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# Guidebook for Secretaries (for Marriages) of Synagogues

General Register Office  
Issued: 2012  
Last updated: February 2023

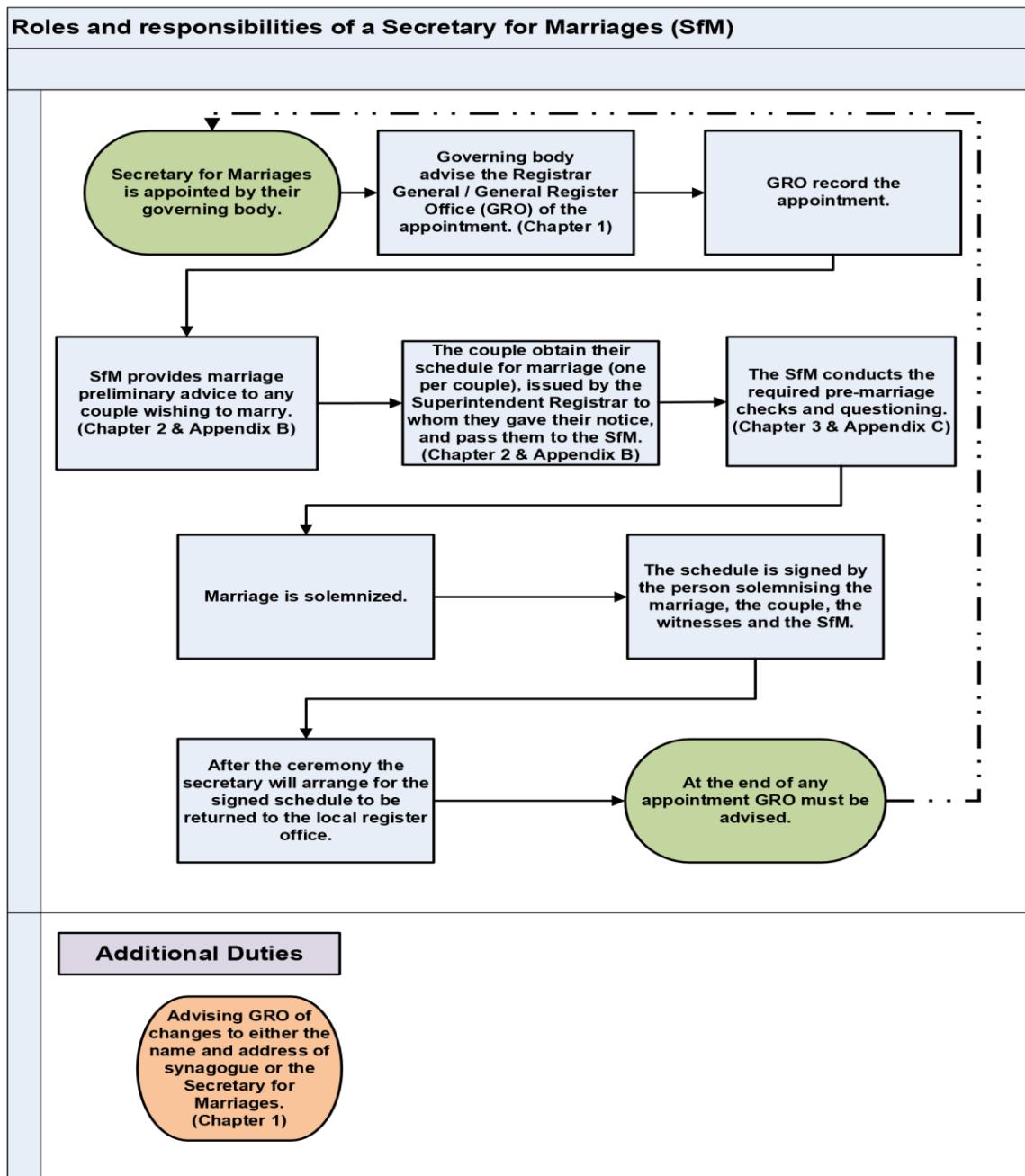
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## **Introduction**

This booklet has been designed to provide you with guidance in your role at marriage ceremonies. We hope you will find it helpful; if you have any queries, please contact your local Superintendent Registrar (SR) or the General Register Office (GRO). GRO contact details can be found in Appendix A.

Your responsibility, as a Secretary for Marriages, is to ensure that the legal requirements of marriages solemnized are met; this includes marriage preliminaries, the pre-marriage questioning and the return of the signed marriage schedule to a registrar in the district in which the marriage was solemnised. Below is a summary of your roles and responsibilities.



## 1 Roles and Responsibilities

### Becoming a Secretary for Marriages

- 1.1 Before you start your duties as Secretary of a Synagogue, the Registrar General (GRO) must be notified of your appointment. The notification must specify if the appointment is for the marriage of opposite or same sex couples, or for both. The definition of a Secretary of a Synagogue for the purposes of marriage registration therefore only applies to:

- A person, whom the President of the Board of Deputies to British Jews certifies to the Registrar General to be the Secretary of a Synagogue of persons professing the Jewish religion.

- A person certified to the Registrar General to be the Secretary of the West London Synagogue, or of a synagogue connected with it or
  - A person certified to the Registrar General to be the Secretary of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, or of a synagogue connected with it.
- 1.2 The Secretary of a Synagogue is required to describe themselves as “Secretary for Marriages” in the marriage schedule. other titles such as ‘registrar’ must not be used.
- 1.3 In the case of the temporary absence of the Secretary for Marriages, an ‘Additional Secretary’ may be appointed. However, they must have been certified by the relevant body and the Registrar General (GRO) advised before they act in the capacity of secretary for marriages.
- 1.4 In addition to the Secretary of a Synagogue certified to the Registrar General, there may be another official connected to a synagogue who may be appointed to perform the synagogues ordinary secretarial duties. They are known as ‘the secretary’. However, this person has no authority to sign the marriage schedule.
- Marriage of same sex couples**
- 1.5 For marriages of same sex couples the relevant governing authority will have to give their consent before the legal preliminaries can be completed. Consent allowing marriage of same sex couples can be obtained as described on page 7.

| <i>The “relevant governing authority” is...</i>   | <i>...if the marriage falls to be registered by...</i>  |
|---|---|
| the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth  | the secretary of a synagogue certified under paragraph (a) of the relevant definition (certification by the President of the Board of Deputies)   |
| the person or persons duly recognised by the members of—<br><br>(i). the West London Synagogue of British Jews (“the West London Synagogue”), and<br>(ii). the other synagogues that are constituents of or affiliated to the Movement for Reform Judaism | — either the secretary of the West London Synagogue, as certified under paragraph (b) of the relevant definition<br>— or the secretary of another synagogue in a case where:<br>(i) the secretary is certified under paragraph (d) of the relevant definition by the secretary of the West London Synagogue, and<br>(ii) the synagogue is one of those which are constituents of or affiliated to the Movement for Reform Judaism |
| the person or persons duly recognised by the members of—<br><br>(i) the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, St. John's Wood (“the St. John's Wood Synagogue”), and<br>(ii) the other synagogues that are constituents of or affiliated to Liberal Judaism           | — either the secretary of the St. John's Wood Synagogue, as certified under paragraph (c) of the relevant definition<br>— or the secretary of another synagogue in a case where:<br>(i) the secretary is certified under paragraph (d) of the relevant definition by the secretary of the St. John's Wood Synagogue, and<br>(ii) the synagogue is one of those which are constituents of, or affiliated to Liberal Judaism        |
| the person or persons duly recognised by the members of the synagogue by whose secretary the marriage falls to be registered  | the secretary of a synagogue certified under paragraph (d) of the relevant definition (certification by the secretary of the West London Synagogue or the secretary of the St. John's Wood Synagogue), in a case where the synagogue is not one of those which are constituents of, or affiliated to:<br><br>(i) the Movement for Reform Judaism, or<br>(ii) Liberal Judaism  |

