

BONALLACK & BISHOP SOLICITORS AND THE HAPPY RELATIONSHIP COMPANY

PRESS RELEASE

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A combination of the lengthy Christmas break and the economic downturn look likely to put a huge strain on many marriages, according to Nigel Heath of Salisbury-based relationship experts, The Happy Relationship Company. His views are supported by Colin Carnegy, head of family law at Salisbury-based solicitors Bonallack and Bishop. Colin commented, "The new year period is traditionally a busy time for family solicitors. An extended time away from work forces couples to spend time together and with the added stress some people feel at Christmas, it may sadly prove to be the final straw leading to marriage breakdown."

Relate, the UK's largest provider of relationship support reported a 59% surge in call numbers over Christmas and recent estimates suggest that up to 2 million couples in Britain suffer marriage problems and up to 1.3 million people are considering splitting up.

However, according to Colin and Nigel, there are positive steps couples can take to minimise difficulties. The Happy Relationship Company already run a free relationship advice surgery alongside Bonallack and Bishop's own free long-running legal surgery run by Colin Carnegy, every Tuesday between 5:15 and 7pm at the Bonallack & Bishop offices in Rougemont Close.

Nigel commented, "Couples can fall into 'habits' of miscommunication that lead to argument. Relationships often drift apart because of lack of understanding. Fortunately if there is willingness to put things right there are some very simple ways for couples to begin re-building a stronger, more loving and fulfilling relationship. Often the 'wake up' call of Christmas is all they need to begin anew, and divorce may be unnecessary."

The Happy Relationship Company has produced some FREE tips available on www.bishopslaw.com/relationships to help couples work on improving their communication and are also able to coach people to be clear on the outcome they truly want and help them to reduce the stress of divorce.

Colin points out that even if a couple sadly conclude that their marriage simply cannot be saved, there are steps that they can take to make the painful process a little easier. They need to make sure they get the right family lawyer – an experienced, specialist family lawyer who is prepared to listen and will be proactive in dealing with a divorce and any other legal issues swiftly, sensitively and with the aim of having the problem solved without unnecessary unpleasantness. If both partners are positive and are looking to avoid confrontation, Colin would strongly recommend appointing a collaborative lawyer and he adds that two specially-trained collaborative

lawyers are part of his family team. He also observes that, "Above all, couples need to be realistic in negotiating a settlement, acknowledging that their material standard of living may well be lower after divorce than before – two people living apart simply cannot live as cheaply as one! Financial issues are likely to be particularly difficult to resolve with plunging house prices, the squeeze on bank lending and general economic uncertainty."

Nigel's final words are "Seek professional help before the situation becomes untenable. We seem to think asking for help is a sign of weakness yet a little help now may save a lot of heartache in the future."

For further information or advice, please contact Colin Carnegy at Bonallack & Bishop on 01722 422300 or Nigel Heath of the Happy Relationship Company on 0800 298 5938.

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