

How will former Love Island stars split their £9m assets?

SOPHIA PANAYI, 18/09/2024

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Former Love Island stars - Molly Mae Hague and Tommy Fury - have split after five years together leaving them to divide their £9 million net worth.

According to the law firm Wilson Solicitors, Ms Hague contributed roughly £6 million to their net worth through social media influencing, being a business owner, and YouTube revenue.

Mr Fury made up the rest of the earnings through his boxing career and brand deals.

While the couple had been engaged before parting ways, they were not married, which Katie McCann, managing partner at Lowry Legal, said "would makes things different" when it came to them splitting their assets.

Cohabitation law can be complex when couples split so as long as they have been "advised properly" before they started to live together things may be easier for them than if they were getting divorced.

Julia Townend, a barrister at family law firm 4PB, agreed, explaining that "the concept of a 'common law marriage' is a myth."

Previously the Labour party acknowledged its support for a reform of co-habitation laws which Fladgate partners Joshua Moger and Catherine Costley discussed with *eprivateclient* at the beginning of the year.

However, since its success in the election, the new UK government has not yet commented on whether co-habitation laws will change.

Had the couple been married, the starting point in a divorce would see a 50/50 split, provided there is no pre-nuptial agreement. However, as the couple were never married, "anything in their sole names will be theirs," Ms McCann explained.

This includes the former couple's £3.8 million house in Cheshire.

Although both resided there with their young daughter Bambi, several reports stated that Ms Hague is the sole owner of the property. As a result, Mr Fury has no claims over the property.

"There may be exceptions providing Tommy with an interest in the home," Ms Townend highlighted.

For example, a co-habitation agreement is a legally binding document which sets out arrangements for finances, property and children for a couple living together.

It can include, as Ms McCann described, arranging “who is paying for more and how much people would take” in the event of the couple splitting up.

A Declaration of Trust could also protect them by allowing them to “ring fence their deposit” on their family home if one put in more than the other.

Ms McCann also highlighted “if more payments were being made by one person that could mean they will get more during the split”.

The separation will also make no difference to arrangements for the child.

“They will have to go through the same process whether engaged or married,” Ms McCann said.

According to law firm Geldard’s case study of the split, both parents will likely share custody.

However, a dispute about welfare issues pertaining to the child may lead to an application for a child arrangements order, stipulating with whom she would live or otherwise spend time.

“The guiding principle would be Bambi’s best interest,” Ms Townend stressed.

The parent with whom Bambi is not resident for most of the time will be expected to pay child maintenance for her benefit.

Ms Townend added beyond this there is scope for other claims for financial provision for the child pursuant to Schedule 1 of the Children Act 1989, either by way of capital or income provision and depending on the circumstances.

“They will likely come to an arrangement themselves unless there is a safe-guarding risk in which case visits could be supervised, if necessary,” Ms McCann stated.

It is worth noting the videos being shared of Mr Fury in a club setting “will not be taken into consideration” when deciding how their assets will be split.

The reason for the breakdown of the relationship is not relevant to the case and videos of his actions will not impact the outcome.

Ms McCann suspects that both will be “lawyered up properly” and there could be a “a process of mediation to reach an agreement”.

“High profile cases rarely go to court,” she said. “Often they use an alternative form of dispute

This includes hiring a judge for a day in a neutral venue, normally a retired high court judge or a senior barrister, to “provoke a deal”.

The judge would go through the case and suggest a deal for the separated couple to keep the case out of court.

If the couple cannot come to an agreement on their own, various applications could be made to the Family and County Courts.

Ms Townend concluded: “The couple did not marry so the scope for financial applications would be limited due to the current state of English law for cohabitants.”