## **Civil Partnerships in religious premises**

- 1.6 If your registered building is also approved for the formation of civil partnerships, (both opposite and same sex) then it is important to remember that a civil partnership formation in a religious building is by law, an entirely secular event. Any non-statutory religious ceremony, which is also allowed in law and may precede or follow the legal civil partnership formation, must be distinct and separate from the legal formation. It is also important that a civil partnership registrar, who is also a secretary, clearly understands their different roles during the statutory and non statutory elements of the civil partnership and clearly conveys this to the couple, the witnesses and their guests.
- 1.7 We would suggest that secretaries, who are also acting as civil partnership registrar, adopt the following procedure at a civil partnership formation.
- 1.8 Welcome the couple and their guests to the premises stating the following: -

"The.....(name of the registered building) has been approved according to the law for the formation of civil partnerships.

That according to the law A & B will become civil partners when they sign the civil partnership schedule in the presence of C & D, witnesses and myself as the civil partnership registrar for .....registration authority.

That I am also the secretary of .....(name of building), I will lead a religious ceremony before the proceedings commence with a further ceremony taking place at the conclusion of the proceedings, when A, B, C, D and myself have signed the civil partnership schedule."

- 1.9 When as secretary, you are acting as a civil partnership registrar, then you should ensure that the civil partnership schedule is returned to the registration authority to be registered. The parties should be advised that until this is done, they will not be able to obtain a certified copy of their civil partnership.
- 1.10 If you have been appointed by your local registration authority to act as a civil partnership registrar, then you should be aware that it is an offence to fail to return the schedule without reasonable cause to do so.

## **Civil partnership conversion into marriage**

- 1.11 The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 allows couples in a civil partnership to convert their civil partnership into a marriage by signing a declaration in the presence of a superintendent registrar.

- 1.12 The declaration can be signed in the following settings, but only where a ceremony is to immediately follow.
- Religious buildings registered for marriages of same sex couples (including military, naval and air force chapels)
  - A synagogue
  - A meeting place of the Society of Friends.
- 1.13 The civil partnership conversion into marriage will be registered by the superintendent registrar, who will be in attendance on the day. A secretary or Rabbi may be involved in the ceremony that follows the signing of the declaration but will have no role to play in the registration.
- 1.14 The superintendent registrar will allow the person conducting the ceremony to view the signed declaration prior to commencing the ceremony. The signed declaration does not need to be copied and will be retained by the Superintendent Registrar so that the marriage resulting from the conversion can be registered. The registration will be carried by the superintendent registrar at the local register office, after which a certificate of the converted marriage can be issued.
- 1.15 It is the responsibility of the couple to make the necessary arrangements with the person conducting the ceremony and the superintendent registrar to attend the proposed venue. If you are approached to conduct a ceremony following the conversion of civil partnership into marriage, you should advise the couple to get in touch with the superintendent registrar at the Register Office.

#### **Changes to the name and address of a synagogue**

- 1.16 It is important that any change in the name or address of a synagogue be notified to the Registrar General (GRO) and:
- The Secretary, Board of Deputies of the British Jews. 1 Torriano Mews, London, NW5 2RZ.
  - Or, in the case of a synagogue connected to the West London Synagogue to the Secretary of the West London Synagogue of British Jews, 33 Seymour Place. London. W1H 5AU.
  - Or in the case of a synagogue connected with the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, 28 St John Wood Road, London. NW8 7NA.

### **Marriage registers**

- 1.17 The Secretary of a Synagogue has legal custody and responsibility for any duplicate registers and schedules in their care. As such, all persons with the responsibility for holding the duplicate registers and schedules have a duty to ensure their safekeeping and prevent their loss or theft. See also section 4.10

### **Missing or stolen safe**

- 1.18 In the event of your safe being stolen, this matter should be reported to the Police immediately. If the registers or schedules are unaccounted for and there is the possibility that it may have involved a theft, you should also report this to the Police. In both cases a Police Crime Incident Number should be obtained.
- 1.19 In all instances, GRO must be notified immediately on telephone number 0300 123 1837 (select Option 1). When you ring GRO, they will take details of the incident, and send out a report form for completion. The details GRO require include the name, address and building number, and the number of registers stolen and the Police Crime Incident Number.
- 1.20 Your local superintendent registrar should also be notified of any loss or theft of schedules or registers.

### **Ink**

- 1.21 A permanent type of black ink should be used when signing the schedule . Registration ink can be purchased from Ecclesiastical Stationery Supplies. Contact details can be found in Appendix A.

### **Damaged register books**

- 1.22 If a duplicate marriage register needs to be rebound or repaired, the secretary for marriages may wish to ensure that this is done.

### **Disposal of registers from a closed synagogue**

- 1.23 In the event of a synagogue being permanently closed or disused for any reason, the Registrar General must be notified. Please contact the GRO via email to [GROcasework@gro.gov.uk](mailto:GROcasework@gro.gov.uk) or telephone 0300 123 1837 for advice regarding closed marriage registers in the event of closure or disuse.

### **Change of contact details**

- 1.24 Please notify GRO and your local SR of any changes to your contact details including home address, telephone number and email address.

### **Leaving office**

- 1.25 If a Secretary of a Synagogue relinquishes his appointment, any registers that they are responsible for must be delivered to the synagogue officers. A Secretary of a Synagogue appointed to succeed

another must be certified to the Registrar General (GRO) and apply for any registers from the synagogue officers.

## 2. Marriage Preliminaries

### General information

- 2.1 A marriage can only be solemnized where couples have given notice of intent to marry at a register office, and the superintendent registrar has issued their schedule for marriage, one per couple. An example of a superintendent registrar's schedule can be found in Appendix E.
- 2.2 In March 2015, a scheme to tackle sham marriages and civil partnerships in the UK was introduced. A sham marriage or civil partnership is entered into by a couple who are not in a genuine relationship, in order to obtain an immigration advantage for one or both of them.
- 2.3 The notice period for civil preliminaries is 28 days. However, for couples where one or both parties is a non-Relevant National with limited or no immigration status, the Home Office may extend the notice period to 70 days to investigate whether their case is a sham.
- 2.4 The scheme also introduced a requirement for both parties to a proposed marriage to provide a photograph of themselves to the superintendent registrar when they give notice of marriage, where one or both parties is a non-Relevant National and subject to immigration control (see 2.8 and 2.10).
- 2.5 The marriage must not be allowed to proceed unless the superintendent registrar's schedule has been produced to the Secretary for Marriages.
- 2.6 A certificate for marriage issued in Scotland (called a certificate of no impediment) for a marriage to take place in England or Wales must be presented to the Superintendent registrar of the district of the marriage, before they may issue their schedule, see appendix D. The certificate of no impediment is not an authority for the marriage to proceed, although after presentation to the superintendent registrar it will enable the schedule to be issued which will be presented to you as the authority for the marriage. On no account should you accept a certificate of no impediment as an authority for marriage and if you are, you should contact your local register office.
- 2.7 Documents which cannot be accepted as an authority for marriage are: banns certificates, ecclesiastical licences, documents issued in a British dominion, colony or protectorate of protected state or any document issued in a foreign country.

