

Perspectives

Personal law updates from Morr & Co

Newsletter

AUTUMN 2026

Hello,

Welcome to the latest edition of Perspectives, our newsletter which provides information, news and insights into the most recent legal developments that may affect you and your family.

While many people use the summer as an opportunity to slow down, it has been a productive few months at Morr & Co. Across the firm, we've continued to invest in our people, strengthen our services and support clients through what remains a challenging and fast-changing environment.

We've welcomed new colleagues, celebrated some excellent individual and team achievements and continued to see growth across a number of key practice areas. During the summer, we have also been preparing for several developments that will be introduced over the coming months, all aimed at ensuring we continue to meet the evolving needs of our clients.

Looking ahead, our focus remains the same: providing high-quality legal advice, supporting our clients' ambitions and investing in the long-term success of the firm. The remainder of the year promises to be a busy one, with new initiatives, client events and opportunities to strengthen the relationships that are so important to our business.

I hope you enjoy this edition of Perspectives and find the articles both informative and useful.



Catherine Fisher
Managing Partner

MORR & CO



Scan to set your
preferences on how you
receive our Perspectives
newsletter



When sentimental value leads to costly inheritance disputes

Most people assume inheritance disputes are about money. In reality, some of the most fiercely contested cases involve items with little financial value but enormous sentimental importance.

A recent High Court case involving the estate of singer Amy Winehouse highlights the issue. The dispute centred on personal possessions, including clothing and other items associated with the late singer. While the case attracted attention because of her celebrity status, similar disagreements arise in families more often than many realise.

In our experience, disputes frequently involve jewellery, watches, photographs, furniture, letters and family heirlooms. Although these items may have limited financial value, family members often attach significant emotional importance to them.

The first legal question is not who wants an item most, but who owns it. Executors can only recover assets that belonged to the deceased at the date of death and establishing ownership is not always straightforward. Items are often loaned, gifted or shared informally, with little supporting evidence.

In the Winehouse case, the Court examined individual possessions to determine whether they had been gifted, loaned or remained part of the estate. The judgment reinforced an important principle: just because an item once belonged to the deceased does not automatically mean it forms part of their estate.

Many disputes can be avoided through careful estate planning, by recording significant gifts and discussing intentions with loved ones. However, even well-drafted Wills do not always prevent disagreements. Where questions arise, early legal advice can help avoid unnecessary escalation. Our Dispute Resolution team regularly assists executors, beneficiaries and family members in resolving these issues, whether through negotiation, mediation or, where required, Court proceedings.



Often, a proportionate and pragmatic approach can resolve disputes before they become costly and divisive.



If you have any questions or would like any further information on the content of this article, please do not hesitate to contact our **Dispute Resolution** team, who will be happy to help.

**Kellie Williams-Jauvel – Partner,
Head of Dispute Resolution**

kellie.williams-jauvel@morrlaw.com

Cohabitation reform: a time for change?

The Ministry of Justice has now closed its consultation, A Fairer End to Relationships, which considers what could be one of the most significant family law reforms in decades.

Among other things, it looks at whether cohabitants should have clearer financial rights when a relationship ends, or when one partner dies without a Will.

For years, family practitioners have warned that the law has not kept pace with modern life – millions of couples in England and Wales live together without marrying or entering a civil partnership, yet many still assume they are protected by “common law marriage”.

There is no such protection and no matter how long the relationship, separation can result in one party being left without the resources to meet their reasonable needs.



The proposals aim to create a clearer framework for qualifying cohabitants: broadly, couples who have lived together for more than three years, or who have a child together.

Importantly, this does not mean the law will treat cohabiting couples in the same way as married couples. The rights being considered are narrower and focused on meeting needs, protecting children and reducing hardship, rather than introducing the full sharing claims that can arise on divorce or dissolution of a civil partnership.

The proposals would also introduce an element of choice. Couples could opt-out of the regime, provided they do so properly and with informed consent. That matters, as not every couple wants legal obligations to arise simply because they share a home.

Supporters see the reforms as a long-overdue safety net for those left in real financial need after long-term cohabitation. However, critics worry that automatic rights may create obligations couples never intended and that more legal claims may follow.

What is clear, is that moving in together is no longer just a romantic or practical milestone. It may soon carry more legal significance too.

For cohabiting couples, the message is simple: understand where you stand, discuss expectations early and take advice before life, or the law, moves faster than you do.



If you have any questions or would like any further information on the content of this article, please do not hesitate to contact our **Family** team, who will be happy to help.

**Anne McAllister – Partner,
Head of Family**

anne.mcallister@morrlaw.com



What's happening in the property market?

If the past few years have taught us anything, it's that the UK property market is remarkably resilient. While affordability remains a challenge for some, transactional activity has continued throughout 2026, with buyers and sellers adapting to a more balanced market.

Recent figures from Rightmove show asking prices softened over the summer as more properties came onto the market. In practice, this is creating healthier conditions, with realistic pricing helping buyers and sellers find common ground more quickly. Increased housing stock also means purchasers have greater choice and less pressure to make rushed decisions.

As ever, the market is highly regional. While parts of London and the South East have seen modest price adjustments, many areas across the country continue to perform steadily. Well-presented homes in desirable locations remain in demand, particularly where sellers have priced sensibly from the outset.

Looking ahead, there are reasons to be optimistic. The Financial Times has reported growing expectations that mortgage affordability could improve as inflation eases and lending conditions gradually become more favourable. While significant change is unlikely overnight, the direction of travel is encouraging.

