

Helping our clients to achieve

Relationship problems – the seasonal spike

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by Howard Gardener , senior partner specialising in family law

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‘Christmas holidays are over but this can be one of the most testing times for a rocky relationship’, says Howard Gardener, senior partner at Phillips Solicitors. ‘Many couples whose marriages have reached breaking point have stuck together over the holidays but many now have money worries that have simply pushed their relationship to breaking point. Rising unemployment and the difficult housing market have added to the strain and the first week after children return to school in January is very often one of the busiest for starting divorce proceedings.

‘Many couples agree to stay together for one last Christmas as a family and then start the divorce process after their children go back to school’ says Howard, ‘which means we get a lot more calls in the first part of the New Year than any other time of the year’

Howard says “There are many other couples experiencing heartaches who are not married – these are co-habitees living as a married couple and they are equally likely to separate, but their breakdowns won’t show up in the statistics. Their separation is equally complicated, especially if children or property are involved, because co-habiting couples have different rights and responsibilities.

Almost one in every two marriages ends in divorce and the breakdown of any relationship is painful and traumatic for everyone involved. But couples don’t always have to go through costly divorce proceedings in court’ says Howard, ‘there are cheaper, alternative ways of finding a more amicable resolution, such as mediation or collaborative law. We always encourage couples to try this first as it’s cheaper, less acrimonious, and a way of finding a solution that you both agree on, enabling you both to have an ongoing relationship afterwards – essential if you have children. Most importantly, do obtain specialist advice as to the options available to you right at the outset and before matters get out of control.’

Call Howard on 01256 854632. Visit www.phillips-law.co.uk

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