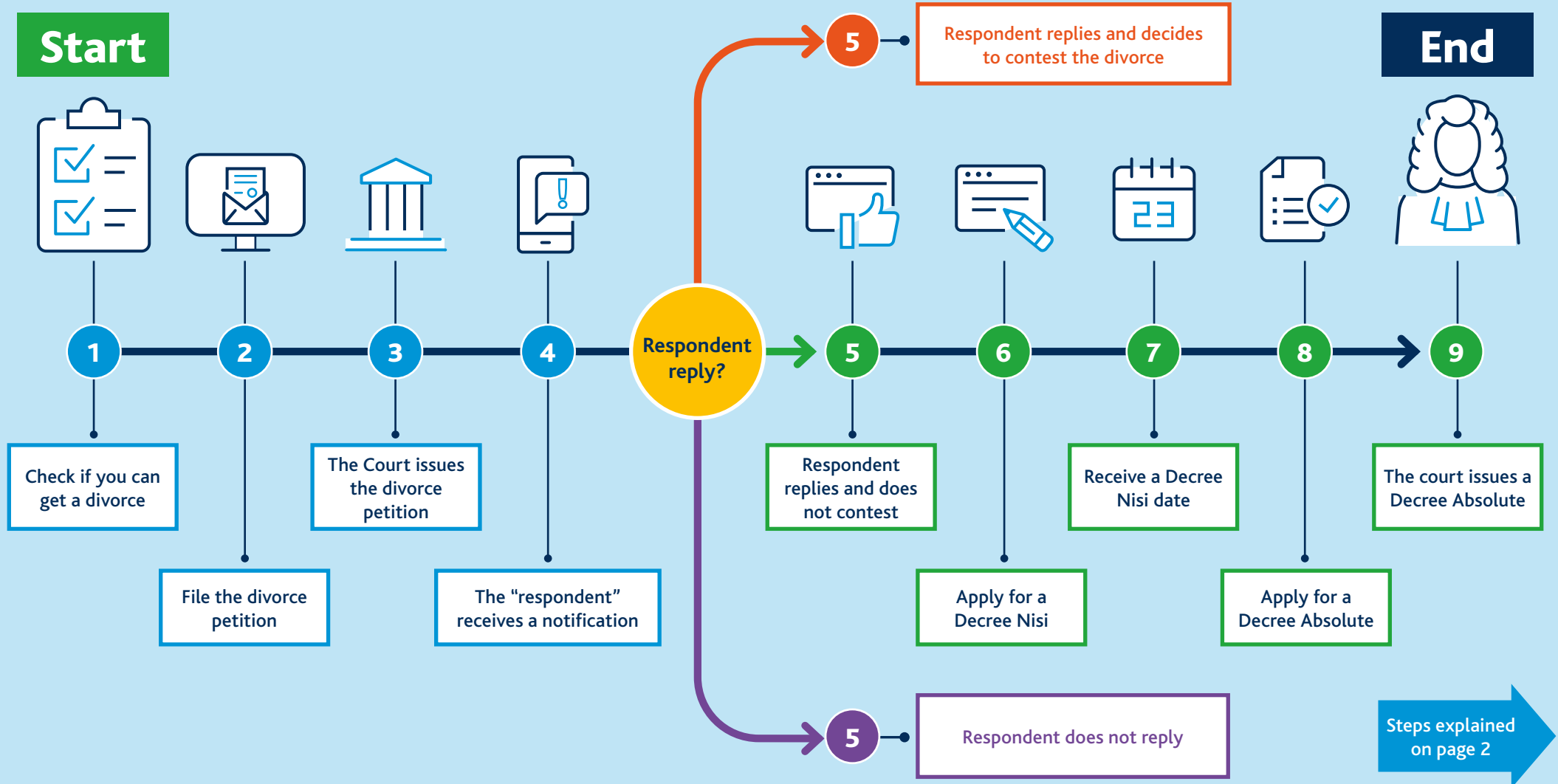




How to apply for **divorce online** in England and Wales



How to apply for divorce online in England and Wales

Overview Guidance

1. Check if you can get a divorce

To file for divorce your marriage must have irretrievably broken down and you must establish one or more of the **five available reasons**.

