



# Matrimonial Causes Act 1965

1965 CHAPTER 72

**E+W**

[<sup>F1</sup>An Act to consolidate certain enactments relating to matrimonial causes, maintenance and declarations of legitimacy and British nationality, with corrections and improvements made under the Consolidation of Enactments (Procedure) Act 1949.] [8th November 1965]

## Textual Amendments

**F1** Long title repealed by [Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 \(c. 18\)](#), s. 54(1), [Sch. 3](#) but reproduced for the purpose of constraining the remaining provisions of this Act

## Modifications etc. (not altering text)

**C1** Words of enactment repealed by [Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 \(c. 18\)](#), [Sch. 3](#)

## PART I **E+W**

### DIVORCE, NULLITY AND OTHER MATRIMONIAL SUITS

#### *Divorce*

1—7 ..... <sup>F2</sup> **E+W**

## Textual Amendments

**F2** Ss. 1–8(1), 9–24, 25(2)(3) repealed by [Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 \(c. 18\)](#), s. 54(1), [Sch. 3](#)

**8 Remarriage of divorced persons. **E+W****

(1) ..... <sup>F3</sup>

*Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Matrimonial Causes Act 1965. (See end of Document for details)*

- (2) No clergyman of the Church of England or the Church in Wales shall be compelled—
  - (a) to solemnise the marriage of any person whose former marriage has been dissolved and whose former spouse is still living; or
  - (b) to permit the marriage of such a person to be solemnised in the church or chapel of which he is the minister.

**Textual Amendments**

**F3** Ss. 1–8(1), 9–24, 25(2)(3) repealed by [Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 \(c. 18\)](#), s. 54(1), **Sch. 3**

9–14. .... <sup>F4</sup> **E+W**

**Textual Amendments**

**F4** Ss. 1–8(1), 9–24, 25(2)(3) repealed by [Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 \(c. 18\)](#), s. 54(1), **Sch. 3**

**PART II E+W**

ANCILLARY RELIEF

15–  
22. .... <sup>F5</sup> **E+W**

**Textual Amendments**

**F5** Ss. 1–8(1), 9–24, 25(2)(3) repealed by [Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 \(c. 18\)](#), s. 54(1), **Sch. 3**

*Maintenance agreements*

23 ..... <sup>F6</sup> **E+W**

**Textual Amendments**

**F6** Ss. 1–8(1), 9–24, 25(2)(3) repealed by [Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 \(c. 18\)](#), s. 54(1), **Sch. 3**

24 ..... <sup>F7</sup> **E+W**

**Textual Amendments**

**F7** Ss. 1–8(1), 9–24, 25(2)(3) repealed by [Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 \(c. 18\)](#), s. 54(1), **Sch. 3**

*Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Matrimonial Causes Act 1965. (See end of Document for details)*

## 25 Alteration of agreements by court after death of one party. **E+W**

[<sup>F8</sup>(1) Where a maintenance agreement within the meaning of section 23 of this Act provides for the continuation of payments under the agreement after the death of one of the parties and that party dies after 16th August 1957 domiciled in England, the surviving party may—

- (a) before the end of the period of six months from the date when representation in regard to the deceased's estate is first taken out; or
- (b) with the permission of the court, after the end of that period but before the administration and distribution of the estate is completed,

apply to the High Court for any order under subsection (1) of the last foregoing section for which the surviving party might have applied immediately before the death.

[<sup>F9</sup>An application under this section shall not, except with the permission of the court, be made after the end of the period of six months from the date on which representation in regard to the estate of the deceased is first taken out.]

(2) ..... <sup>F10</sup>

(3) ..... <sup>F10</sup>

(4) In considering for the purposes of subsection (1) of this section the question when representation was first taken out, a grant limited to settled land or to trust property shall be left out of account, and a grant limited to real estate or to personal estate shall be left out of account unless a grant limited to the remainder of the estate has previously been made or is made at the same time.

(5) For the purposes of section 162(1) of the <sup>M1</sup>Supreme Court of Judicature (Consolidation) Act 1925 (which relates to the discretion of the court as to the persons to whom administration is to be granted) a person by whom an application is proposed to be made by virtue of this section shall be deemed to be a person interested in the deceased's estate.]

### Textual Amendments

**F8** S. 25(1) repealed by [Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 \(c. 18\)](#), s. 54(1), [Sch. 3](#) but reproduced for the purpose of construing the remaining provisions of this Act

**F9** Words added by [Family Provision Act 1966 \(c. 35\)](#), s. 5(3)

**F10** Ss. 1–8(1), 9–24, 25(2)(3) repealed by [Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 \(c. 18\)](#), s. 54(1), [Sch. 3](#)

### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

**C2** S. 25(4)(5) repealed except as applied by s. 28(2) of this Act by [Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 \(c. 18\)](#), s. 54(1), [Sch. 3](#)

### Marginal Citations

**M1** 1925 c. 49.

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*Maintenance from estate of deceased former spouse*

**26 Orders for maintenance from deceased’s estate. E+W**

- (1) Where after 31st December 1958 a person dies domiciled in England and is survived by a former spouse of his or hers (hereafter in this section referred to as “the survivor”) who has not remarried, the survivor may—

- (a) ..... F11  
 (b) ..... F11

apply to the court for an order under this section on the ground that the deceased has not made reasonable provision for the survivor’s maintenance after the deceased’s death.

