

Registry

Changes to marriage law and registration

*The General Registrar's Office has issued a clergy newsletter about the long-awaited changes to the registration of marriages, which come into force on **4th May**. Also recently released is a long-awaited guidance note and a Home Office Q&A document about the change of status of EU nationals from **1st July**.*

Our Diocesan Registry emphasises that all clergy and those dealing with marriages in parishes need to read the newsletter ([here](#)), and the other 2 documents as a matter of urgency.

The change of status of EU nationals, from 1st July this year, will lead to some fairly significant changes in respect of marriage law and the responsibilities that will rest with clergy.

All EU/ EEA nationals who do not have Settled or Pre Settled status (EUSS) in the UK will now be required to undertake civil preliminaries prior to a marriage in an Anglican church. After 1st July, any EU/ EEA national without Settled or Pre Settled status will no longer be permitted to marry in church after the calling of banns or a common licence - there are transitional arrangements for those who have already started their preliminaries by 1st July.

As it will be illegal for such a wedding to take place, it is vital that we notify all clergy and those dealing with marriages in parishes.

From 1st July, Clergy MUST check the nationality of ALL couples intending to be married and, if they are not UK or Irish nationals (proved by an in-date passport) they must check whether the EU/ EEA national has the relevant Settled or Pre Settled Status. In order to do that, they will have to use a government online checker tool after being given an access code by the parties concerned. Details are provided [here](#), and the Q&A is [here](#).

The legal preliminaries where one or both of the parties is not UK/ Irish or of EUSS status will need to be undertaken at the Civil Registry. In order to obtain a Superintendent Registrar's Certificate (SRC) at the Civil Registry, both parties must be resident in this country for 7 days (in any parish if they have a qualifying connection, or in the parish where they are to marry if they have no other qualifying connection) before serving notice.

If both parties live abroad they will need to return to this country in order to do the residency before they can give notice. There is then a 28-day notice period before the SRC is issued (during which time the couple do not need to be resident). A marriage visa for entry into the country for non UK/ Irish EUSS will also be required.

Many people are already planning weddings and legal preliminaries and, given that the transitional arrangements do allow for a transitional period to cover weddings planned into the summer and autumn, careful thought should be given to the timing of the start of the calling of banns or other preliminaries. Please call the Diocesan Registry office if you have any queries, on 01722 432390 or email registry@salisbury.anglican.org.