

Matrimonial Jargon Buster

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Petition: The document which contains the request for the court to dissolve your marriage. It includes details of where you were married, children, why you think the marriage has broken down irretrievably.

Acknowledgement of service: This document is returned to the court by your husband or wife to say that they have received the petition. They will also say whether or not they agree with the proposed arrangements for the children.

Petitioner: The person who asks for the divorce.

Respondent: The husband or wife of the petitioner.

Statement of arrangements for children: The court wants to know what arrangements have been made for the children now and what is going to happen to them after the divorce. This document which we prepare on your behalf gives that information.

Decree Nisi: The first decree of divorce. It means that your marriage has been dissolved.

Decree Absolute: The final decree of divorce. This dissolves your marriage and has significant consequences for any wills you may have made any insurance investment or pension arrangements that you might have undertaken. You will be advised about this.

Ancillary financial relief: A phrase for property, maintenance and money issues.

Sworn Statement (Affidavit): A document in which you swear that what you have written is true. It is often a substitute for you having to give evidence in a court.

Residence order: This is the new term for custody, in other words who is to have the day to day care for the child or children.

Contact order: The new terms for access. It means the parent with a contact order will see his or her children as ordered by the court.