[<sup>F12</sup>An application under this section shall not, except with the permission of the court, be made after the end of the period of six months from the date on which representation in regard to the estate of the deceased is first taken out.]

- (2) If on an application under this section the court is satisfied—

- (a) that it would have been reasonable for the deceased to make provision for the survivor’s maintenance; and  
 (b) that the deceased has made no provision, or has not made reasonable provision, for the survivor’s maintenance,

the court may order that such reasonable provision for the survivor’s maintenance as the court thinks fit shall be made out of the net estate of the deceased, subject to such conditions or restrictions (if any) as the court may impose.

- (3) Where the court makes an order under this section requiring provision to be made for the maintenance of the survivor, the order shall require that provision to be made by way of periodical payments terminating not later than the survivor’s death and, if the survivor remarries, not later than the remarriage, so however that [<sup>F13</sup>if the court sees fit] the order may require that provision to be made wholly or in part by way of a lump sum payment.

- (4) On an application under this section the court shall have regard—

- (a) to the past, present or future capital of the survivor and to any income of the survivor from any source;  
 (b) to the survivor’s conduct in relation to the deceased and otherwise;  
 (c) to any application made or deemed to be made by the survivor during the lifetime of the deceased—  
 (i) where the survivor is a former wife of the deceased, for such an order as is mentioned in section 16(1) of this Act or that subsection as applied by section 19 of this Act;  
 (ii) where the survivor is a former husband of the deceased, for such an order as could be made either under the said section 16(1) as applied by subsection (3) of that section or under section 17(2) of this Act,  
 [<sup>F14</sup>(iii) where the survivor is a former wife or a former husband of the deceased, for an order under section 2 or 4 of the <sup>M2</sup>Matrimonial Proceedings and Property Act 1970 or under section 23(1)(a), (b) or (c) or 24 of the <sup>M3</sup>Matrimonial Causes Act 1973]

and to the order (if any) made on any such application, or (if no such application was made by the survivor, or such an application was made by the survivor and no order was made on the application) to the circumstances appearing to the court to be the

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reasons why no such application was made, or no such order was made, as the case may be; and

(d) to any other matter or thing which, in the circumstances of the case, the court may consider relevant or material in relation to the survivor, to persons interested in the estate of the deceased, or otherwise.

(5) In determining whether, and in what way, and as from what date, provision for maintenance ought to be made by an order under this section, the court shall have regard to the nature of the property representing the net estate of the deceased and shall not order any such provision to be made as would necessitate a realisation that would be imprudent having regard to the interests of the dependants of the deceased, of the survivor, and of the persons who apart from the order would be entitled to that property.

[<sup>F15</sup>(5A) For the avoidance of doubt it is hereby declared that references in this section to remarriage include references to a marriage which is by law void or voidable.]

(6) In this and [<sup>F16</sup>the three next following sections]—

[<sup>F17</sup> “Court” [<sup>F18</sup>means the High Court and] includes a county court in relation to cases of which a county court has jurisdiction]

“former spouse”, in relation to a deceased person, means a person whose marriage with the deceased was during the deceased’s lifetime dissolved or annulled by a decree made or deemed to be made under [<sup>F19</sup>the Matrimonial Causes Act 1973], and “former wife” and “former husband” shall be construed accordingly;

“net estate” and “dependant” have the same meanings as in the <sup>M4</sup>Inheritance (Family Provision) Act 1938 [<sup>F20</sup>as amended by the <sup>M5</sup>Family Provision Act 1966][<sup>F21</sup>the <sup>M6</sup>Family Law Reform Act 1969 and the <sup>M7</sup>Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1970]; and

“property” means any real or personal property, any estate or interest in real or personal property, any money, any negotiable instrument, debt or other chose in action, or any other right or interest whether in possession or not.