## **RELEVANT NATIONAL**

- 2.8 A relevant national is defined as one of the following:-
- (i) A British Citizen
  - (ii) an Irish Citizen
  - (iii) A person who has been granted EU Settlement Status (EUSS) either settled or pre-settled or has a pending application for that settled status submitted before 30 June 2021

If either party is not a British or Irish citizen and is unsure if they have EUSS, then they should contact their local superintendent registrar for further advice

- Giving notice of intent to marry**
- 2.9 Both parties to the marriage need to give notice at either the same or different register offices, depending on where they live and their nationality and immigration status. The couple must complete 7 full days residence in that district before they can give notice, and they may only give notice up to 12 months ahead of the marriage. After 28 clear days from when the notice has been entered, the superintendent may issue their schedule. A flowchart showing where a couple can give notice is in Appendix B.
- 2.10 For couples where one or both parties is a non-Relevant National with limited or no immigration status, the Home Office may extend the notice period to 70 days to investigate whether their case is a sham. You should be aware (before confirming a booking) that the notice period may, in certain circumstances, be extended to 70 days.
- 2.11 Where one or both parties to an intended marriage is a non-Relevant National, they must attend together at a designated register office in the registration district where one or both of them live to give notice of intent to marry, unless they are exempt from immigration control (e.g. has right of abode in the UK or diplomatic status).
- 2.12 Each person giving notice will need to present documents that evidence their name, age, nationality and residence, and same sex couples should also produce a letter of consent, as detailed in 1.5, in the case of am.
- 2.13 After 28 clear days from when the notice has been entered, the SR of the district of marriage may issue their schedule. Where one or both parties to a proposed marriage is a non-Relevant National and subject to immigration control, there is a requirement for both parties to provide a photograph to the superintendent registrar when they give notice of marriage. A document containing the photographs will be sent to the

Secretary for Marriages along with the superintendent registrar's schedule before the wedding is due to take place.

- 2.14 The photographs should be used to ensure the person who attends the ceremony is the same person who attended to give notice. If there is any doubt, then please contact GRO on 0300 123 1837 (Option 1). However, if for any reason the photographs are not received, the marriage should proceed as planned. Once the marriage has taken place the photographs should be confidentially destroyed. If this is not possible, you should return the photographs to the superintendent registrar.
- 2.15 The Registrar General may, where there are exceptional circumstances and compelling reasons, reduce the 28-day waiting period when the couple formally applies for this. On such occasions, you should advise the couple to speak to their local superintendent registrar. Couples should be advised that there is an additional charge for this service
- 2.16 Marriages must be between persons both professing the Jewish religion and may take place in a synagogue, private house or any other venue as detailed on the schedule for marriage issued by the Superintendent Registrar.
- 2.17 Both parties must be 18 years of age or over on the day of marriage
- 2.18 If either party has been previously married or in a civil partnership, evidence that the marriage / civil partnership has ended will need to be submitted at the time of giving notice. This is usually in the form of a death certificate, divorce decree absolute or annulment document.
- 2.19 If either party has been married before and have a divorce which was obtained outside the UK, the superintendent registrar may refer it to the Casework Team at GRO.
- 2.20 This referral process at 2.10 can take longer than the minimum 28 day waiting period. To reduce the number of marriages that have to be postponed whilst waiting for this clearance, it is recommended that the couple are advised to give their notices at the earliest possible point i.e. up to 12 months prior to the intended date of marriage.
- 2.21 If one of the parties is serving aboard one of HM Ships at sea, they may give notice to the Commanding Officer who will issue a certificate. In this case, the waiting period is a clear 21 days and not 28 days. There is no provision for the Registrar General to reduce this waiting period. Only when the Captain's certificate has been issued can the other party give notice at their local register office, the superintendent registrar's schedule may only be issued on the expiry of the 28-day waiting period.

### **Restrictions on marriage**

2.22 The following are legal impediments to a marriage:

- A marriage contracted by anyone under the age of 18
- Pre-existing marriage or civil partnership – polygamy/polyandry is not legal within England & Wales.
- Prohibited degree of relationship - a marriage solemnized between persons related within certain relationships by blood or adoption is void. Generally speaking, if there are 2 or less links e.g. a man marrying his mother's sister (aunt) this would be void.

### **Place of marriage**

2.23 There are no restrictions to the place of marriage as long as it is in England or Wales.

2.24 The couple may only marry in the place which is specified in the superintendent registrar's schedule. There are no restrictions to the hours within which the marriage may be solemnized.

### **Access**

2.25 The public must have unrestricted access to the building during any marriage ceremony to allow for valid objections against the marriage.

### **Witnesses**

2.26 A minimum of two witnesses must be present at the marriage and there is a requirement that two of them must sign the document. However, there will be capacity in the register to record up to six witnesses. While it is up to you if additional people sign in the space for witnesses, you must ensure that their names and signatures are legible and can fit in the space provided. There is no lower age limit, but they must be able to understand what is taking place and if necessary, give evidence as to what they have seen and heard if they are required to testify in court

### **Marriage by Registrar General's Licence**

2.27 The Marriage (Registrar General's Licence) Act 1970 provides for a marriage to take place when one of the parties is seriously ill and not expected to recover. The marriage can be a civil or religious ceremony (except for Church of England or Church in Wales marriages). If you have any queries about Registrar General's Licences, please contact your local superintendent registrar.

### **Two marriage ceremonies on the same day**

2.28 If a couple wish to have two marriage ceremonies performed on the same day, they should be advised that this is not possible. The couple

could choose to have either a religious marriage ceremony, or a civil marriage ceremony followed by a religious blessing.

#### **Religious ceremony after a civil marriage**

- 2.29 Section 46 of the Marriage Act 1949 allows a couple to have a religious ceremony i.e. a blessing, after their civil marriage. The couple must produce a certificate of their civil marriage before the ceremony may take place.
- 2.30 The religious ceremony does not invalidate or supersede the civil marriage and no record may be made in the marriage registers kept under the Marriage Act 1949. No legal preliminaries are required for such a religious ceremony.

#### **Re-marriage**

- 2.31 A couple who are already lawfully married or in a civil partnership cannot choose to re-marry each other unless there is some doubt as to the validity of the earlier marriage / civil partnership.
- 2.32 Where there is no apparent informality in the previous marriage/civil partnership and the couple merely wish to go through another marriage ceremony with each other, they should be informed that they are already lawfully married / in a civil partnership with each other and there is no statutory provision for marriage preliminaries to be completed in these circumstances.
- 2.33 If it is unclear whether a previous marriage or civil partnership is capable of recognition as lawful, advice should be sought from the General Register Office.

#### **Parental Names**

- 2.34 A recent change in the law now provides for up to four parents to be recorded in a marriage schedule and subsequently the marriage entry for each of the parties to the proposed marriage. These are mother, father, parent, and step-parent. These details will be captured when the couple give notice at the local register office. In view of the sensitivities that may concern the choice of parent to be recorded in the marriage schedule and to avoid any embarrassment on the day of the marriage, we would suggest that you check with the couple well in advance (i.e. prior to them giving notice of marriage) which parental options that they require. The term "Step-parent", in relation to a party to a marriage, means a step-parent who is or was married to, or the civil partner of, a parent of the party.

