

More Divorce or Less Marriage?

New Statistics from the Family Courts

The latest statistics for the family court in the last quarter (January to March 2010) have been released by the Court Service.

In the first quarter of 2010, 30,400 decrees absolute were granted dissolving marriages. This is an increase of 6 per cent compared to the first quarter of 2009. At first blush it therefore appears as if divorce is on the increase. However, over the last few years there has been an overall decrease in the numbers of divorces granted. These statistics are perhaps indicative of the view that less people are in fact marrying, and accordingly, less people are divorcing. We have certainly seen a rise in the number of cohabiting couples who consult us for advice. Equally, we have seen an increase in couples who wish to enter into a pre-nuptial agreement if they are contemplating or proposing marriage.

In the last few years statistics have demonstrated a steady increase in the number of applications made in matters affecting children. 5,700 public law applications and 30,200 private law applications were made to the courts. Following the high profile case of Baby P this is perhaps not surprising although from a practical point of view, children cases are tending to take much longer to reach final determination.

Of course entering the court process is not the only way to settle the issues that arise following a family breakdown. In addition to being leaders in financial disputes, Russell-Cooke also has a strong mediation and collaborative law practice. Please consult any member of our family team for further information.

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