



# Matrimonial Causes Act 1973

## 1973 CHAPTER 18

### PART IV

#### MISCELLANEOUS AND SUPPLEMENTAL

<sup>F1</sup>45 .....

#### Textual Amendments

**F1** S. 45 repealed by [Family Law Act 1986 \(c. 55, SIF 49:3\)](#), ss. 68(2), 69, [Sch. 2](#)

<sup>F2</sup>46 .....

#### Textual Amendments

**F2** S. 46 repealed by [Domicile and Matrimonial Proceedings Act 1973 \(c. 45\)](#), s. 17(2), [Sch. 6](#)

#### **47 Matrimonial relief and declarations of validity in respect of polygamous marriages.**

- (1) A court in England and Wales shall not be precluded from granting matrimonial relief or making a declaration concerning the validity of a marriage by reason only that [<sup>F3</sup>either party to the marriage is, or has during the subsistence of the marriage been, married to more than one person].
- (2) In this section “matrimonial relief” means—
  - (a) any [<sup>F4</sup>order] under Part I of this Act;
  - (b) a financial provision order under section 27 above;
  - (c) an order under section 35 above altering a maintenance agreement;

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- (d) an order under any provision of this Act which confers a power exercisable in connection with, or in connection with proceedings for, any such <sup>F5</sup>... order as is mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (c) above;
- [<sup>F6</sup>(dd) an order under Part III of the Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act 1984;]
- (e) an order under [<sup>F7</sup>Part I of the <sup>M1</sup>Domestic Proceedings and Magistrates' Courts Act 1978].

[<sup>F8</sup>(3) In this section “a declaration concerning the validity of a marriage” means any declaration under Part III of the Family Law Act 1986 involving a determination as to the validity of a marriage]

[<sup>F9</sup>(4) Provision may be made by rules of court—

- (a) for requiring notice of proceedings brought by virtue of this section to be served on any additional spouse of a party to the marriage in question; and
- (b) for conferring on any such additional spouse the right to be heard in the proceedings,

in such cases as may be specified in the rules.]

#### Textual Amendments

- F3** Words in s. 47(1) substituted (8.1.1996) by 1995 c. 42, ss. 8, 16(2), **Sch. para. 3(a)** (with s. 8(1)(3))
- F4** Word in s. 47(2)(a) substituted (6.4.2022) by Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Act 2020 (c. 11), s. 8(1)(8), **Sch. para. 30(a)** (with s. 8(4)(6)); S.I. 2022/283, reg. 2
- F5** Words in s. 47(2)(d) omitted (6.4.2022) by virtue of Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Act 2020 (c. 11), s. 8(1)(8), **Sch. para. 30(b)** (with s. 8(4)(6)); S.I. 2022/283, reg. 2
- F6** S. 47(2)(dd) inserted by Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act 1984 (c. 42, SIF 49:3), ss. 46(1), 48(3), **Sch. 1 para. 15**
- F7** Words substituted by Domestic Proceedings and Magistrates' Courts Act 1978 (c. 22), s. 89(2), **Sch. 2 para. 39**, with saving for an application made before 1.2.1981 under Matrimonial Proceedings (Magistrates' Courts) Act 1960 (c. 48): S.I. 1979/731, **Sch. 2 para. 8**
- F8** S.47(3) substituted by Family Law Act 1986 (c. 55, SIF 49:3), ss. 68(1), 69(5), **Sch. 1 para. 14**
- F9** S. 47(4) substituted (8.1.1996) by 1995 c. 42, ss. 8, 16(2), **Sch. para. 3(b)** (with s. 8(1)(3))

#### Marginal Citations

- M1** 1978 c. 22.

## 48 Evidence.

- (1) The evidence of a husband or wife shall be admissible in any proceedings to prove that marital intercourse did or did not take place between them during any period.
- (2) In any proceedings for nullity of marriage, evidence on the question of sexual capacity shall be heard in camera unless in any case the [<sup>F10</sup>court] is satisfied that in the interests of justice any such evidence ought to be heard in open court.

#### Textual Amendments

- F10** Word in s. 48(2) substituted (22.4.2014) by Crime and Courts Act 2013 (c. 22), s. 61(3), **Sch. 10 para. 34**; S.I. 2014/954, art. 2(d) (with art. 3) (with transitional provisions and savings in S.I. 2014/956, arts. 3-11)

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## 49 Parties to proceedings under this Act.

<sup>F11</sup>(1) .....

<sup>F11</sup>(2) .....

<sup>F11</sup>(3) .....

(4) Rules of court may make provision<sup>F12</sup>... with respect to the joinder as parties to proceedings under this Act of persons involved in allegations of<sup>F13</sup>... improper conduct made in those proceedings, and with respect to the dismissal from such proceedings of any parties so joined; and rules of court made by virtue of this subsection may make different provision for different cases.

