can make special arrangements to ensure that you will not come into direct contact with the other party at court. We can also arrange for a specialist barrister to present your case in court.

If there are further hearings, we will help you to prepare and draft the documentation required. We will advise you at every stage until the process is complete. If there is a case to extend an existing order, we can help with this and advise you in relation to any breaches that occur. You should always contact the police in the first instance if a perpetrator breaches a Non-Molestation or Occupation Order.

### SURROGACY

Surrogacy is the process by which a woman (“surrogate”) carries a child for another person or a couple (“the intended parent(s)”), usually with the intention of transferring her legal rights, duties and obligations in respect of that child to the intended parents by way of a “Parental Order”, which is made through the courts.

In some cases, the surrogate’s own eggs are used to create the embryo, in other cases the intended parent’s egg is used, or a donor egg. IVF procedures are used to create an embryo which is transferred into the surrogate’s uterus.

The surrogacy arrangement may be domestic (i.e. take place in England and Wales), or it may be international. If so, consideration will need to be given to immigration matters.

In England and Wales, the woman who gives birth to the child (the surrogate) is recognised in law as that child’s legal mother, even if she has no biological link to that child.

It is therefore necessary for intended parents to apply for a Parental Order, to confer all the rights, duties, responsibilities in relation to that child to them, and for them to be recognised as the child’s

# Other areas we can help with

legal parents, and extinguish the surrogate's (and her spouse's if she is married) parentage.

It is important for the surrogate and the intended parents to take legal advice before proceeding, and to do so as early as possible. We are here to offer support, advice and assistance through what can be a complex, emotional and momentous journey.

We can help, whether you are a surrogate or the intended parent(s) considering a surrogacy arrangement, and advise in relation to the application for a Parental Order, including preparation of the necessary paperwork and provision of representation at the court hearings. We can advise on any risks involved at each stage should a dispute unfortunately arise.

## VARYING MAINTENANCE ORDERS

If you are already subject to an Order for spousal or child periodical payments, we can advise in relation to a variation of that Order. The circumstances in which a spousal maintenance order, or an order for maintenance of both your spouse and the children with one payment (a global maintenance order), can be varied will be fact specific. If, for example, you have recently lost your job, have had a significant change in your income or your circumstances have changed such that your income needs have changed significantly, it may be worth considering a variation. Conversely, if you wish to consider making/receiving a capital payment to replace ongoing maintenance, we can advise you about this.

In respect of child maintenance, the court's jurisdiction over child maintenance lasts only one year after the order is made following which variations are handled by the CMS (Child Maintenance Service). We can advise on your position under the CMS maintenance structure as against the existing order, and whether you should consider requesting a calculation. We can also advise in special circumstances such as the paying parent having a high income or a disabled child where the court will retain jurisdiction.

## ENFORCING AN AGREEMENT OR COURT ORDER

If you have not been paid what you are due under a court order, this is a breach of the Order and you can seek to enforce it through the courts. There are various court enforcement mechanisms which are available, either to enforce payments of one off amounts which are outstanding (e.g. lump sum orders) or to enforce arrears of regular ongoing payments (e.g. arrears of maintenance). However if you want to enforce maintenance arrears which are over 12 months old, you need permission of the court, so it is important not to delay taking action. We can advise on the most efficient and cost effective approach depending on the circumstances.

If an agreement breaks down in relation to child arrangements, there are various options to consider depending on whether or not there is a court order in place. We are well placed to support you in considering the best way to get arrangements back on track.

## APPEALING A JUDICIAL DECISION

An appeal is a means of challenging a judicial decision which has been made in family proceedings and the process can be a complex one. Family arbitration awards can also be challenged in the same way as family court decisions.

There are strict time limits for appealing a decision of the lower family courts, in most cases 21 days from the original decision, so it is important to act quickly. It might be possible to obtain permission to appeal out of time, but this should not be relied on and any delay in taking action might prove fatal to the application.

### Case law suggests that appeals should only be allowed if:

- there was a procedural irregularity.
- the Judge failed to take account of relevant matters or took account of irrelevant matters.
- the decision was "plainly wrong".

An appeal is usually limited to a review of the decision or order, unless the Judge considers that,

in the circumstances of the case, it would be in the interests of justice to hold a rehearing. Fresh evidence is not normally allowed.

