

# Family Office First



Solutions for family conflict

withersworldwide

The law firm for successful families



# Family conflict

For Family Offices, unforeseen threats such as fraud, disputes between family members or litigation with third parties can severely jeopardise family stability, value and reputation.

Just as families are complex, continually evolving entities, so too are the issues they face. In many cases, it will be a transitional event – such as a sudden death, a generational shift or the sale of a family business – that initiates conflict. Other commonly encountered problems stem from investments that have misfired, divorces, trust disputes and fraud.

When everything is running smoothly, it's easy to rely on the fact that 'everyone knows how things work around here', but when operations come under pressure, risks can multiply quickly. These risks become more acute in the case of multi-generational families and those with international asset holdings.

We understand that the problem you face may, in fact, be a symptom of a larger and more significant issue in the family. We will work with you to understand and resolve the underlying issues as well as the immediate conflict.

## How can Family Office First help?

We have quietly, efficiently and sensitively helped families with conflict for many generations. Our group, Family Office First, distills that experience, providing you with solutions to help prevent the damage that can flow from litigation, intra-family disputes and criminal activity. We understand family conflict better than anyone else in the litigation market.

Conflict is ever present. It is normal. So as a family you need to be prepared to experience it. This means turning to people who are technically skilled and are sensitive to your need to carry on functioning as a family after the issue is resolved.

Family conflicts are inherently different from commercial ones and we do not treat them in the same way. When you are connected by blood you can't always just walk away following a dispute, meaning you often don't want a 'knockout solution'. You are likely to want us to win, but to do so sensitively.

The idea of remaining connected following a dispute is extraordinarily difficult. Other litigators default to type and their aggression can resonate down the generations. When we say that we take a different approach, we mean it. It is in our DNA to show sensitivity and tact. We will not try to win at all costs (unless you tell us to). This sometimes means our engagement is very short.

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Disputes in a family can leave an impact for generations to come. We focus on minimising this, and on protecting your family name as much as on resolving your dispute.

We work with families all around the world, we are based all around the world. We always take time to fully understand the cultural context in which your family operates before offering any advice.



‘We litigate with the best and speak the language of families.’

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# Family Office First – our approach

Depending on your circumstances, and the stage of conflict you are at, we offer **three solutions**. Each of these will provide you with the calm, confidential and experienced advice required to successfully resolve your conflict.

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## 1 First Signs

At this stage our team are focused on risk management. We will work closely with you to spot the warning signs within your businesses and family. We develop strategies to help you head off, and to protect against, conflict.

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## 2 First Response

Crisis management and defence against litigation. Where internal and external threats to the family or business arise which are out of your control, we will act swiftly to mitigate or shield you from them. Our reputation management specialists are very experienced at keeping your issues out of the public eye. Privacy is key to our approach.

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## 3 First Strike

If you reach the stage of needing your families' interests to be protected, we will act decisively to litigate.

Our Family Office First approach works just as effectively whether it is an intra-family conflict or if you need us on your side, defending you against external threats. We will provide you with certainty on cost so you are completely free to focus on managing your family. Litigation is emotionally involving and we will not add spiralling costs an already stressful situation.

If you require further information please contact the client services team on +44 (0)20 7597 6649 or [www.withersworldwide.com](http://www.withersworldwide.com).



