



HM Passport
Office

General Register Office

Clergy Newsletter

Clergy Newsletter

Issue 13: June 2021

Introduction

Welcome to the 13th edition of the newsletter for members of the clergy. In this newsletter we are including some helpful hints and tips in response to queries that have arisen since the introduction of the marriage schedule system in May and further guidance has been published on the LRSA website on checking an individual's status under the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) in particular for Certificate's of Application.

The Training and Business Improvement Team, the General Register Office (GRO)

COMPLETION OF A MARRIAGE DOCUMENT/SCHEDULE

Since the implementation of the Marriage Schedule System the GRO have received a number of enquiries where clarification is being sought as to the completion of the marriage document and marriage schedule. To aid members of the clergy we thought it would be useful to highlight some of the frequently asked questions or issues that have been identified in terms of the relevant spaces:-

The Heading

What if my church is not in a parish? For the purpose of marriage and marriage registration your church will be described as being in a parish, therefore you must not cross through the words parish or enter something different as this cannot be recorded on the registration and subsequent certificates".

Can we amend a typographical error in the Heading of the Marriage schedule? Yes you may, e.g. if the Register Office has typed Northehamptonshire instead of Northamptonshire then this may be amended and initialled by the couple.

Space 1 (Date and place of marriage)

If the terminology "TBA" (To Be Arranged) has been used in space 1 for the date of marriage please cross through and ensure the actual date of the ceremony is added. If the space is blank, you must also enter the date of marriage.

Please also check the format is recorded correctly ie First July 2021.

You should always check this space to ensure the place of marriage has been recorded.

Space 4 (Condition)

What should I do if I record the old marital conditions of Spinster and Bachelor in error?

The condition "Single" replaced Spinster and Bachelor in 2005 and in the event that Bachelor or Spinster is recorded in error, then you should amend it to read "Single" and ask the relevant party to initial the amendment.

Space 7 (Mother/Father/Parent name surname and occupation)

Can incorrect parent details be corrected after the religious ceremony? Yes, both the order of parent names and details may be amended and initialled by the relevant party.

What is the correct way to record the details of a parent when they are deceased and retired? Record (deceased) after the name first then (retired) after their occupation, e.g. Peter THOMPSON (deceased) Engineer (retired).

NB: there is no need to add a designation for parent unless they are a step-parent. There is also no required order of preference, the couple should decide how their parents are recorded in this space.

Space 8 (Attestation)

How do I amend the details in the marriage schedule to reflect the fact that the marriage followed ecclesiastical preliminaries? Delete the "usages of", after "parish of" insert the name of the parish or other appropriate ecclesiastical description; e.g. They wouldn't have a MS if it was banns etc.. they'd have an MD so I don't understand the question?

"Marriage solemnised according to the rites and ceremonies ~~of/usages~~ of the Church of England in the parish of All Saints by schedule by me J Smith, John Smith, Vicar."

Space 9 (Signature of the Parties)

The bride has signed in her new married name, what should I do? The name that should be recorded in the name and surname area of the form is the name in use on the day of the marriage. However, if the bride/groom decides to sign in their new name they can.

Should I add the full names of the parties on the reverse of the marriage document/schedule?

If space is limited and you cannot fit everything into the box on the front of the form then we would recommend that you use the reverse, making clear what space it should be shown in. If you do note anything on the reverse of the form then you should ensure you indicate this on the front of the form. Including as much information as possible in the note on the reverse will reduce the need for the LRS to contact you to clarify the data.

Space 10 (Name and Witnesses)

Should I add the full names of the witnesses on the reverse of the marriage document/schedule? If space is limited and you cannot fit everything into the box on the front of the form then yes, we would recommend that this is done as it will reduce telephone calls from the Local Registration Service clarifying details ahead of the completion of the marriage registration.

Should the witnesses add their surnames in block capitals? It is not necessary for them to do this, though this is not an error and does not need amending.

Space 11 (Signature of person authorised to sign the schedule)

What do I add for my designation? Whatever your appropriate designation is, e.g. Vicar, Curate or Clerk in Holy Orders.

Additionally GRO has been asked if it is possible for individual churches to create their own marriage document in word. In order to avoid any confusion using non-statutory forms, we would advise that this is not appropriate. We have also been made aware that when some marriage documents have been sent in the post, there is insufficient postage to cover the postage cost. Therefore, if you are posting a marriage schedule/document, then please ensure that the postage paid is sufficient to cover the cost of returning the document/schedule to the local register office.

EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) and Certificate of Application (CoA)

Currently, for a person who holds EUSS either settled or pre-settled status, the way to check that status is through GOV.UK. An individual with a status under EUSS wishing to marry will need to access a unique six digit code and supply that code at their initial appointment to determine if the individual can marry under ecclesiastical or civil preliminaries. The member of clergy will then enter the code on to GOV.UK and it will provide the picture of the individual as well as confirming the status they hold.

For pending applications its always been intended for an individual to provide a CoA to prove they have made an application to EUSS and for the purposes of the calling of banns or the issues of a common licence they can be treated as a relevant national.

What is changing:

EUSS are currently contacting all individuals who have a pending application under EUSS to inform them they will be issued with a digital CoA and how to access and use it.

The digital CoA will be checked in the same way as settled or pre-settled status via GOV.UK but this does not invalidate the previous CoA if a person wished to use it – Paper/PDF versions remain valid whilst the application is still pending, even if a digital status is available.

More information will be made available on the LRSA website.

The Guidebook for the Clergy

Will be updated to reflect some of the points raised above. Once finalised the updated version will be uploaded onto the usual page on GOV.UK.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-the-clergy>

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