DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A FORM A AND A FORM D81

The key difference between Form A and Form D81 in divorce proceedings in England and Wales lies in their purpose and the stage at which they are used:

Form A (Notice of [intention to proceed with] an application for a financial order)

- **Purpose:** Form A is the **application form** used to formally **start** financial remedy proceedings in court. It notifies the court of your intention to seek financial orders (e.g., division of assets, maintenance).
- **Timing:** This form is filed with the court **at the beginning** of the financial remedy process, usually after the Conditional Order (formerly Decree Nisi) of divorce has been granted. It's the first step in asking the court to make decisions about finances when an agreement hasn't been reached.
- **Outcome:** Filing Form A initiates the court process for resolving financial claims. The court will then issue directions for the exchange of financial information (often using Form E) and schedule court hearings if necessary.

Form D81 (Statement of information for a consent order in relation to a financial remedy)

- **Purpose:** Form D81 is a **statement of financial information** that accompanies a **drafted Consent Order**. It provides the court with a summary of both parties' current financial situations and the terms of their agreed financial settlement.
- **Timing:** Form D81 is completed and submitted to the court **after** the parties have already reached a financial agreement and a Consent Order has been prepared. It is lodged with the court alongside the proposed Consent Order for the judge's review and approval.
- **Outcome:** The judge uses the information in Form D81 to assess whether the agreed Consent Order is fair to both parties. If the judge is satisfied, they will approve and "seal" the Consent Order, making it legally binding.

Here's a simple analogy:

Imagine you want to order food at a restaurant:

- **Form A is like raising your hand to tell the waiter you want to place an order.** It signals the start of the process.
- **Form D81 is like a detailed description of the agreed dishes and the bill split you hand to the waiter for confirmation.** It provides the specifics of an agreement already reached.

In summary:

- You use **Form A** to **start** the court process for financial orders.

- You use **Form D81** to provide the court with the details of a **pre-agreed** financial settlement for approval through a Consent Order. You wouldn't file a D81 without also submitting a Consent Order.