



HM Courts & Tribunals Service

HMCTS Financial Remedy Centre Pilot

The idea of Financial Remedy Centres (FRC's) was first suggested by HHJ Hess and Joanna Miles in their article 'The recognition of money work as a speciality in the family courts by the creation of a national network of Financial Remedies Units' published in the November 2016 version of Family Law. This idea was revisited by the President of the Family Division in the President's 17th View from Chambers published in May 2017 and a detailed suggested blueprint was laid out in a further article by HHJ Hess, HHJ O'Dwyer and Joanna Miles titled 'Financial Remedies Courts' published in the June 2017 edition of Family Law.

HMCTS has considered the proposals raised within these articles and as a result is working in partnership with the President of the Family Division to pilot the creation of a FRC in Birmingham Civil and Family Justice Centre covering the West Midlands.

Entry points will remain as they are with all applications continuing to be submitted at the West Midlands Regional Divorce Centre (although, if you prefer to send your local contested FR applications directly to Birmingham CFJC for the course of the pilot, to speed up the process, they will be accepted).

FR applications made by consent at issue will continue to be dealt with at the divorce centre or in line with any alternative provisions already in place in your centre. However, if a FR application is contested or needs a hearing, the FR application will be transferred to the FRC (rather than the local Court) while the Divorce case continues at the Regional Divorce Centre.

Hearings will largely be focused within dedicated FR hearing centres in Birmingham, Coventry, Telford and Wolverhampton by specialist FR Judges, however, Judicial digression will apply and therefore all local Courts (Dudley and Walsall) will retain the ability to host an FR hearing if the case requires.

As this is an administrative change there will be no changes to the Family Procedure Rules or any application forms / guidance documents.

The focus of these pilots will be to test the following features:

- The use of specialist Judiciary within the FRC
- The nomination of a FRJ for each centre to give an oversight of financial remedy work and drive forward best practice and improvements
- The creation of a team of staff dedicated to financial remedy work
- The introduction of a gatekeeping process for contested cases
- The use of centralised listing from within the FRC
- The centralisation of administration of financial remedy work
- The use of electronic working across FRCs

The use of electronic files is an important part of this pilot, we ask that where possible, you submit papers via email (however paper bundles will still be required for hearings). As part of the pilot, scanned copies of contested applications will be accepted via email where users are using Payment By Account (PBA) or have provided a telephone number for the Divorce Centre to call to take payment. If you are submitting an application via email, please ensure the subject line reads

'New Form A'. All emails should be directed to FRCBirmingham@justice.gov.uk. More information about PBA can be found via the following link:

http://hmctsformfinder.justice.gov.uk/HMCTS/GetForm.do?court_forms_id=3000

We thank you for your support and co-operation. Any feedback regarding these changes is welcomed and can be provided via email. Please ensure the subject line of your email reads 'FR Application Pilot – Feedback' to ensure your comments reach the relevant team in a timely manner.