



Divorce: beware the quick fix!

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Over the past few years, there has been a sharp increase in services offering fixed fee packages for divorce, including some that include mediation and the preparation of a legally binding agreement in relation to the finances. These can seem very attractive as they offer the potential to significantly reduce the costs involved as well as the promise of reaching a quick and easy resolution.

Even as a mediator who is dedicated to helping clients to reach agreements about issues in the most cost-effective, straightforward and amicable a way as possible, I am concerned that some people are being attracted to these “cheap and easy” solutions when they may not be appropriate for their situations, as getting divorced is rarely simply a paper exercise or a series of simple steps that can be broken down into a “one size fits all” approach.

Firstly, divorce is invariably an extremely difficult time emotionally and it is vital that both parties are able to make informed decisions that are in their long-term best interests. It may take many months for one or both parties to reach the point where they are able to make these decisions and any package that encourages a quick fix is likely to be the opposite of what is required.

On top of this, if there are any children to consider, or complex financial assets such as

pensions and employee benefit packages to discuss, as well as any property including the former family home, then it is vital that both parties consider seeking appropriate legal and financial advice. The cost of this advice can be kept to a minimum by feeding this advice back into the mediation process but the additional costs required may well help avoid far greater financial damage being caused to one or both parties’ finances in the future.

Ultimately, if one person, whether as a mediator or as a legal advisor, offers to sort out the whole divorce process, including the preparation of a legally binding finance order, for a very attractive fee, then I would suggest that you consider carefully whether you will be receiving the quality of service that you deserve, whether you will actually be receiving the sort of legal and financial advice that you need and whether there are any checks and balances to prevent you from being drawn into signing a legally binding document that is flawed or inappropriate.

My suggestion is that you beware the quick fix and ensure that you research your options very carefully before deciding how to proceed. A suitably qualified and experienced mediator should be able to spend time discussing your options with you and help to raise the sorts of issues discussed in this article before you make any decisions.

If you feel you might benefit from seeing a mediator then please contact me for a FREE initial consultation

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