

THE FINANCIAL RELIEF PROCESS

All forms relating to financial settlements are available to download from <http://hmctsformfinder.justice.gov.uk/HMCTS/FormFinder.do>

STAGE 1

Complete Form A.

Lodge 3 copies with the court, together with the court fee of £255 (in the form of a cheque made payable to HM Courts & Tribunals Service) and a completed form FM1.

STAGE 2

Once the application has been issued, the court will serve the Respondent together with a notice of hearing for the First Appointment. This usually takes place within 12 to 16 weeks of the application being issued.

Alternatively your solicitor can request to serve the Respondent.

STAGE 3

No later than 35 days before the First Appointment, the parties exchange financial disclosure in Form E, together with supporting documentation.

STAGE 4

No later than 14 days before the First Appointment, you must file your Statement of Issue, Chronology of Events and Questionnaire with the court and Respondent.

STAGE 5

Prior to the First Appointment parties agree the Case Summary, Schedule of Assets and Draft Directions that they wish the court to make.

These are provided to the court, usually on the day of the hearing.

STAGE 6

At the First Appointment the judge will order directions for the case moving forward.

For example, these could include the time to answer the Questionnaire or obtain an expert valuation report.

STAGE 7

Parties file responses to Questionnaires, arrange any expert reports and comply with any further directions issued by the court.

Parties usually put forward without prejudice proposals to try and settle the matter in preparation for the hearing.

STAGE 8

Financial Dispute Resolution Hearing. The parties are encouraged to negotiate and the judge will provide an indication to aid settlement. If the parties settle, the Order will be drawn up and sealed by the court.

If the matter remains unsettled the following documents will need to be completed prior to a Final Hearing:

- An open offer for settlement should be filed by the Applicant no later than 14 days before the Final Hearing.
- An open offer for settlement should be filed by the Respondent no later than 7 days after receiving the Applicant's offer.
- A court bundle must be agreed, and usually prepared by the Applicant, then filed at Court no later than 2 days before the hearing. This will include letters between the parties, applications and orders, open offers and Form Es.

STAGE 9

Order sealed by the court.