For buyers, the coming months may present some of the best opportunities we have seen for a while. Increased supply, more realistic pricing and improving borrowing conditions are creating a market where purchasers have greater negotiating power, more choice and more time to make informed decisions. For sellers, demand remains strong for quality properties, providing confidence that well-marketed homes can still achieve successful outcomes.



**Jonathan Turner – Partner,
Head of Property**
jonathan.turner@morrlaw.com

Pension planning: why your Will may need a health check

For many years, pensions have been one of the most tax-efficient ways to pass wealth between generations. However, significant changes are on the horizon which could have a major impact on estate planning and inheritance tax.

From 6 April 2027, most unused pension funds and pension death benefits are expected to form part of a person's estate for inheritance tax purposes. This represents one of the most significant changes to private client planning in recent years and could affect families who previously considered pension wealth to sit entirely outside the inheritance tax regime.

For some individuals, this may mean that estates which currently fall below the inheritance tax threshold could become liable to tax. For others, it may increase an existing inheritance tax bill.

The changes are likely to be particularly relevant for those who have built up substantial pension funds or who have deliberately preserved pension assets as part of their succession planning.

Importantly, these changes highlight the need to review your wider estate planning. Many people update their Wills but forget to review pension nomination forms. However, pension nominations, your Will and any trusts, should work together as part of a coherent estate plan.

The proposed reforms also place greater responsibility on personal representatives when administering estates, potentially increasing the complexity of the probate process and creating additional reporting obligations.

The good news is that there is still time to review your arrangements. By taking advice now, individuals can consider whether their existing Will, pension nominations and lifetime planning remain appropriate in light of the forthcoming changes.



Estate planning should never be viewed as a one-off exercise. As tax rules evolve, it is important to ensure that your plans continue to protect your family, reflect your wishes and minimise unnecessary tax wherever possible.



If you have any questions or would like any further information on the content of this article, please do not hesitate to contact our **Private Client** team, who will be happy to help.

**Natalie Payne – Partner,
Private Client**
natalie.payne@morrlaw.com

What do the new employment tribunal time limits mean for employees?

For years, employees have often faced a difficult balancing act when something goes wrong at work. They must often manage the emotional and financial impact arising from discrimination, dismissal and/or other disputes, while navigating strict employment tribunal deadlines and looking for another job.

The Government's latest employment law reforms are set to ease some of those pressures by significantly extending the time limits within which employees may bring employment tribunal claims.

With effect from 1 October 2026, the time limit for bringing almost all claims in an employment tribunal will increase from three months to six months.

This will also complement the decision taken at the end of 2025 to extend the time from 6 weeks to 12 weeks within which employees can try and reach a settlement with their employer through the ACAS Pre-Claim Conciliation Scheme.

Not just a change for senior executives

Employment claims are sometimes perceived as being pursued mainly by high earners or senior executives. In practice, many affected employees are in the middle of their careers, balancing mortgages, family responsibilities and the practical realities of finding alternative employment.

Extending the time limit will give employees more breathing space to assess their position, obtain professional advice and make an informed decision, rather than rushing into litigation simply to preserve a claim.

A particular benefit for older workers

The change may also be important for employees later in their careers, who may be concerned about securing a comparable role after many years with one employer or in a senior position.

Where they may reasonably prioritise an immediate job search and only later reflect more fully on the circumstances surrounding their departure, the current system can leave employees facing a difficult choice: commence legal proceedings while trying to move on with their career or focus on finding work and risk losing the right to bring a claim altogether.

More time for meaningful settlement discussions

The ACAS Pre-Claim Conciliation Scheme remains a mandatory step before most claims can be brought. Significantly, the time spent in the process (up to a maximum of 12 weeks), pauses the 6 month limitation period referred to above, while the parties explore whether a resolution can be reached.



In practice, the actual time to commence a tribunal claim will be almost 9 months (6 months plus 12 weeks) for any dismissals or other act, conduct or failure complained of, which occurs on or after 1st October 2026.*

**The current time limit of 3 months will continue to apply for claims where the dismissal or other act complained of occurred before 1st October 2026.*

Better access to justice for employees

Deciding whether to bring a claim can be daunting, particularly when already dealing with a difficult situation at work.

Having more time to seek independent legal advice, consider the options available and explore a potential settlement, could help employees make more informed decisions, without feeling pressured to act immediately.



If you have any questions or would like any further information on the content of this article, please do not hesitate to contact our **Employment** team, who will be happy to help.

**Alice Nash – Solicitor,
Employment**
alice.nash@morrlaw.com

You have received this as you are a current or recent client of Morr & Co LLP (Formerly: Morrisons Solicitors, Wheelers Solicitors or Harrops & Hepburn Solicitors) or you have subscribed to receive this. If you would rather receive this electronically, or you do not want to receive future editions please email us at marketing@morrlaw.com. Although correct at the time of publication, the contents of this newsletter are intended for general information purposes only and shall not be deemed to be, or constitute, legal advice. We cannot accept responsibility for any loss as a result of acts or omissions taken in respect of this article. Please contact us for the latest legal position.

Our offices

Our **Farnborough** office is temporarily closed while we relocate to new premises. Our staff can still be contacted and remain working remotely.

Farnborough
01252 316 316
farnborough@morrlaw.com

Fleet
01252 316 316
fleet@morrlaw.com

Guildford
01483 970 140
guildford@morrlaw.com

Oxted
01883 723 712
oxted@morrlaw.com

Redhill
01737 854 500
redhill@morrlaw.com

Teddington
020 8943 1441
teddington@morrlaw.com

Wimbledon
020 8971 1020
wimbledon@morrlaw.com

Stay up to date with all of our latest insights and updates at www.morrlaw.com/news