In the majority of cases, the Judge may set aside or vary the order, make another order in substitution, remit the matter for re-hearing or further consideration, or order a new trial to take place before him or another Judge.

An application for a re-hearing is appropriate where no error of the court is alleged, but where the court did not have the material facts before it. This might be because of a material non-disclosure, where the factual basis on which the original order was made was incorrect or where there was fraud, mistake or a misrepresentation. On a re-hearing, further evidence can be admitted and considered.

Where parties have agreed a financial settlement and entered into a Consent Order, this cannot be appealed. A Consent Order can be set aside in very limited circumstances, for example if it can be shown that the parties' agreement was reached on the basis of a serious mistake by one of the parties, or as a result of fraud or a serious misrepresentation, or in circumstances where one party had not disclosed all the material facts to the other. Action needs to be taken very swiftly as soon as the mistake, fraud or non-disclosure comes to light.

## YOUR FUTURE

The importance of having an up to date Will cannot be underestimated and divorce or separation, a change to your financial position and needing to update matters in relation to children over time are all key reasons to review and update yours. Our Wills, Probate, Tax & Trusts team, recognised among the most established and respected in the region, can provide expert advice, including in relation to trusts and lifetime tax planning, as well as on drawing up Lasting Powers of Attorney (LPAs) if required.

This may be of particular significance if you own a property with a partner from whom you are separating. A jointly owned property can be held in one of two ways.

1) as 'beneficial joint tenants' where the joint owners are equally entitled to the property. On the death of one joint tenant, the property will automatically pass to the surviving owner.

2) as 'tenants in common' where the property is held by the owners in specific shares, sometimes unequal. On the death of one tenant in common, the property does not pass automatically to the surviving owner(s) but instead passes according to the terms of the deceased's Will or, if none, under the rules of Intestacy. We can provide expert advice in this area.

## YOUR PROPERTY

Buying or selling property is sometimes considered to be one of life's more challenging experiences. Our award-winning Residential Property team is committed to ensuring that this is not the case and can advise on sales and purchases of all sizes and levels of complexity.

## YOUR BUSINESS INTERESTS

We are experienced in providing businesses (with turnovers ranging from under £1 million to over £100 million) and their owners with a full range of legal services, including advising on disputes between shareholders and the restructuring or sale of all or part of a business or its assets.

**"Definitely the biggest hitters in the Thames Valley region when it comes to Family Law."**

**The Legal 500**

# Funding legal fees in family cases

There are a number of different options as to how you can fund your legal fees. Potential options include private funding, third party funding, litigation loans and Legal Services Orders. We will be happy to discuss your costs and funding options with you in more detail, so that you can decide on the best route for you.

## PRIVATE FUNDING

Our fees can be paid from your income and/or savings.

## BORROWING PRIVATELY

You can fund your case through personal borrowing: either commercial, by way of bank loan or credit card facility; or non-commercial borrowing from friends or family. If a third party pays your fees on your behalf directly to us, it will be necessary for the firm to carry out due diligence checks on that individual.

## LITIGATION LOANS

There are specialist providers who offer loans for the specific purpose of funding family law cases. With some of these products, you only pay interest on funds which are used to meet costs, rather than the whole amount of the initial loan requested, and are re-payable upon conclusion of the financial settlement. Some lenders will also offer to extend the loan to meet personal maintenance requirements if your spouse is not funding you during the course of proceedings. Interest usually accrues on the monies that are drawn down and most providers will require you to obtain independent legal advice in relation to the loan agreement.

## LEGAL SERVICES ORDERS

In certain circumstances it is possible to obtain an order from the court which specifies that the other party i.e. your spouse, should meet your legal costs. Such orders cannot be made unless the court is satisfied that without it, you would not be able to obtain appropriate legal advice and that you cannot reasonably obtain funding from another source.

## LEGAL AID/PUBLIC FUNDING

Legal aid is available for private law matters in certain limited circumstances, and for public law matters. We do not offer Legal Aid, but if you believe that you may be eligible for public funding we can direct you to other local firms who offer this service.

**"Blandy's have a formidable reputation in the region dealing with high-value divorce cases and complex children matters and quite rightly deserve a top tier ranking."**

**The Legal 500**

# Our people



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