

HERRINGTON AND CARMICHAEL WELCOMES GOVERNMENT HELP FOR CHILDREN FACING FAMILY BREAKDOWN

Wokingham, 9th January 2009 – Wokingham solicitors Herrington & Carmichael LLP welcomes Government plans announced last month to do more to help children who are coping with their parents' divorce.

Around 200 – 250,000 couples in the UK separate each year, affecting around 350,000 children. More than one in three children will experience the breakdown of their parents' relationship before they reach the age of 16*. The Department for Children, Schools & Families, along with family and relationship experts, is looking into ways to help support both children and parents at a time of separation.

Rosemary Isbell, Family Lawyer at Herrington & Carmichael LLP, believes that many separating parents could actually do more themselves to reduce the effect breakdown has on their children.

Rosemary's advice is that, wherever possible, parents should try to avoid the stress and formality of court proceedings by instead sitting down together and working out their arrangements in an amicable and constructive fashion.

“The Government's intentions are commendable, but in the first instance it's down to couples themselves to try to reduce the stress caused to their children and to themselves by the separation. There will of course be particular circumstances, where it's absolutely impossible to sit down with the other partner and discuss matters, but there will be many more situations where matters can be worked out collaboratively without the emotional cost of going to court,” explains Rosemary.

“Obviously, a collaborative process is not confined solely to the arrangements relating to the children, but can be used to sort out the family’s finances.

Each party meets with their lawyer to discuss the process and the information that needs to be exchanged. There are then a series of ‘four-way meetings’ at which the couple and their lawyers will discuss and negotiate towards an agreement that is sensible, fair and legally binding for them both,” continues Rosemary.

Rosemary and her colleague Rachael House in the Family Law department at Herrington & Carmichael are fully trained in the collaborative law process and positively encourage their clients from their first meeting to consider this process in reaching a final settlement.

“What we are doing is encouraging dialogue between the parties and getting them to reach a settlement that suits their requirements and has not been imposed by a court or has had to comply with the court’s strict timetable. Consequently, there is less opportunity for further upset or animosity between the couple and therefore less negative impact for the children as well; that’s got to be healthier for everyone,” said Rosemary.

For further information about the collaborative law process, please contact Rosemary Isbell on 0118 977 4045 or at rosemary.isbell@herrington-carmichael.com

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Editor’s notes:

*statistics from the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

About Herrington & Carmichael LLP

Herrington & Carmichael is a well established law firm providing an extensive range of services to business and private clients. An experienced team of 80 staff and lawyers operate from offices in Aldershot, Camberley and Wokingham with an enviable reputation for practical, cost-effective legal advice.

For further information on the firm’s services please visit www.herrington-carmichael.com

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