



# modern women

## Some practical pointers and suggestions of how to deal with issues that affect you

Have the demands on women today ever been greater? A modern woman in London not only juggles her own children, husband or partner and ageing parents but also tries to carve out time for herself to continue to pursue her own career (or kickstart it following children) or by setting up that dream business. In a couple of articles, Nichelaw-net (a group of like-minded law firms based in London) will provide you with some practical pointers and suggestions of how to deal with some of the issues which could affect you on a daily basis.

### Going back to work after maternity... or dreaming of being your own boss

For a lot of women, taking the maximum amount of statutory maternity leave (52 weeks) can give rise to possible concerns about career progression on their return to work. For babies due on or after 3 April 2011, women will be able to share a portion of their maternity leave after the birth of a baby with their partner. "This ability to trade places with their husbands may enable women to be less concerned about returning to the workplace. We see a lot of women currently who are genuinely concerned about returning to work after maternity leave and worrying that they may be pushed into a corner in a reduced role," comments Belinda Eriksson of SW19Lawyers, employment law firm in London."

Following the recession, more and more women are taking the plunge and setting up on their own. Before you consider launching a business, there are a whole host of issues to put in place but one important subject, which is quite often overlooked, relates to intellectual property (IP). Victoria Botsoff of Botsoff, IP law firm comments "The first IP point, to get right from the start, is the name of your business as you need to ensure that it's free to use. The last thing you want to do is to spend time and resources setting up a website, printing business cards and stationery only to find that someone else has rights in the name. Not only will you have to provide for the cost of reproducing your materials, the establishment of your business will be delayed. Furthermore, any PR, advertising or marketing that you've already done could be affected. The longer it takes for issues relating to the name to come to light, the more expensive it could be for you."

Also, if you are one of the lucky ones and are able to start hiring immediately in your new venture: watch out, "if that gem of an employee in your dream team is from outside the EU, you will need to apply for a sponsorship licence

from UK Border Agency. My advice is give yourself enough time to do this before the proposed start date of the employee," comments Nilmini Roelens of The Wimbledon Effect Solicitors specialising in UK immigration law.

### Divorce rates are still high

For women, the prospect of a divorce raises a lot of questions about their future. Will they be able to remain in the matrimonial home? Is their husband obliged to support them financially? What will happen to the children? Are you allowed to relocate with the children if you have family living abroad? "It is only natural to worry about these issues," says Clare Kirby of Kirby & Co, a family law legal practice. It is also common to worry about the court proceedings for divorce itself. Whilst court proceedings may become necessary, Kirby & Co's emphasis is on achieving the best possible outcome by negotiating an agreement with the other party. "I am a member of Resolution (formerly Solicitors Family Law Association) and membership of this panel commits family lawyers to deal with disputes in a constructive way designed to preserve people's dignity and to encourage agreements. Having said that we always want the best deal for our clients," adds Clare Kirby.

When the dust has settled from the divorce, you need to speak to your solicitor about estate planning. "Your will should be updated post-divorce," says Jo Summers of PWT Advice, a specialist private client law firm. "You may want to change guardians for your children and remove gifts to your former spouse. You also need to consider the impact of losing the spouse exemption for inheritance tax."

If you would like to follow up on any issue raised in this article or would like another topic covered in a future edition, please contact Jennifer Ison on 020 8946 7330 or email [office@sw19lawyers.co.uk](mailto:office@sw19lawyers.co.uk)

Please note that the comments in this article are general guidance only. Specific expert advice should be sought in relation to your particular circumstances.



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