#### Textual Amendments

- F11** S. 26(1)(a)  
(b) repealed by Family Provision Act 1966 (c. 35), ss. 5, 10(2), **Sch. 2**
- F12** Words added by Family Provision Act 1966 (c. 35), **s. 5(3)**
- F13** Words substituted by Family Provision Act 1966 (c. 35), **s. 4(1)**
- F14** S. 26(4)(c)(iii) substituted by Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 (c. 18), s. 54, **Sch. 2 para. 5(a)**
- F15** S. 26(5A) added retrospectively by Matrimonial Proceedings and Property Act 1970 (c. 45), **s. 36**
- F16** Words substituted by Family Provision Act 1966 (c. 35), **s. 6(2)**
- F17** Definition added by Family Provision Act 1966 (c. 35), **s. 7(4)**
- F18** Words inserted by Divorce Reform Act 1969 (c. 55), s. 9(1), **Sch. 1 para. 8** and Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 (c. 18), s. 54, **Sch. 2 para. 5(b)**
- F19** Words substituted by Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 (c. 18), s. 54, **Sch. 2 para. 5(c)**
- F20** Words inserted by Family Provision Act 1966 (c. 35), **s. 8(2)**
- F21** Words substituted by Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1970 (c. 33), **s. 6(5)**

#### Marginal Citations

- M2** 1970 c. 45.  
**M3** 1973 c. 18.  
**M4** 1938 c. 45.

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*Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Matrimonial Causes Act 1965. (See end of Document for details)*

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**M5** 1966 c. 35.

**M6** 1969 c. 46.

**M7** 1970 c. 33.

**27 Discharge and variation of orders under s. 26. E+W**

- (1) Subject to the following provisions of this section, where an order (in this section referred to as “the original order”) has been made under the last foregoing section, the court, on an application under this section, shall have power by order to discharge or vary the original order or to suspend any provision of it temporarily and to revive the operation of any provision so suspended.
- (2) An application under this section may be made by any of the following persons, that is to say,—
  - (a) the former spouse on whose application the original order was made;
  - (b) any other former spouse of the deceased;
  - (c) any dependant of the deceased;
  - (d) the trustees of any relevant property;
  - (e) any person who, under the will or codicil of the deceased or under the law relating to intestacy, is beneficially interested in any relevant property.
- (3) An order under this section varying the original order, or reviving any suspended provision of it, shall not be made so as to affect any property which, at the time of the application for the order under this section, is not relevant property.
- (4) In exercising the powers conferred by this section, the court shall have regard to all the circumstances of the case, including any change in the circumstances to which the court was required to have regard in determining the application for the original order.
- (5) In this section “relevant property” means property the income of which, in accordance with the original order or any consequential directions given by the court in connection with it, is applicable wholly or in part for the maintenance of the former spouse on whose application the original order was made.

**28 Additional provisions as to orders under ss. 26 and 27. E+W**

- (1) The provisions of the last two foregoing sections shall not render the personal representatives of a deceased person liable for having distributed any part of the estate of the deceased after the end of the period mentioned in subsection (1) of section 26 of this Act on the ground that they ought to have taken into account the possibility that the court might permit an application under that section after the end of that period, or that an order under that section might be varied under section 27 of this Act; but this subsection shall not prejudice any power to recover any part of the estate so distributed arising by virtue of the making of an order under section 26 or section 27 of this Act.
- (2) Section 25(4) of this Act shall apply for the purposes of section 26(1) of this Act as it applies for the purposes of subsection (1) of the said section 25; and section 25(5) of this Act shall apply in relation to an application under section 26 or section 27 of this Act as it applies in relation to an application in pursuance of the said section 25.
- (3) Section 3 of the <sup>M8</sup>Inheritance (Family Provision) Act 1938 [<sup>F22</sup>as amended by the <sup>M9</sup>Family Provision Act 1966] (which relates to the effect and form of orders under

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that Act) shall have effect in relation to orders under sections 26 and 27 of this Act as it has effect in relation to orders under that Act.

#### Textual Amendments

**F22** Words inserted by [Family Provision Act 1966 \(c. 35\), s. 3\(2\)](#)

#### Marginal Citations

**M8** 1938 c. 45.

**M9** 1966 c. 35.

### [<sup>F23</sup>28A **E+W**

- (1) Where on an application for maintenance under section 26 of this Act it appears to the court—
  - (a) that the applicant is in immediate need of financial assistance, but it is not yet possible to determine what order (if any) should be made on the application for the provision of maintenance for the applicant; and
  - (b) that property forming part of the net estate of the deceased is or can be made available to meet the need of the applicant;

the court may order that, subject to such conditions or restrictions, if any, as the court may impose and to any further order of the court, there shall be paid to or for the benefit of the applicant out of the deceased's net estate such sum or sums and (if more than one) at such intervals as the court thinks reasonable.