### **3. Solemnization of Marriage**

## **Pre-marriage checks**

You must carry out the following checks before you allow the ceremony to go ahead. See the flowchart in Appendix C.

- 3.1 The superintendent registrar's schedule for marriage should be presented to you before the day of the marriage. The heading of the schedule and spaces 1 to 7 will already be pre-populated with information taken from the notices given at the local register office. You must check the schedule and ensure that:
- i. the place where the marriage is taking place is correctly specified on the schedule (see Chapter 2 paragraph 2.23);
  - ii. the schedule is valid (a schedule is valid for 12 calendar months from the date of entry in the marriage notice book).

An example of a superintendent registrar's schedule for marriage is in Appendix E.

## **Pre-marriage questions**

- 3.2 You must check that there is no legal impediment to the marriage and ask the following questions of both parties:

- **What is the name by which you are known, and have you been known by any other name?**  
The names and surnames must agree with those on the schedule. If there are any discrepancies, you must question the parties further. If the differences can be satisfactorily explained, you should go ahead with the marriage. If the differences cannot be explained you should contact your local superintendent registrar or the General Register Office.

See also the example in Appendix I.

- **What is your date of birth?**  
The couple must both be over 18 for the marriage to be valid. If not, you must postpone the marriage. This question also ensures that the correct date of birth for each party was entered into the marriage schedule
- **Have you been through any form of marriage or civil partnership in this, or any other country?**  
The “condition” must agree with that shown on the schedule. If there is a discrepancy, you must question that person further and, if in doubt, contact the SR or their deputy who issued the schedule before the ceremony. If you are unable to contact the SR, you should seek advice from GRO as to whether you can proceed with the marriage.

If, at the time of the marriage, evidence is provided which shows that the party is free to marry, you may proceed with the ceremony. Where the evidence relates to a divorce outside the United Kingdom, Isle of Man or Channel Islands you should contact the GRO.

- 3.3 If the details on the superintendent registrar's schedule do not match the information given to you by each of the parties to the proposed marriage and the discrepancy does not affect the identity or status of the parties to the marriage, or disclose a legal impediment, then you should correct the marriage schedule before the marriage is solemnized. You should cross through any inaccurate information so that it is still legible, and any correction or addition should be made in registration ink and be initialled the party to the marriage. As a matter of good practice, we would strongly recommend that you initial the amendment as well as it adds an element of assurance that the amendment has been made by the secretary and not the couple themselves. However, although this is not mandatory.

There will be instances where you will decide to proceed with the ceremony, even though an initialled amendment relates to the status or identity of the one of the parties to the marriage. In these cases, you should write a note of explanation of the circumstances on the back of the schedule.

A flowchart showing the process for pre-marriage checks can be found at Appendix B.

### **Forced marriages**

- 3.4. Both parties must be present at the ceremony, be able to recognise each other and enter into the marriage contract knowingly and voluntarily. If you are in any doubt, please contact your local SR or GRO to discuss whether the marriage should take place. Signs you may wish to take into account include:

- either party showing signs of emotional distress;
- either party showing signs of physical harm or assault;
- one party may do all the talking or be reluctant to let the other party be spoken to alone;
- the parties are unable to converse in the same language;
- an allegation of a forced marriage has been made by someone else.

If you suspect that one of the parties about to marry is doing so against their will, you should enquire whether they wish to proceed and offer to contact the Forced Marriage Unit at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office. Contact details are in Appendix A. You will need to act with sensitivity, and it is recommended that you find a way to discuss the

matter privately (without family members) with the person – be aware that this could be their only chance to let someone know that they are being forced to marry. If the person decides to proceed with the marriage it is best practice to get written confirmation that they are entering into the marriage voluntarily. If you decide to not proceed with the marriage, you must inform GRO. If however the party insists on the marriage proceeding, you should go ahead Further guidance on forced marriage is available on GOV.UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage>

### **Sham marriage**

- 3.5 Under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, a sham marriage is one entered into for the purposes of evading the provisions of United Kingdom immigration law or the immigration rules and involves at least one party who is not a Relevant National.
- 3.6 The signs of a sham marriage may be similar to those associated with a forced marriage listed above. However, the following may also be indicative of a sham marriage:
  - either party giving the impression of knowing very little about the other person;
  - either party referring to notes to answer questions about the other person;
  - one of the parties is seen to receive payment for the marriage;
  - an allegation that it is a sham marriage has been made by a credible third person, e.g. Immigration Officer or Police Officer;
  - there is little interaction between the couple; or,
  - one of the parties seems unable to give the full name or address of the other person.
- 3.7 None of these reasons may in itself indicate that the marriage is a sham and there may be other factors which may arouse your suspicions that are not listed. However, it is generally expected that a sham marriage will be a combination of these factors.
- 3.8 A sham marriage should not be confused with a traditional arranged marriage that is usually organised by family members, where there may be no intention to circumvent immigration law.
- 3.9 If you have any concerns that a marriage may be a sham when the couple first contact you or at any time prior to the marriage ceremony, you should contact your local superintendent registrar for advice. It is important to remember that a sham marriage is not an impediment to a marriage, and if you do suspect that a marriage may be a sham then you should allow the ceremony to proceed, although afterwards you should notify your local superintendent registrar, who, if satisfied that

the proposed marriage was a sham, is obliged under the 1999 Act to report the facts of the matter to Home Office (Immigration).

### **Mental capacity and Vulnerable Adults**

Both parties to the marriage must have the mental capacity to understand the nature of the marriage that they are about to contract. A vulnerable adult is defined as a person aged 18 and over and who is or may be in need of community case services by reason of mental or other disability, age, or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or serious exploitation. A vulnerable adult could include an individual

- with learning difficulties
- with dementia
- who lacks capacity as defined under the Mental Capacity Act 2005

In all cases demeanour should not be used solely as a guide that the person is entering into the marriage of their own free will as they may not show signs of emotional distress or harm e.g. just because a person appears happy about a forthcoming wedding does not mean that they have the capacity to consent to the marriage.

3.10 A person should understand:

- (i) that they are taking part in a marriage ceremony and understands the words used;
- (ii) the nature of the marriage contract. This means the person must be capable of understanding the duties and responsibilities which normally attach to marriage.

3.11 A person's mental capacity will have been assessed and considered at the time they gave their notice of marriage. However, if at pre-marriage questioning you have any concerns, you should immediately discuss the matter with your local superintendent registrar or GRO who will be able to advise you further. A marriage cannot proceed if a person does not have the mental capacity to marry.

3.12 A key principle of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 is that a person must be assumed to have capacity unless it is established that he/she lacks capacity. It should never be assumed that because a person has a learning disability that they lack the capacity to marry.

## **4. Completing and Signing the Marriage Schedule**

4.1 A schedule for a Jewish marriage must be completed as follows.

- (i) where the parties to the marriage are both members of the same synagogue; the marriage schedule shall be completed by the secretary of the synagogue, or
  - (ii) where the parties to the marriage are members of different synagogues; the marriage schedule shall be completed by the secretary of whichever of those synagogues the parties to the marriage nominate.
- 4.2 The secretary of marriages, both parties to the marriage, at least two witnesses and the person by, or before whom, the marriage was solemnized must sign the schedule.

