



## Your first meeting with one of our family lawyers

**You've booked a first meeting with us at Tees. Don't worry if the first step feels daunting – we're here to talk you through every step and be by your side.**

### You can bring a friend

Our role is to reassure and guide you, as well as give you legal advice, but many people like to have a friend or family member to accompany them as well. This is perfectly fine and this is the case whether you are meeting with us in person, or at an online meeting such as Zoom. Make sure you're happy for that person to hear the details of your situation (if there are private matters you can always ask them to leave the room for that part of the meeting). Having a friend there can be very useful for discussing what was said afterwards. Please note, the person cannot be anyone who is directly involved in the proceedings, such as your estranged partner or children.

You don't need to bring any documents to the meeting if doing so is difficult. We will still be able help you straightway. After the first meeting, we can gather further information working together. **However, if you can bring some documents, here's a suggested list:**

Docs

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#### Relationship key dates

Write out a brief chronology of your relationship, to include events such as: when you met, when you started living together (if this occurred before your marriage), when you married, when you separated (if this has already occurred) and the dates of birth of any family members (your estranged partner or children).

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#### Letters or documents from estranged partner

Bring with you any letters or documents you may have received from your estranged partner's solicitors or the Court. This will enable us to understand what if any legal action has been undertaken and how we may best assist you.

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#### Financial information

In respect of your own financial position, you will be asked about your understanding of your current income, savings and assets. If you can also prepare an outline schedule of the financial position of your family, so far as you are aware of this, please try to do so. You're more than welcome to bring financial documents with you, whether by way of assets in your sole name or jointly held with another person.

We have strict rules about how we may view or use another party's documents. If you have documents such as these in your possession with the full consent and knowledge of the other party, then this will probably cause no issue. However, if you're uncertain as to whether you should have these, we must discuss these rules with you before you bring them to us. If you're in any doubt, just give us a ring and we will talk you through it.

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#### Marriage certificate

If you're seeking advice about starting a divorce, it would be helpful for you to bring your original marriage certificate or an official certified copy (a photocopy is not sufficient for the purposes of commencing divorce proceedings). If you're unable to locate your marriage certificate, please let us know and we will help you to get a certified copy from the church or registry office where you were married.

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#### Estimated property valuation

If you are looking to divorce, the matrimonial home or any other property in the relationship is likely to be an important part of the overall assets of the marriage and it would be helpful if you have a rough idea of the value of the property. This can generally be achieved by speaking to local estate agents or looking online.

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#### List of questions

Please prepare a list of questions you want to ask for you to refer to during the meeting. It's so easy to forget questions you wanted to ask, during the course of discussions about your situation. It's never too late though, you can call us after the meeting to ask further questions.

**We look forward to meeting you at our first meeting. If you have any questions you want to ask in advance, just give your legal adviser a call.**

## There's more to Tees

Tees provides a range of expert legal services and independent financial advice so our expert advisers can also help you in other ways such as: wills, lasting power of attorney, property, foremost and retirement planning. Your adviser in our family law team will remain your foremost solicitor throughout, but they can introduce you to other experts, should you need and wish.

