



Divorce Hits The Young And The Old Say Pictons

A letter in the Sunday Times from Jo Edwards, Chairwoman of Resolution, has sparked a debate about the importance of putting the needs of children first when their parents are going through a divorce or separation.

Resolution, a national group of 6500 family justice professionals has recently launched a parenting charter addressing the needs of children in divorce and separation cases. With the current yearly divorce figures in the UK as high as 120,000, affecting at least 100,000 children it's clearly a vitally important issue.

[Siobhan Rooney](#), a Partner at leading regional law firm Pictons and a specialist in Family Law says "[Divorce or separation](#) are never easy and can have an especially devastating effect on families where there are children involved. In some cases children are almost forced to take sides or have to support their parents in what should really be a responsibility solely for the adults.

"We work a lot with clients in [Mediation](#) but there are occasions when the process leads to cases going to court and this is when situations can become especially tense and difficult. We always encourage parents to protect their children and in doing so, ensure that the children are not emotionally split between the two, even if they have to be physically separated from one of their parents."

The annual divorce statistics don't only cover family break ups. There has been a notable rise in 'baby boomer' divorces as people live longer and have greater freedom. While for a lucky few the freedom can stretch to their finances as some couples revel in 'spending the kids inheritance' for others the future is not so welcoming. As highlighted by journalist Felicity Hannah in The Independent, she warned of the impact divorce can have on a couple's finances, particularly in old age.

Aviva has estimated that the cost of a divorce is £44,000 per couple, on top of the average £1,280 spent on legal fees. However, the figure does not take into account each former partner's future finances, which can be severely hampered by the fallout from the break-up. A recent survey from Prudential found that divorcees suffer an average £2,100 a year drop in their pension income compared with their non-divorced peers, and those who separate are likely to have greater debts in retirement as well.

Siobhan continues "We are seeing an increase in divorce and separation amongst older couples and they face different issues as compared to a break up for a younger family. Many older couples don't foresee how deeply upsetting a divorce can be for

their grown up children and often don't take into account the longterm prospects on their finances. This is often particularly difficult for older women who may have given up their careers to bring up their families. If they have been dependent on their husbands or partners for a long time it is essential that they get professional advice on what they are entitled to from their former spouse and how to cope with a loss of income.”

If you need separation or Divorce advice then contact Siobhan or one of her team on 0845 263 7505* or email info@pictons.co.uk

*local rates apply, mobiles may vary