

# Hoping for the best, preparing for the worst!



Dawn Mobbs, Partner and head of our Family Department, advises -

Whenever a couple decides to move in together, the last thing they want to think about is what might happen if they split up – but Dawn Mobbs is encouraging everybody in this position to agree in advance how they would settle some important issues if the worst should ever happen.

According to Dawn “Earlier this year, the government decided not to give cohabiting couples the same rights as married people, leaving them and their dependents extremely vulnerable in the event of a separation or even death. This can cause real problems at a time of emotional upset, when having to consider how to distribute factors like property, shared financial assets and other possessions is the last thing one needs.”

Dawn continues, however, there is a simple and cost-effective solution, which clarifies and simplifies the situation. “You can now draw up a document called a ‘Cohabitation Agreement’”.

“You first agree in the event of a separation who will pay for what, who will own the home, how the equity will be shared and more. Critically, you should also agree who would care for any children you may have. Then you need to approach two separate solicitors, one acting for each partner, to create a formal document that you can sign. While Courts are not bound by such agreements, they are usually effective if they are properly drafted. It is also highly recommended that you prepare your wills as well, in case one partner should die, leaving the other without any rights to your shared assets.”

Cohabitation Agreements are becoming increasingly common and are expected to reduce future heartache and stress,. “If you would like to discuss any issues relating to relationships please call 024 7663 2121 and speak to either Dawn Mobbs or Tracy Cross.”