



Save the Date – for an End to the ‘Blame Game’

The government has set the date that, as of 6 April 2022, married couples will finally be able to petition for divorce without assigning blame to one another. Government minister, Chris Philp, announced on 7 June 2021 in reply to a Parliamentary Question, that the Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Act 2020 will come into force on 6 April 2022. The Act aims to provide the biggest reform to divorce law in decades by allowing for a ‘no fault’ divorce process.

Currently, to apply for divorce the petitioner (applicant) must demonstrate to the court that their marriage has ‘irretrievably broken down’ by one of five facts. Only two of these facts can be used to start divorce proceedings within two years of separating and these assign blame – adultery and unreasonable behaviour. For many years practitioners across the country have criticised the requirement to provide a ‘fact’, which assigns blame to the other party, for the end of a marriage due to its contentious and hostile nature during what can already be an emotive and difficult process for clients. Under the Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Act, once implemented, petitioners will no longer have to provide a fact and can proceed with a ‘no fault’ divorce process which is hoped to reduce conflict between parties by removing the element of blame from the court record.

The government previously indicated that the Act, which received its Royal Assent on 25 June 2020, would come into force in the autumn of 2021. The new implementation date of 6 April 2022 is later than anticipated but, now a specific date has been set, there is certainty as to when the reformation of the UK’s divorce process will be introduced. The delay is to allow the government time for IT changes to the HMCTS divorce system, which allows for the divorce process to be conducted via an online portal.

We will be keeping an eye on the developments regarding bringing the ‘no fault’ divorce into force as 6 April 2022 approaches.

If you are considering divorce or have any queries then feel free to contact our [divorce solicitors](#) on 0344 967 0793 to arrange for advice on the circumstances.