### **Errors found before the ceremony**

- 4.3 The secretary should check the details in the schedule with the parties to ensure that they are correct. If a discrepancy is found at this stage and does not affect the identity or status of the parties, it can then be manually amended and initialled by the relevant party as explained at paragraph 3.3. As also stated at paragraph 3.3, we would suggest, as a matter of good practice that you initial the amendment as well, although this is not mandatory.

### **Signing the schedule**

- 4.4 On the completion of the ceremony. In space 8 you should add the rites used in the ceremony, i.e. “the Jews” after “usages of”, and your signature after “by schedule by me” and your name and designation. Alternatively, if a Rabbi officiated at the ceremony, then they must add their name and signature instead in space 8 instead.

In space 9 the parties should add their usual signatures followed by the witnesses in space 10. The witnesses should also add their names of their signatures in space 10. In space 11 you should sign adding you name and designation.

For marriages in a registered building the person signing space 8 of the marriage schedule may also be the same person signing space 11 (see above).

Any correction to the marriage schedule should be done following pre-marriage questioning and before the marriage is solemnised, see paragraph 3.3. However, a minor typographical or transcription error, for example the mis-spelling of an occupation may be corrected at this stage.

Once the schedule has been signed you should advise the couple that you will return it to a registrar in the district where the marriage was solemnised in order for the marriage to be registered and a certificate issued. Alternatively, and with your agreement, the parties or a relative can return the marriage document to a registrar in that registration district on

your behalf. Once this has been done, and not before, the couple or their representatives will be able to obtain a marriage certificate.

4.5 Where a person makes a mark or signs in a foreign language, you should write either

- “the mark of.....”
- or
- “the signature of.....”

next to the mark or signature and then write the forenames and surnames of that person.

#### **Illegible signatures**

4.6 If one or more of the signatures (including the officiating officer) are illegible, please ensure that you print the names that they relate to, in pencil, on the reverse of the schedule. This will help the registrar in the registration district where the marriage was solemnized and who will register the marriage on RON when the schedule is returned to there.

As a matter of good practice, we would strongly recommend that you should print the signatures of the parties to the marriage on the reverse of the marriage schedule. This will reduce the incidence of registration officers contacting you to clarify a signature prior to registration

#### **Return of the schedule to the Register Office**

- 4.7 The Secretary is legally required to return the signed marriage schedule to a registrar in the district where the marriage was solemnised, 21 days after the date of the marriage. If the register office has not received the schedule within the 21 days, then they will write to you to request the return of marriage schedule.
- 4.8 If the signed schedule has still not been received within 8 days of the date of this letter, then the local registration service will send a further notice requiring you to attend in person at the register office within 8 days of the date of the notice. Failure to attend the register office after being given a notice to do so is an offence and you may be liable to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale, which is currently £1000.
- 4.9 Alternatively, and with your agreement, the parties or a relative can return the marriage schedule to a registrar in the district where the marriage was solemnised on your behalf. Once received at the register office the marriage is registered, in the electronic register (Registration Online, RON), and the parties can then apply for a certified copy of their marriage entry.

### **Filled register books and searching and issuing certificates**

- 4.10 Following the implementation of the Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths (Registration etc.) Act 2019 (the 2019 Act), there is no requirement for marriage registers to be completed by secretaries (see above paragraphs). The place of worship will however have a number of registers that are completed or closed. These registers cannot be used for issuing certificates. However, a member of the public may still search the registers if they wish, although if they require a certified copy then they will need to contact the local register office or the GRO. Your closed duplicate registers must be kept in a fire-resistant safe (ideally with internal dimensions of no less than 310mm by 465mm) and must be kept in the registered building, or in another building approved by the Registrar General

There may be occasions where a couple will have insufficient time to obtain a marriage certificate after their marriage, yet they may still require some proof of their marriage. For example, they may be travelling abroad on their honeymoon very soon after the marriage ceremony.

In these circumstances you may wish to complete and give them Acknowledgement Form at Appendix L. This is a non-statutory form, which confirms the details of their marriage and may, if so required, be produced to any other authority in this country or abroad as evidence that their marriage has taken place. However, they must be warned that it is not a marriage certificate and that as soon as practicably possible, they should obtain a marriage certificate from the register office in the district where the marriage was solemnized.

### **Examples of marriage schedules**

- 4.11 Examples of marriages schedules can be found in Appendices E to I.

## **5. Corrections**

### **Types of corrections**

- 5.1 There are two types of corrections – those discovered before the schedule is complete and those discovered afterwards, this includes when it is registered. For any other errors or cancellation of entries, please ring GRO.
- 5.2 Since the introduction of the 2019 Act there is no provision for a secretary to correct a marriage entry.
- 5.3 Corrections relating to errors to entries contained in marriage registers will be authorised by GRO and completed at the register office where the register is held. The correction will not be made in the closed, duplicate register held at the registered building.

- 5.4 Corrections to marriages which are registered following the signing of a marriage schedule will be authorised by and carried out at GRO.
- 5.5 If a couple wish for their marriage registration to be corrected please refer them to the local register office after completing the Corrections application form [Link](#). Guidance notes for the application form are also available [Link](#)
- 5.6 You can, if you wish, also approach the local registration service on behalf of the couple. Any correction made by the local registration service or GRO will be not require the parties to the marriage or any witnesses to be present to witness the correction.
- 5.7 As part of the correction application process, the superintendent registrar may require a copy of the register page for the marriage solemnized at your building. The copy may be provided as a photocopy of the entry or a digital copy and may be transmitted digitally or by another method to the superintendent registrar.

## **6. Offences and penalties**

- 6.1 Section 76 of the Marriage Act 1949 sets out certain provisions to impose penalties on persons who refuse or neglect to sign the marriage schedule, or who carelessly lose or allow damage to the marriage schedule or closed marriage register books in their custody. See also paragraphs 4.7 and 4.8 and the paragraph on Civil Partnerships.

## Appendices

### Appendix A - Useful Contact Details

GRO

General Register Office  
Smedley Hydro, Trafalgar Road  
Southport  
Merseyside  
PR8 2HH  
Tel : 0300 123 1837  
Email : [GROcasework@gro.gov.uk](mailto:GROcasework@gro.gov.uk)

---

GRO Data Unit

Tel: 0300 072 2321  
Email: [gro.fdu@gro.gov.uk](mailto:gro.fdu@gro.gov.uk)

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GRO, Registration Supplies Unit

Tel: 0151 471 4736  
Email: [registration.supplies@gro.gov.uk](mailto:registration.supplies@gro.gov.uk)

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Ecclesiastical Stationery Supplies  
01440 784596