- (2) In determining what order, if any, should be made under this section the court shall, so far as the urgency of the case admits, take account of the same considerations as would be relevant in determining what order should be made on the application for the provision of maintenance for the applicant; and any subsequent order for the provision of maintenance may provide that sums paid to or for the benefit of the applicant by virtue of this section shall be treated to such extent, if any, and in such manner as may be provided by that order as having been paid on account of the maintenance provided for by that order.
- (3) Subject to subsection (2) above, section 3 of the <sup>M10</sup>Inheritance (Family Provision) Act 1938 as applied by section 28 of this Act, shall apply in relation to an order under this section as it applies in relation to an order providing for maintenance.
- (4) Where the deceased's personal representative pays any sum directed by an order under this section to be paid out of the deceased's net estate, he shall not be under any liability by reason of that estate not being sufficient to make the payment, unless at the time of making the payment he has reasonable cause to believe that the estate is not sufficient]

#### Textual Amendments

**F23** S. 28A added by [Family Provision Act 1966 \(c. 35\), s. 6\(2\), Sch. 1](#)

#### Marginal Citations

**M10** 1938 c. 45.

*Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Matrimonial Causes Act 1965. (See end of Document for details)*

29— ..... F24 **E+W**  
32.

**Textual Amendments**  
F24 Ss. 29–37, 39–41, 43(2)(3), 44, 45, 46(2)(3), Schs. 1, 2 repealed by Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 (c. 18), s. 54(1), **Sch. 3**

**PART III E+W**

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

33— ..... F25 **E+W**  
37.

**Textual Amendments**  
F25 Ss. 29–37, 39–41, 43(2)(3), 44, 45, 46(2)(3), Schs. 1, 2 repealed by Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 (c. 18), s. 54(1), **Sch. 3**

38 ..... F26 **E+W**

**Textual Amendments**  
F26 S. 38 repealed by Statute Law (Repeals) Act 1976 (c. 16), **Sch. 1 Pt. I**

**PART IV E+W**

MISCELLANEOUS AND GENERAL

*Miscellaneous*

39— ..... F27 **E+W**  
41.

**Textual Amendments**  
F27 Ss. 29–37, 39–41, 43(2)(3), 44, 45, 46(2)(3), Schs. 1, 2 repealed by Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 (c. 18), s. 54(1), **Sch. 3**

42 ..... F28 **E+W**



*Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Matrimonial Causes Act 1965. (See end of Document for details)*

**Textual Amendments**

**F28** S. 42 repealed by Domestic Proceedings and Magistrates' Courts Act 1978 (c. 22, SIF 49:3), **Sch. 3**

**43 Evidence. E+W**

- (1) ..... **F29**
- (2) ..... **F30**
- (3) ..... **F30**

**Textual Amendments**

**F29** S. 43(1) repealed by Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (c. 60, SIF 95), ss. 80(9), 82(3), 119, 120, **Sch. 7 Pt. V**  
**F30** Ss. 29–37, 39–41, 43(2)(3), 44, 45, 46(2)(3), Schs. 1, 2 repealed by Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 (c. 18), s. 54(1), **Sch. 3**

**44** ..... **F31 E+W**

**Textual Amendments**

**F31** Ss. 29–37, 39–41, 43(2)(3), 44, 45, 46(2)(3), Schs. 1, 2 repealed by Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 (c. 18), s. 54(1), **Sch. 3**

*General*

**45** ..... **F32 E+W**

**Textual Amendments**

**F32** Ss. 29–37, 39–41, 43(2)(3), 44, 45, 46(2)(3), Schs. 1, 2 repealed by Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 (c. 18), s. 54(1), **Sch. 3**

**46 †Short title, interpretation, commencement and extent. E+W**

- (1) This Act may be cited as the Matrimonial Causes Act 1965.
- (2) ..... **F33**
- (3) ..... **F33**
- (4) ..... **F34**, this Act does not extend to Scotland or Northern Ireland.

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*Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects  
for the Matrimonial Causes Act 1965. (See end of Document for details)*

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**Textual Amendments**

- F33** Ss. 29–37, 39–41, 43(2)(3), 44, 45, 46(2)(3), Schs. 1, 2 repealed by [Matrimonial Causes Act 1973](#) (c. 18), s. 54(1), [Sch. 3](#)
- F34** Words repealed by [Statute Law \(Repeals\) Act 1977](#) (c. 18), [Sch. 1 Pt. VII](#)

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

- C3** A dagger appended to a marginal note means that it is no longer accurate.

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*Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Matrimonial Causes Act 1965. (See end of Document for details)*

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F35F35 SCHEDULE 1 **E+W**

**Textual Amendments**

**F35** Ss. 29–37, 39–41, 43(2)(3), 44, 45, 46(2)(3), Schs. 1, 2 repealed by Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 (c. 18), s. 54(1), **Sch. 3**

F35

F36F36 SCHEDULE 2 **E+W**

**Textual Amendments**

**F36** Ss. 29–37, 39–41, 43(2)(3), 44, 45, 46(2)(3), Schs. 1, 2 repealed by Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 (c. 18), s. 54(1), **Sch. 3**

F36

**Changes to legislation:**

There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Matrimonial Causes Act 1965.