

Family Courts



The new Family Courts offer you and your marriage partner a more human way to settle family law disputes.

Open since 1 October 1981 the Family Courts—

- offer to arrange counselling, free, for you and your partner before you take any legal steps.
- provide for counselling when one of you applies for a separation order—to help you resolve your marriage difficulties or at least agree on some of the matters in dispute.
- may make a further effort at helping you work out disputes by a mediation conference chaired by a Family Court Judge.
- finally, if you can't agree, bring the matter to a court hearing.

The Family Courts deal with most family law matters. They are divisions of their local District Courts but—

- judges wear ordinary dress.
- judges are specially chosen for their experience and training in family law.
- the room is arranged less formally than a normal courtroom.
- procedures are simpler.
- the sittings are private and the proceedings are confidential.

Leaflets in the family law series cover separation and dissolution, Family Courts, counselling services, guardianship, custody and access, and maintenance. These, and two others prepared by the National Marriage Guidance Council, are available, free, from Family Courts, Citizens Advice Bureaux and Marriage Guidance Offices.



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