28 Windmill Rise, Hundon, Suffolk CO10 8EQ Tel:  
Website: <https://www.registrarsink.co.uk>

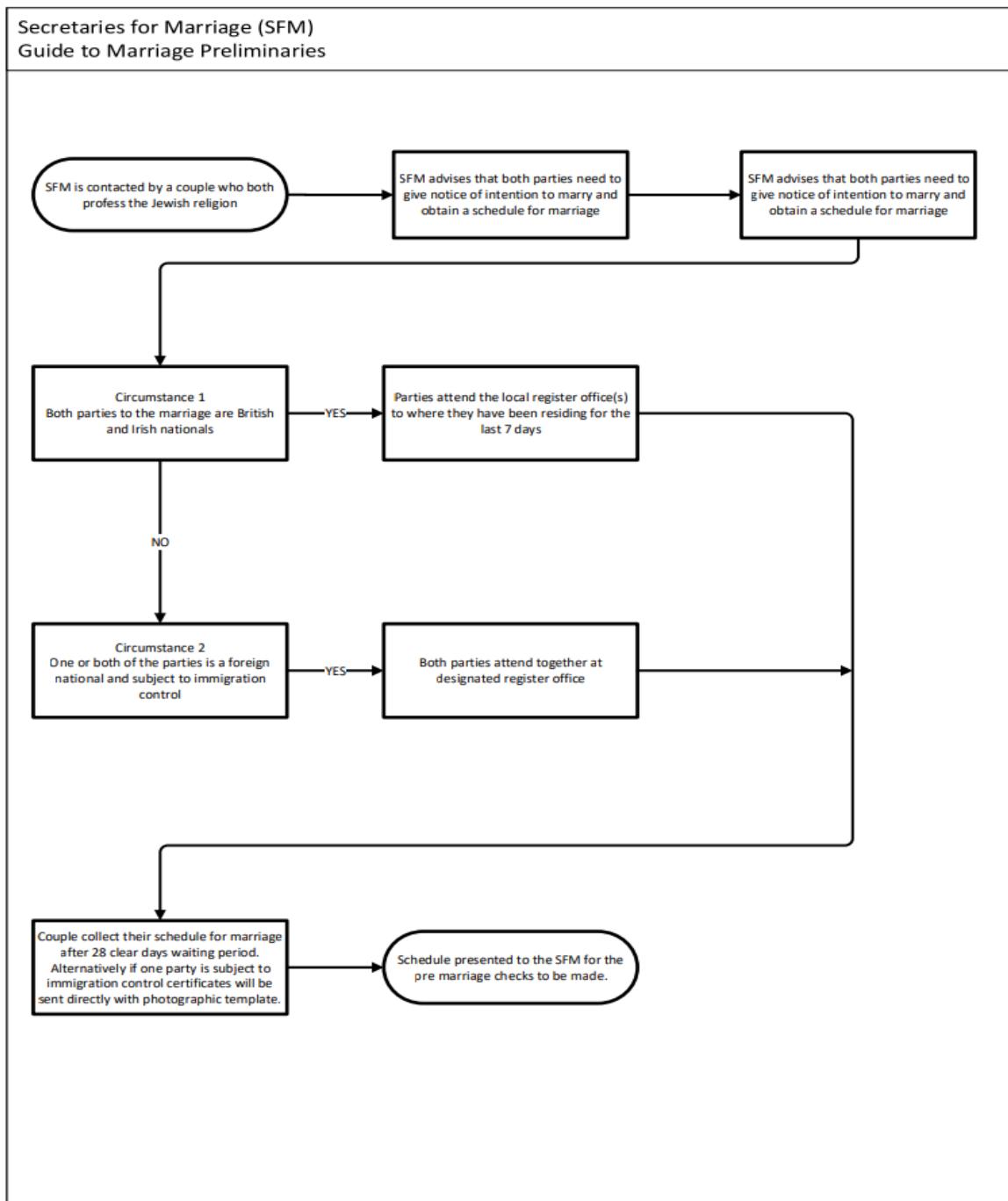
Forced Marriage Unit, Foreign &  
Commonwealth Office

0207 008 0151  
[www.gov.uk/forced-marriage](http://www.gov.uk/forced-marriage)

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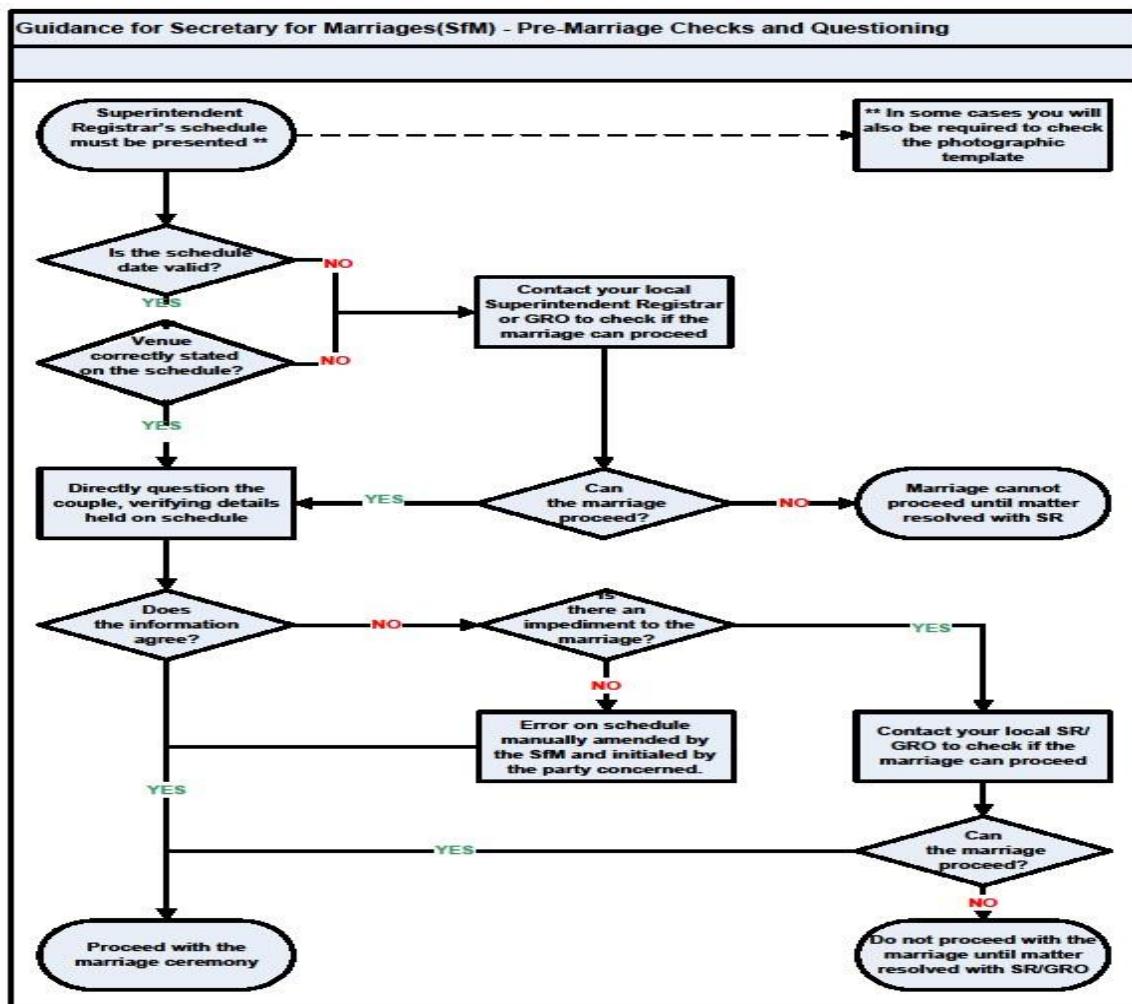
## Appendix B – Flowchart – Guide to Marriage Preliminaries

Appendix B – Flowchart – Guide to Marriage Preliminaries



The flowchart concludes with the couple collecting the schedule after the expiry of the waiting period and when they present it to the secretary for marriages.

## Appendix C – Flowchart for Pre-marriage Checks



These checks include the validity of the schedule, that the venue is correct and that the information relating to the couple's details is correct. If not then the secretary will need to contact their local register office for further advice. In some situations the marriage will have to be stopped.