2. File the divorce petition

This is where you apply to the court for a decree of divorce. You will need to provide information to support the reasons given for the irretrievable breakdown of your relationship.

You can apply at [gov.uk/apply-for-divorce](https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-divorce).

3. The Court issues the divorce petition

Your application for divorce will be checked and if the information is correct you'll receive confirmation that it has been "issued" together with a copy of your completed divorce petition.

4. The "respondent" receives a notification

Your husband or wife (the "respondent") will be notified of the divorce petition and will receive an invitation via email to complete the response (known as the acknowledgement of service) which they should do within 7 days.

5. Respondent replies and does not contest

Your husband or wife responds online to say they are aware of the divorce petition and do not contest.

6. Apply for a Decree Nisi

You will receive an email confirmation. You can then apply for a "Decree Nisi" (the interim decree of divorce) online by logging into your account.

7. Receive a Decree Nisi date

If your Decree Nisi Application is approved, the court will send you and your husband or wife a "certificate of entitlement to a decree". This will tell you the time and date when you'll be granted the Decree Nisi. You should note that you remain legally married because the Decree Nisi is only an interim decree of divorce.

8. Receive a Decree Nisi date

You need to wait at least six weeks after the Decree Nisi is granted before you can apply for a "Decree Absolute" to finalise the divorce. You will receive an email on how to apply online.

9. The court issues a Decree Absolute

If the court approves your application, you will receive the Decree Absolute. This is an official document that confirms you are legally divorced. Please keep it safe.

5. Respondent replies and decides to contest the divorce

Your husband or wife may choose to contest ("defend") the divorce petition which is known as providing an "Answer". They may also seek to file their own divorce petition (known as a "cross-petition").

This happens when either the respondent does not accept that the marriage has broken down irretrievably or if they disagree with the reasons you have given to apply for the divorce. If your husband or wife provides an "Answer" with supporting evidence, and pays the fee, you may both need to go to court where a judge will decide if there is enough evidence for the divorce process to continue.

Learn more at:
[GOV.UK/respond-divorce-application](https://www.gov.uk/respond-divorce-application)

5. Respondent does not reply

The court needs to hear from both parties in a marriage before it can grant a divorce, unless there is a good reason why your husband or wife cannot be found or contacted.

If it's safe to do so, usually the simplest way to proceed is to contact your husband or wife directly to find out why they haven't responded. They can still send in their response after the deadline has passed.

If there's still no response, you have several options available to you, depending on your situation.

More guidance can be found at [GOV.UK/divorce](https://www.gov.uk/divorce)



Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse in relationships is very common. There are many different types of abuse including emotional, economic, physical and sexual. If you feel you are at risk, get some support or advice before starting divorce proceedings.

For more information and help visit:

[GOV.UK/guidance/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help)

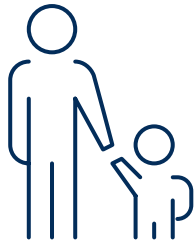
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Checklist

To apply for a divorce online you'll need:



- ✓ Your husband or wife's full name, email and address.
- ✓ Your original marriage certificate or a **certified copy** (and a certified translation if it's not in English).
- ✓ Proof of your name change if you've changed it since you got married - for example your **deed poll**.



Making arrangements for the future

You and your husband or wife can choose to work out arrangements for looking after any children, child maintenance payments and division of money and property.

Find out more at [GOV.UK/get-a-divorce](https://www.gov.uk/get-a-divorce)



A divorce application is made up of 3 steps

1. filing a **divorce petition**
2. applying for a **Decree Nisi**
3. applying for a **Decree Absolute**

You won't be legally divorced until you receive your Decree Absolute.

98% fewer returned applications

The new online application is easier to complete with prompts to help you through. It has already contributed to a 98% drop in the number of applications being returned because of mistakes, when compared with paper forms.



No postage costs



Easier to apply



Pay your fee online



Email updates



You can apply for a divorce without legal representation

An online divorce service for people without legal representation is now available at: [GOV.UK/apply-for-divorce](https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-divorce)



Get legal advice

If you want help with the divorce process you can find out how to get legal advice at: [GOV.UK/find-a-legal-adviser](https://www.gov.uk/find-a-legal-adviser)



Divorce forms

If you want to apply by post, you can download the paper forms.

Search for '**Form D8**' on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk), or [click on this text](#).