



## **Brangelina, Zoe Ball and Norman Cook- Celebrity Break Ups Highlight the Importance of Taking Care of the Children**

We barely had the chance to take in the split of the most glamorous celebrity couple in Hollywood, Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt, when hot on their heels comes the news that UK TV presenter Zoe Ball and her partner and then husband of 11 years Norman Cook (Fat Boy Slim) have parted.

Not surprisingly, after the acres of coverage on Brangelina in the media, the Ball/Norman split has been relatively low key, mainly because neither party has attacked the other and both Zoe and Norman appear to be splitting up as amicably as possible for the sake of their two children. In contrast, Jolie opened fire on her soon to be former husband by saying the children weren't safe with him and a very public spat ensued.

In fact the Ball/Cook break up looks set to be a textbook example of how to work together to ensure the end of a relationship does not damage those most likely to be affected, your children. In this case the couple are living near to each other and seem to have accepted that couples sometimes grow apart. For the moment at least, they are proof that a split doesn't have to be negative and toxic.

Martin Boniface, a Family Law specialist at leading and award winning regional law firm Pictons says "Any separation is an extremely difficult time but it is often made even harder when children are involved. They can be caught in the middle of their parents trying to come to terms with what is happening and will pick up on any emotion and negativity given out by anyone involved: their parents, friends, family etc.

"For this reason, the Children Act is crystal clear – the safety, welfare and best interests of your children are of paramount importance in cases of separation or divorce. Children are the first consideration the court will have in any matter where they are involved and will prioritise the needs of the children over anything else – and for good reason! The court will only make a decision if the couple are unable to compromise, negotiate and come to an agreement and it is often said by judges and magistrates alike that if they have to decide, neither party will like their decision.

"The best advice I can give to a separating couple whether it is Brad, Angelina, Zoe, Norman or anyone else; is that separating is never an easy thing to do. Always remember that your words and actions around your children will stay with them for a lot longer than you think, so make sure they know they are loved by both parents and the break up is not their fault."