



HM Courts &
Tribunals Service



PRESIDENT OF THE
FAMILY DIVISION

**Family Division Liaison Judges
Designated Family Judges
HMCTS Delivery Directors
HMCTS Heads of CFT**

27 April 2017

Dear All,

Administrative De-linking of Financial Remedy Applications from Divorce Proceedings

The centralisation of divorce and dissolution proceedings into the 11 specialist divorce centres in 2015 has seen a significant improvement in the way that these cases are handled. Whilst there have been some issues as this change has bedded in, on the whole court users have seen a much improved and standardised service. We are grateful for all the hard work by the judiciary, legal advisors and HMCTS administrative staff for making these changes such a success.

However it has shone a spotlight on the way in which related financial applications are dealt with and it is clear that this process can and should be improved.

Currently if a contested financial application is made the whole divorce proceedings are transferred to a local court to be dealt with. This builds in delay for court users and is resource intensive for HMCTS staff to administer.

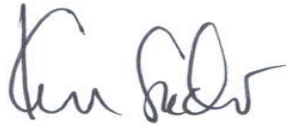
On the 2nd of May 2017 the first step to improving this service will be piloted at the South West Regional Divorce centre in Southampton. It will see the administrative delinking of financial proceedings from divorce so that the main divorce proceedings can remain in the specialist centre and staff and judiciary at the local hearing centres can work independently on the contested financial proceedings. Consent applications will remain at the divorce centres.

A separate financial remedy file, using the same case number as the divorce proceedings, will be created at the local hearing centre and HMCTS staff will ensure that the dates of any decree nisi or absolute are highlighted on the file. In the main this is the only information from the divorce suit that is required for the financial proceedings to be dealt with.

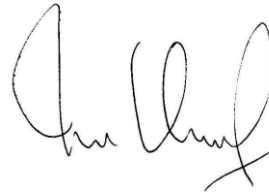
Entry points for users will not change. All applications will continue to be sent to the Regional Divorce Centre that holds the main divorce proceedings before being sent to local centres.

We understand that working from a financial remedy file without access to the original Divorce file is a new and different way of working and HMCTS will be working closely with the judiciary to ensure any issues are resolved during the pilot period.

Subject to this pilot being a success we expect to roll out this process to all the courts in England and Wales in June 2017.



Kevin Sadler
Deputy Chief Executive and
Courts and Tribunals Development
Director - HM Courts & Tribunals
Service



Sir James Munby
President of the Family Division