(5) [<sup>F14</sup>In every case] in which the court considers, in the interest of any person not already a party to the suit, that that person should be made a party to the suit, the court may if it thinks fit allow that person to intervene upon such terms, if any, as the court thinks just.

### Textual Amendments

**F11** S. 49(1)-(3) omitted (6.4.2022) by virtue of [Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Act 2020 \(c. 11\)](#), s. 8(1)(8), [Sch. para. 31\(2\)](#) (with s. 8(4)(5)); S.I. 2022/283, reg. 2

**F12** Words in s. 49(4) omitted (6.4.2022) by virtue of [Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Act 2020 \(c. 11\)](#), s. 8(1)(8), [Sch. para. 31\(3\)\(a\)](#) (with s. 8(4)(5)); S.I. 2022/283, reg. 2

**F13** Words in s. 49(4) omitted (6.4.2022) by virtue of [Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Act 2020 \(c. 11\)](#), s. 8(1)(8), [Sch. para. 31\(3\)\(b\)](#) (with s. 8(4)(5)); S.I. 2022/283, reg. 2

**F14** Words in s. 49(5) substituted (6.4.2022) by [Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Act 2020 \(c. 11\)](#), s. 8(1)(8), [Sch. para. 31\(4\)](#) (with s. 8(4)(5)); S.I. 2022/283, reg. 2

<sup>F15</sup>**50** .....

### Textual Amendments

**F15** S. 50 repealed (14.10.1991) by [Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act 1984 \(c. 42, SIF 49:3\)](#), s. 46(3), [Sch. 3](#); S.I. 1991/1211, [art. 2](#)

<sup>F16</sup>**51** .....

### Textual Amendments

**F16** S. 51 repealed (14.10.1991) by [Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act 1984 \(c. 42, SIF 49:3\)](#), s. 46(3), [Sch. 3](#); S.I. 1991/1211, [art. 2](#)

## 52 Interpretation.

(1) In this Act—

<sup>F17</sup>...

“child”, in relation to one or both of the parties to a marriage, includes an illegitimate<sup>F18</sup>... child of that party or, as the case may be, of both parties;

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“child of the family”, in relation to the parties to a marriage, means—

- (a) a child of both of those parties; and
- (b) any other child, not being a child who <sup>F19</sup>is placed with those parties as foster parents] by a local authority or voluntary organisation, who has been treated by both of those parties as a child of their family;

<sup>F20</sup>“the court” (except where the context otherwise requires) means the High Court or the family court;]

<sup>F21</sup>  
...

“education” includes training.

<sup>F22</sup>“<sup>F23</sup>maintenance calculation]” has the same meaning as it has in the Child Support Act 1991 by virtue of section 54 of that Act as read with any regulations in force under that section.]

<sup>F24</sup>  
...

(2) In this Act—

- (a) references to financial provision orders, periodical payments and secured periodical payments orders and orders for the payment of a lump sum, and references to property adjustment orders, shall be construed in accordance with section 21 above;
- <sup>F25</sup>(aa) references to pension sharing orders shall be construed in accordance with section 21A above; and]
- (b) references to orders for maintenance pending suit and to interim orders for maintenance shall be construed respectively in accordance with section 22 and section 27(5) above.

(3) For the avoidance of doubt it is hereby declared that references in this Act to remarriage include references to a marriage which is by law void or voidable.

<sup>F26</sup>(3A) References in this Act to the formation of a civil partnership by a person include references to a civil partnership which is by law void or voidable.]

(4) Except where the contrary intention is indicated, references in this Act to any enactment include references to that enactment as amended, extended or applied by or under any subsequent enactment, including this Act.

#### Textual Amendments

- F17** Definition repealed by [Children Act 1975 \(c. 72\)](#), **Sch. 4 Pt. I** as respects things done, or events occurring, after 31.12.1975
- F18** Words repealed by [Children Act 1975 \(c. 72\)](#), **Sch. 4 Pt. I** as respects things done, or events occurring, after 31.12.1975
- F19** Words in s. 52(1) substituted (14.10.1991) by [Children Act 1989 \(c. 41, SIF 20\)](#), s. 108, **Sch. 12 para. 33** (with [Sch. 14 para. 1\(1\)](#)); S.I. 1991/828, **art. 3(2)**
- F20** Definition in s. 52(1) substituted (22.4.2014) by [Crime and Courts Act 2013 \(c. 22\)](#), s. 61(3), **Sch. 11 para. 65(1)** (with [Sch. 11 para. 65\(2\)](#)); S.I. 2014/954, art. 2(e) (with art. 3) (with transitional provisions and savings in S.I. 2014/956, arts. 3-11)
- F21** Definition in s. 52(1) repealed (14.10.1991) by [Children Act 1989 \(c. 41, SIF 20\)](#), s. 108, **Sch. 15** (with [Sch. 14 paras. 1\(1\), 27\(4\)](#)); S.I. 1991/828, **art. 3(2)**
- F22** Definition in s. 52(1) inserted (5.4.1993) by S.I. 1993/623, art. 2, **Sch. 1 para. 4**
- F23** Words in s. 52(1) substituted (3.3.2003 for certain purposes, otherwise prosp.) by 2000 c. 19, ss. 26, 86(2), **Sch. 3 para. 3(4)** (with s. 83(6)); S.I. 2003/192, **art. 3**, **Sch.**

