



HM Passport
Office

Clergy Newsletter

General Register Office

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Issue 10: February 2021

Introduction

Welcome to the 10th edition of the newsletter for members of the clergy.

In this issue, you will find an update to issue 9 which provided an introduction and background to the forthcoming changes resulting from the Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths (Registration etc.) Act 2019 in relation to the registration of marriages.

This newsletter will update you on the plans to implement the new system and will outline the support available in more detail.

The Training and Business Improvement Team, General Register Office

The Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths (Registration etc.) Act 2019

You will be aware from the last newsletter that the Act had successfully completed its passage through Parliament and attained Royal Assent on 26 March 2019.

The Act provides for the modernisation of marriage registration for the first time since 1837, by introducing a marriage schedule system and registration in an electronic register. The process will move away from the current paper register introducing a more secure system for keeping marriage records, that is also more efficient and simpler to administer and amend, if necessary, in the future.

The regulations which will make the required amendments to the Marriage Act 1949 have been laid in Parliament today 22 February 2021, and subject to approval, will come into force on 4 May 2021.

How will this impact the work and responsibilities as a member of the Clergy?

What won't change:

- You will still be required to ensure couples meet the requirements to marry in your building.
- You will still be required to ensure couples complete the relevant preliminaries, i.e.: the calling of banns, issue of common or special licence or, where required, the prior attendance of the couple at the relevant register office to give their notices of marriage in the correct timescale.
- You will still be required to conduct pre-marriage checks and confirm that the details contained on the marriage document or marriage schedule are correct before the marriage proceeds.
- The marriage will still be performed by Church of England or Church in Wales rites.
- You will still use registration ink to complete the marriage schedule.

What will change:

- You will be required to create a marriage document or obtain the marriage schedule prior to the date of marriage.
- You will no longer complete the formal register for the marriages you solemnize (There will still be a register kept by you for the records of your church).
- You will no longer issue the legal marriage certificates.
- The completed marriage document or marriage schedule must be returned to the register office for the registration to take place in the electronic marriage register before a certificate can be issued.
- You will no longer need to complete quarterly returns for marriages which take place in your building.
- You will no longer be responsible for corrections in marriage registers. After the changes are introduced, all corrections to marriage entries will be carried out by the registration officers or GRO.
- The electronic register will also allow for the names of parents of the couple (mother / father / parent) to be included in the marriage entry instead of only their fathers' names as is currently the case.

What happens next?

In the coming weeks we will provide you with training materials and instructions for the new procedures which will support you as we move to the new marriage schedule system. The support material will also include a step by step guide of the new processes and a frequently asked questions document.

The first of the support materials will be available shortly.

There will also be an opportunity to attend a question and answer session with GRO representatives prior to the implementation of the marriage schedule system.

If you have any comments about this newsletter, please contact GROCasework@gro.gov.uk