



# NEW YEAR, NEW ME

If you feel as though the cracks in your marriage have become too hard to ignore over the festive period, then you are not alone.

In September 2018, the Office for National Statistics released the following information:

- There were 101,669 divorces of opposite-sex couples in England and Wales in 2017.
- There were 338 divorces of same-sex couples in 2017, more than three times the number in 2016; three-quarters of same-sex couples divorcing in 2017 were female.
- In 2017, there were 8.4 divorces of opposite-sex couples per 1,000 married men and women aged 16 years and over.
- The divorce rate for opposite-sex couples was highest among men aged 45 to 49 years and women aged 40 to 44 years.
- The average duration of marriage at the time of divorce was just over 12 years for opposite-sex couples.

Unreasonable behaviour was the most common reason for opposite-sex couples divorcing, with 52% of wives and 37% of husbands petitioning on these grounds; it was also the most common reason for same-sex couples divorcing, accounting for 83% of divorces among women and 73% among men.

Further statistics reveal that the estimated percentage of marriages that end in divorce is 42% with around half of these divorces occurring in the first 10 years of marriage. In a nutshell, the cumulative percentages of marriages that end in divorce increase more rapidly in the first 10 years of marriage than the 10 years after that. Furthermore, once the 20th wedding anniversary is reached, the cumulative percentages increase less rapidly.

Relationship troubles - including difficulties with money, trust, fidelity, controlling behaviour and lack of communication - are more common in marriages

than many would wish to admit. Marital issues such as these coupled with the pressure over Christmas and the New Year to “hold it together” for the sake of the family can be too much to bear after spending more time than usual with a spouse that you no longer feel a real connection with.

Ask any family lawyer and they will confirm that there is often a surge in divorce and separation enquiries after the return to work in January.

Often clients simply wish to find out their options and talk through what might happen with regard to the children of the marriage and finances before coming to a decision.

If you find yourself in a similar situation, then feel free to contact me or my colleagues who would be happy to talk through your circumstances and assist you by advising you on your options for a formal separation or divorce and what this may mean for you. We can also assist with taking the initial steps on your behalf if, and when, you are ready to take the first legal steps towards separating from a partner or spouse.

Shefali Maher is a Solicitor based at our Beaconsfield office. With compassion, Shefali helps clients through what is more often than not a difficult time and adopts a pragmatic approach to achieve a fair result, balancing the benefits to be gained against the costs. Clients find Shefali to be extremely approachable and she is known for her determination and ability to achieve the best results. ■

**KJ Smith Solicitors are specialists in family law, with offices in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Surrey & Hampshire. We are recognised by the Legal 500 as a Leading Firm. Why not contact us to arrange a free initial consultation? Call 01494 629 000, email [info@kjsmith.co.uk](mailto:info@kjsmith.co.uk) or visit [www.kjsmith.co.uk](http://www.kjsmith.co.uk) to find out more.**



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