

10 THINGS TO DO BEFORE YOU CALL YOUR DIVORCE LAWYER

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If you're in the unfortunate situation of needing a divorce lawyer, what should you do before you speak to one? Following these few simple steps of preparation will help your lawyer to prepare your case and save you money.

1. Decide if your marriage is really over or if you're just coming to find out more. Would you benefit from going to Relate? How will you pay for the initial meeting? If on a joint card, your spouse will see the expenditure.
2. If you want to divorce, talk to your spouse (if you can) about what will happen to the children, how they will spend time with each of you and other important child centred matters, e.g. holidays. See the CAFCASS Parenting Plan for more information.
3. Talk to your spouse about the financial implications of separating – for example, where will you live, will you sell the house? Are they willing to go to mediation?
4. Sit down with a friend and identify six examples of your spouse's unreasonable behaviour (unless you have been separated for more than 2 years and the divorce is consensual). Make sure they are specific and timed.
5. Locate your marriage certificate to bring with you.
6. Prepare a schedule of your assets, income and pension provision.
7. Gather together 12 months' recent bank statements for each of your accounts, your last P60 and 3 wage slips, your pension transfer value, mortgage redemption statement and business accounts if you're self-employed.
8. Plan for how you'll pay your legal fees – do you need to set aside funds, borrow from a friend or family member or bank? How much do you want to spend? How do you want to work with your lawyer?
9. Think about what you spend each month and what you'll need going forward. Prepare a budget.
10. Start looking for accommodation if you're likely to be moving; check out your capacity to borrow/get a mortgage.

FURTHER INFORMATION



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