



## **PRE NUPS, CO HABS and COLLABORATIVE FAMILY LAW**

Instinctively people feel going to a lawyer is the last thing they want to do when starting out together. They fear their relationship may never get off the ground, if lawyers get involved.

It really is quite astonishing how little time and attention people pay to setting up their relationship on the right lines. Collaborative Family Law would be an ideal way of helping people sort out the essentials.

Questions which need to be addressed when you set up home together are:

- Who is to own what in terms of property and pensions – especially important if there are significantly different contributions.
- What if one person puts their career on the back burner to care for a family?
- What if one of you dies? What should happen if there are children, or if there are no children?
- What do you think is fair if things go wrong – don't panic, there are ways of addressing this which should not make you squirm in your seat.

Your Collaborative Family Lawyer is especially trained to help you sort everything out at face to face meetings with the minimum difficulty. Positional bargaining is out – the whole emphasis is on a search for fair, practical and constructive solutions that work for both of you. The atmosphere is friendly and the focus is on the needs of a couple and their family and an acceptable agreement. This should be a standard way of getting everything off to a flying start, based on a sure, fair and open basis.

If vital, basic issues are not addressed fairly, if they are left to chance, or possibly even cynical manoeuvring, the damage done can be irreparable. Indeed, it is not uncommon to see relationships have broken down simply because of one person feeling they have suffered grave injustices. SO, why not get everything off on the right foot by using Collaborative Law to prepare for your practical life together – and get off to a sound start? I know people embarking on a relationship worry about these things – and most decide to focus on the relationship and leave the rest of it to chance. If your partner is genuine – they will understand arrangements have to be fair. If not, it is better to find out before it's too late.

Mary Banham-Hall is a committed Collaborative Family Lawyer, Family Mediator and Head of Family Law at Heald Solicitors based in Milton Keynes., with mediation outposts in Bedford and Luton through her company Focus Family Mediation.

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