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- F24** Words in s. 52(1) omitted (31.12.2020) by virtue of [The Jurisdiction and Judgments \(Family\) \(Amendment etc.\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2019](#) (S.I. 2019/519), reg. 1(1), **Sch. para. 6(4)** (with reg. 8) (as amended by [S.I. 2020/1574](#), regs. 1, 5(2)); 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)
- F25** S. 52(2)(aa) substituted for word in s. 52(2) (1.11.1999 for certain purposes and otherwise 1.12.2000) by [1999 c. 30, s. 19, Sch. 3 para. 11](#); [S.I. 2000/1116, art. 2](#)
- F26** S. 52(3A) inserted (5.12.2005) by [Civil Partnership Act 2004](#) (c. 33), ss. 261(1), 263, {Sch. 27 para. 46}); [S.I. 2005/3175, art. 2\(2\)](#) (subject to art. 2(3)-(5))

## [<sup>F27</sup>52A Interpretation of certain references to divorce orders, nullity of marriage orders and judicial separation orders

- (1) In sections 21(2), 23(1) and (5), 24(1) and (3), 24A(3), 24B(1) and (2), 24E(1) and (2), 25A(1) and (3), 28(1) to (2) and 31—
- (a) a reference to a divorce order includes a decree of divorce,
  - (b) a reference to a nullity of marriage order includes a decree of nullity of marriage;
  - (c) a reference to a judicial separation order includes a decree of judicial separation;
  - (d) a reference to making includes granting;
  - (e) a reference to an order being made final includes a decree being made absolute.]

### Textual Amendments

- F27** [S. 52A](#) inserted (6.4.2022) by [Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Act 2020](#) (c. 11), s. 8(1)(8), **Sch. para. 32**; [S.I. 2022/283](#), reg. 2

## 53 Transitional provisions and savings.

Schedule 1 to this Act shall have effect for the purpose of—

- (a) the transition to the provisions of this Act from the law in force before the commencement of this Act;
- (b) the preservation for limited purposes of certain provisions superseded by provisions of this Act or by enactments repealed and replaced by this Act; and
- (c) the assimilation in certain respects to orders under this Act of orders made, or deemed to have been made, under the <sup>M2</sup>Matrimonial Causes Act 1965.

### Marginal Citations

- M2** [1965 c. 72](#).

## 54 Consequential amendments and repeals.

(1) Subject to the provisions of Schedule 1 to this Act—

- (a) the enactments specified in Schedule 2 to this Act shall have effect subject to the amendments specified in that Schedule, being amendments consequential on the provisions of this Act or on enactments repealed by this Act; and

<sup>F28</sup>(b) .....

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- (2) The amendment of any enactment by Schedule 2 to this Act shall not be taken as prejudicing the operation of [F29 sections 16(1) and 17(2)(a) of the M3 Interpretation Act 1978] (which relates to the effect of repeals).

#### Textual Amendments

- F28** S. 54(1)(b) repealed by [Statute Law \(Repeals\) Act 1977 \(c. 18\)](#), [Sch. 1 Pt. VII](#)  
**F29** Words substituted by virtue of [Interpretation Act 1978 \(c. 30\)](#), [s. 25\(2\)](#)

#### Marginal Citations

- M3** 1978 c. 30.

### 55 Citation, commencement and extent.

- (1) This Act may be cited as the Matrimonial Causes Act 1973.  
 (2) This Act shall come into force on such day as the Lord Chancellor may appoint by order made by statutory instrument.  
 (3) Subject to the provisions of paragraphs 3(2) F30 . . . of Schedule 2 below, this Act does not extend to Scotland or Northern Ireland.

#### Textual Amendments

- F30** Words repealed by [Statute Law \(Repeals\) Act 1977 \(c. 18\)](#), [Sch. 1 Pt. VII](#)

#### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1** Power of appointment conferred by s. 55(2) fully exercised: 1.1.1974 appointed by SI. 1973/1972, art. 2

**Status:**

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**Changes to legislation:**

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