

New divorce laws will come into force from 6 April 2022

On 6 April this year changes to the legislation on divorce will come into force. We will be launching a new online service to accommodate this change.

The old service will be unavailable from 31 March 2022 while we prepare for these changes.

Changes to divorce law

The Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Act 2020 reforms the legal requirements and process for divorce. The act aims to reduce the potential for conflict amongst divorcing couples by:

- removing the ability to make allegations about the conduct of a spouse
- allowing couples to end their marriage jointly

The act also introduces a minimum period of 20 weeks between the start of proceedings and application for conditional order. This provides couples with a meaningful period of reflection and the chance to reconsider. Where divorce is inevitable, it enables couples to cooperate and plan for the future.

It will no longer be possible to contest a divorce, except on limited grounds including jurisdiction.

If you're getting divorced and have started your application

If you have an application saved on the current digital service and still want proceed, you'll need to access your account and submit your application by 4pm on 31 March 2022.

Alternatively, you can wait until the new digital service is launched. If you still want to apply for a divorce, you can start your application again from 6 April 2022.

If you've started filling out a paper application form, you'll need to make sure it's received by the court by 4pm 31 March 2022. If you're sending it in the post, you'll need to make sure it reaches the court by that date.

If you haven't started your application

It can take time to get the right documents together for your application. So, if you haven't started an application yet, you may want to wait until the new services are available from 6 April 2022.

Important dates

Whether you're a solicitor or applying for a divorce yourself, remember:

- from 31 March 2022 you can no longer apply on the current paper or digital systems or access a saved digital application which is yet to be issued by the court
- from 31 March to 5 April 2022 the digital service will not accept new applications
- from 6 April 2022 the new paper and digital services will be available

Urgent applications

Urgent applications can only be used when the issue of the divorce petition is time critical. This includes when time is critical for jurisdiction or when a freezing injunction is needed. You'll likely need legal advice to make an application.

We'll continue to accept urgent applications that need to be considered after the deadlines set out above and before the 6th April. We'll issue where possible, if received by post or email, before 4pm on the 5th April.

If you're submitting your urgent application by email, use this address: onlineDFRjurisdiction@justice.gov.uk (this inbox will not be monitored after 4pm on 5 April 2022).

Additional information

Decree Nisi and Decree Absolute applications that have been issued will be saved and remain available on the service.

More information on [getting a divorce](#) is available on GOV.UK.