## Appendix D - Description of Occupations

The following are examples of the description of occupations that, subject to the wishes of the parties, should be used when recording a rank or profession.

The kind of industry/business and any professional qualification should be added.

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Agent         | Letting Agent, Estate Agent, Booking Agent, Literary Agent  |
| Civil Servant | Official rank to be stated, followed by the name of the Department in which employed e.g. Administrative Officer, Ministry of Defence |
| Clerk         | Audit clerk, Shipping Clerk, Purchasing Clerk, Advertising clerk  |
| Designer      | Garden Designer, Costume Designer, Set Designer, Graphic Designer   |
| Director      | Film Director, Company Director, Marketing Director, Funeral Director   |
| Driver        | Fork Lift Truck Driver, Coach Driver, Driver – Hot Food Delivery, Taxi Driver   |
| Engineer      | Civil Engineer, Electrical Engineer, Computer Engineer.   |
| Fitter        | Tyre/Exhaust Fitter, Electrical Fitter, Carpet Fitter, Machine Tool Fitter  |
| Labourer      | Agricultural Labourer, Building Labourer, General Labourer  |
| Manager       | Retail Shop Manager, Sales Manager, Project Manager, Bank Manager   |
| Officer       | Finance Officer, Clerical Officer, Prison Officer, Welfare Officer  |
| Technician    | Technical Assistant A.M.I. Mech.E, Department of Trade and Industry.  |

## Appendix E Superintendent Registrar's Schedule for Marriage

| MARRIAGE SCHEDULE   |   | System No. |
|---|---|------------|
| Date / Time _____<br><b>MARRIAGE SCHEDULE</b><br>System No. _____   |   |            |
| Marriage schedule issued by ..... (designation) in the registration<br>district of ..... in the ..... (administrative area) on .....<br>The waiting period in respect of both notices of marriage has expired, or has been reduced on the authority of the<br>Registrar General. The marriage must be solemnized on or before ..... |   |            |
| 1. Date and place of marriage   |   |            |
| 2. Name and surname   |   |            |
| 3. Date of birth  |   |            |
| 4. Condition  |   |            |
| 5. Occupation   |   |            |
| 6. Residence at time of marriage  |   |            |
| 7. Mother/Father/Parent name surname and occupation   |   |            |
| 8. Marriage solemnized according to the rites and ceremonies of <del>usage of</del> *<br>in the parish of ..... by schedule by me ..... (signature)<br>..... (name) ..... (designation)   |   |            |
| <i>*delete as appropriate</i>   |   |            |
| 9. Signature of parties married   |   |            |
| 10. Name and signature of witnesses   |   |            |
| 11. Signature of person authorised to sign the schedule   | ..... (signature)<br>..... (name) ..... (designation) |            |

## Appendix F Schedule marriage at a synagogue

The details in the heading and in spaces 1 to 7 contain the information given at the time of the notice of marriage. Spaces 8 to 11 will be completed after the ceremony.

|   |   |                                 |
|---|---|---------------------------------|
| Date / Time _____<br>System No. _____   |   |                                 |
| <b>MARRIAGE SCHEDULE</b>  |   |                                 |
| Marriage schedule issued by John Smith (name) Superintendent Registrar(designation) in the registration district of Westminster in the London borough of Westminster (administrative area) on 30 <sup>th</sup> May 2023<br>The waiting period in respect of both notices of marriage has expired, or has been reduced on the authority of the Registrar General. The marriage must be solemnized on or before 30th May 2024 |   |                                 |
| 1. Date and place of marriage   | Second August 2023, West-End United Synagogue   |                                 |
| 2. Name and surname   | David John DEBENHAM   | Judith LATIMER                  |
| 3. Date of birth  | 12 <sup>th</sup> June 1958  | 16 <sup>th</sup> December 1962  |
| 4. Condition  | Single  | Widow                           |
| 5. Occupation   | Earl of Barford   | Dowager Marchioness of Chalfont |
| 6. Residence at time of marriage  | Grateley Manor, Suffolk<br>14 Belmont Place, W8   |                                 |
| 7. Mother/Father/Parent name surname and occupation   | Frank William DEBENHAM (deceased)<br>Earl of Barford<br>Esther Ruth DEBENHAM<br>Countess of Barford<br>Hugh Geoffrey COLEMAN<br>Baronet<br>Elizabeth Georgina COLEMAN<br>Baronetess |                                 |
| 8. Marriage solemnized according to the rites and ceremonies of usages of *.....<br>in the parish of ..... by schedule by me ..... (signature)<br>..... (name) ..... (designation)  |   |                                 |
| <i>*delete as appropriate</i>   |   |                                 |
| 9. Signature of parties married   |   |                                 |
| 10. Name and signature of witnesses   | .....<br>.....  |                                 |
| 11. Signature of person authorised to sign the schedule   | ..... (signature)<br>..... (name) ..... (designation)   |                                 |

## Appendix G Schedule marriage at a private address

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  | Date / Time  |   |
| <b>MARRIAGE SCHEDULE</b>   |  |   |
| System No.   |  |   |
| <p>Marriage schedule issued by John Smith (name) Superintendent Registrar(designation) in the registration district of Kirklees in the Kirklees (administrative area) on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023</p> <p>The waiting period in respect of both notices of marriage has expired, or has been reduced on the authority of the Registrar General. <u>The marriage must be solemnized on or before 30th March 2024</u></p> |  |   |
| 1. Date and place of marriage  | Second June 2023, 95 John Street, Dewsbury   |   |
| 2. Name and surname  | Mark STEINBERG   | Leah JACOBS   |
| 3. Date of birth   | 10 <sup>th</sup> June 1986   | 16 <sup>th</sup> May 1984   |
| 4. Condition   | Single   | Previous Marriage Dissolved   |
| 5. Occupation  | Hairdresser  |   |
| 6. Residence at time of marriage   | 22 York Street, Bradford   | 95 John Street Dewsbury   |
| 7. Mother/Father/Parent name surname and occupation  | June STEINBERG<br>Receptionist<br>Moshe STEINBERG (step-parent)<br>Account Manager (retired) | Isaac COHEN (Deceased)<br>Ironmonger<br>Edna COHEN<br>Housewife<br>Shimon COHEN (step-parent) |
| <p>8. Marriage solemnized according to the rites and ceremonies of/usages of *.....<br/>         in the parish of*..... by schedule by me..... (signature)<br/>         (name)..... (designation)</p> <p><i>*delete as appropriate</i></p>   |  |   |
| 9. Signature of parties married  |  |   |
| 10. Name and signature of witnesses  |  |   |
| 11. Signature of person authorised to sign the schedule  | ..... (signature)<br>..... (name) .....  |   |

## Appendix H Schedule signed by couple, witnesses and secretary

| MARRIAGE SCHEDULE  |  |                          |
|--|--|--------------------------|
| System No.   |  |                          |
| <p>Marriage schedule issued by Jane Brown (name) Superintendent Registrar(designation) in the registration district of Stoke on Trent in the County of Staffordshire (administrative area) on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023</p> <p>The waiting period in respect of both notices of marriage has expired, or has been reduced on the authority of the Registrar General. The marriage must be solemnized on or before 30th June 2024</p> |  |                          |
| 1. Date and place of marriage  | 2nd October 2023, Hanley Synagogue   |                          |
| 2. Name and surname  | Hyman GOLDSMIDT  | Esther HARRIS            |
| 3. Date of birth   | 10 <sup>th</sup> November 1976   | 8 <sup>th</sup> May 1982 |
| 4. Condition   | Widower  | Widow                    |
| 5. Occupation  | Estate Agent   |                          |
| 6. Residence at time of marriage   | 30 Bridge Street, Stoke-on-Trent<br>115 Wedgwood Road, Burslem   |                          |
| 7. Mother/Father/Parent name surname and occupation  | Isaac GOLDSMIDT<br>Hairdresser<br>Helen GOLDSMIDT<br>Primary School Teacher (retired)<br><br>Levi COHEN (Deceased)<br>Fruit Merchant (Fruit)<br>Anita COHEN<br>Housewife |                          |
| <p>8. Marriage solemnized according to the rites and ceremonies of *.....the Jews<br/>         in the parish of *..... by schedule by me <i>S Isaacs</i> .....(signature)<br/> <i>Samuel Isaacs</i>... (name) ... Secretary for Marriages... (designation)</p> <p><i>*delete as appropriate</i></p>  |  |                          |
| 9. Signature of parties married  | H Goldsmidt  | E Harris                 |
| 10. Name and signature of witnesses  | Harold Smith, H Smith, Michael Joseph Smith, M J Smith, Stephen Greengold, S Greengold, Yaad Dayan, Y Dayan  |                          |
| 11. Signature of person authorised to sign the schedule  | <i>S Isaacs</i> .....(signature)<br><br><i>Samuel Isaacs</i> ... (name) ... Secretary for Marriages... (designation)   |                          |

## Appendix I – Schedule with amendment made by the secretary, Samuel Isaacs, and initialled by both the secretary and the groom.

| MARRIAGE SCHEDULE  |   |                            |
|--|---|----------------------------|
| System No.   |   |                            |
| <p>Marriage schedule issued by John Smith (name) Superintendent Registrar(designation) in the registration district of Bristol in the Avon (administrative area) on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2023</p> <p>The waiting period in respect of both notices of marriage has expired, or has been reduced on the authority of the Registrar General. The marriage must be solemnized on or before 30th April 2024</p> |   |                            |
| 1. Date and place of marriage  | Twenty Third June 2023, The Severn Synagogue  |                            |
| 2. Name and surname  | <i>Abraham KAUFMAN</i><br><i>Abraham S / AK</i>   | Elizabeth REUBENS          |
| 3. Date of birth   | 16 <sup>th</sup> June 1984  | 22 <sup>nd</sup> July 1996 |
| 4. Condition   | Widower   | Single                     |
| 5. Occupation  | Master Builder  |                            |
| 6. Residence at time of marriage   | 38 Corn Street, Bristol<br>12 Radstock Road, Bedminster   |                            |
| 7. Mother/Father/Parent name surname and occupation  | Thaddeus KAUFMAN (Deceased)<br>Electrical Engineering Company's Draughtsman<br>Mavis KAPLAN<br>School Teacher<br>Gerald KAPLAN (step-parent)<br>Solicitor<br><br>Solomon REUBENS<br>Musician (Vocalist)<br>Barbara REUBENS<br>Pianist |                            |
| <p>8. Marriage solemnized according to the rites and ceremonies of/usages of *.....<br/>           in the parish of*..... by schedule by me..... (signature)<br/>           ..... (name) ..... (designation)</p> <p><i>*delete as appropriate</i></p>  |   |                            |
| 9. Signature of parties married  |   |                            |
| 10. Name and signature of witnesses  |   |                            |
| 11. Signature of person authorised to sign the schedule  |   |                            |

**The amendment made by the secretary and initialled by him and initialled by the groom.**

## Appendix J – Completed marriage entry showing correct details

| <b>MARRIAGE</b>  |   | Entry No.<br>56  |
|--|---|--|
| Marriage solemnized by Moses Hyam at The Severn Synagogue in the District of Bristol in the County of Avon according to the usages of the Jews |   |  |
| 1. Date of marriage  | Twenty Third June 2021  |  |
| 2. Name and surname  | Abraham KAUFMAN   | Elizabeth REUBENS  |
| 3. Date of birth   | 16 <sup>th</sup> June 1984  | 22 <sup>nd</sup> July 1996   |
| 4. Condition   | Widower   | Single   |
| 5. Occupation  | Master Builder  |  |
| 6. Residence at time of marriage   | 38 Corn Street Bristol  | 12 Radstock Road, Bedminster   |
| 7. Mother/Father/Parent name surname and occupation  | Thaddeus KAUFMAN (deceased)<br>Electrical Company's Draughtsman<br>Mavis KAPLAN<br>School Teacher<br>Gerald KAPLAN (step-parent)  | Solomon REUBENS<br>Musician (Vocalist)<br>Barbara REUBENS<br>Pianist |
| 8. Signature of the parties married  | A Kaufman   | E Reubens  |
| 9. Name and surname of witnesses   | Michael Reubens, M Reubens, Sarah Kurtz, S Kurtz, David Solomons, D Solomons,<br>Harold Smith, H Smith.   |  |
| 10. Signature of the specified person and the person by whom the marriage was solemnized, if different   | Moses Hyam Rabbi<br>(name and designation if 2 signatures are needed)<br><br>Samuel Isaacs Secretary of Marriages<br>(name and designation of person who signed the schedule or document) |  |

## **Appendix K- Certificate of No Impediment (Scotland)**

### **CERTIFICATE OF NO IMPEDIMENT** (SECTION 7 OF THE MARRIAGE (SCOTLAND) ACT 1977)

Name.....

Address..... Postcode.....

The above applicant has supplied me the following information concerning his or her intended marriage.

|   | <b>Bridegroom</b> | <b>Bride</b> |
|---|-------------------|--------------|
| <b>1. Forename(s)</b>                         |                   |              |
| <b>2. Surname(s)</b>                          |                   |              |
| <b>3. Date of birth</b>                       |                   |              |
| <b>4. Nationality</b>                         |                   |              |
| <b>5. Country of birth</b>                    |                   |              |
| <b>6. Country of residence</b>                |                   |              |
| <b>7. Place of usual residence</b>            |                   |              |
| <b>8. Marital or civil partnership status</b> |                   |              |
| <b>9. Date of proposed marriage</b>           |                   |              |
| <b>10. Place of proposed marriage</b>         |                   |              |

I hereby certify that

- the applicant has met the legal requirements of the law of Scotland as set out in the Marriage (Scotland) Act 1977; -
- the applicant is not known to me to be subject to any legal incapacity under the law of Scotland which would prevent the applicant from marrying;
- it appears to me that there is **NO IMPEDIMENT** to the proposed marriage as far as the applicant is concerned.

Signature.....

Registrar for the District of ..... in Scotland

**THIS CERTIFICATE IS VALID FOR THREE MONTHS FROM.....**

**After this has been presented to the superintendent registrar, he/she will issue their schedule to the couple to allow the marriage to proceed.**

## APPENDIX L - FORM OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This is to confirm that a marriage between \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ and  
\_\_\_\_\_

was solemnized on \_\_\_\_\_  
at \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Designation \_\_\_\_\_

The register office will be informed that the marriage has  
taken place. Once registered, a certificate can be  
obtained from:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

A fee is charged for the certificate.

Details of register offices can be found on Gov.UK  
<https://www.gov.uk/register-offices>