

## Introduction

Hello and welcome to the first edition of the Authorised Persons newsletter.

Since the General Register Office (GRO) became part of the Identity and Passport Service we have been reviewing who our customers are and how we communicate with them. It was highlighted that an Authorised Person will normally only come into contact with GRO when they are appointed or if there is an error to a marriage entry. We acknowledge that the majority of training and guidance that you have received has been provided by staff at your local register office.

The main aim of this newsletter is to establish a direct communication link with the Authorised Persons community and to provide you with information that you will hopefully find both engaging and useful as you perform your marriage registration duties.



## Authorised Persons Guide

We have recently placed an updated and fully revised version of the Authorised Persons Guide on the Home Office website and we hope that you will take the time to read it. The booklet provides useful guidance on all aspects of the role of an Authorised Person. It covers the following topics:

- Roles and Responsibilities
- Registration Stock
- Disuse of a building registered for religious worship
- Leaving Office
- Marriage Preliminaries
- Solemnisation of Marriage
- Registration of Marriage

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## Authorised Persons Guide

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- Corrections
- Quarterly certified copies

The updated Authorised Person guide is available to download via the Home Office website <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/agencies-public-bodies/ips/civil-registration/marriage-reg/> alternatively you can request a copy by emailing GRO at [marriages@ips.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:marriages@ips.gsi.gov.uk)



## Help Us to Help You

Change is coming.....!

As you may be aware, the marriage returns you send to your local Superintendent Registrar every quarter are currently forwarded to the Receipt and Indexing Team at GRO.

This team process the returns and creates a central record and index of all marriage registrations in England and Wales.

From 1<sup>st</sup> January 2011 all marriage registrations will be captured electronically onto the "Registration On Line" system – a system affectionately known as RON.

Whilst the vast majority of returns that we process are completed correctly, we occasionally see errors that create problems for the team at GRO. Following the hints and tips below will help us process the registrations as quickly and efficiently as possible, ensuring that we hold an exact and up to date record of all marriages that have occurred within England & Wales.

1. **True Copy.** The quarterly return that you submit must be a true copy of the register entry including all marginal notes.

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**2. Method of solemnisation.** It is important that the method of solemnisation is correctly inserted. As the marriage can only proceed on the issue of 2 certificates for marriage, 'by certificate' should be written. There have been occasions when a name has been inserted instead. Omitting or inserting incorrect information may result in the entry being investigated and a subsequent correction may be required.

**3. Signatures.** We appreciate that not everyone's signature is legible and would ask that you print the name of the persons signing (especially witnesses) in pencil in the margin. This will help with both the GRO keying process and the production of any handwritten certified copies.

**4. Father's details - columns 7 and 8.** If the fathers details are not known please insert a dash in both columns (-). If the columns are left blank we would again investigate the omission to establish if a correction is required.

**5. Quarterly returns.** Please only enter marriages from the same quarter on one quarterly copy form. There have been instances where marriages from up to four different quarters have been entered onto one form. This causes delays when processing the returns.

**6. Timeliness.** Please ensure that you submit your return (even if it is "nil") to your Superintendent Registrar by the required date. This is a legal requirement of Section 57 of the Marriage Act 1949 and enables a full public index to be produced without delay.

**7. Certification.** Please ensure that quarterly copies are always certified and the certificate for marriage forms are attached (e.g. the 262). This again is a legal requirement of Section 57 of the 1949 Act.

**8. Registration ink.** As the marriage registers are to be kept as a permanent record please use proper registration ink. The Authorised Persons guidebook details where this can be obtained.



## Authorised Person Form

We have enclosed a revised copy of the Authorised Person form. Please destroy any earlier versions of this form that maybe held.

This new form should be used by the Trustees or Members of the Governing Body to inform GRO of any changes to Authorised Person appointments. Further copies of the form can be downloaded via the Home Office website <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/agencies-public-bodies/ips/civil-registration/marriage-reg/>



This newsletter has been sent to all Responsible Authorised Persons (RAPs). We have also sent a copy to the local registration service for their information. Please share the newsletter with any additional Authorised Persons at your registered building. Further copies of the newsletter can be downloaded via the Home Office website at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/agencies-public-bodies/ips/civil-registration/marriage-reg/>

Whilst this first issue has been posted to you, we are very conscious of the cost and would like to send all further issues via email. Please advise us of your email address within the next two weeks via [grotrainingandbusinessimprovement@ips.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:grotrainingandbusinessimprovement@ips.gsi.gov.uk) Please put "AP Newsletter" and your marriage registration number in the subject heading.

If you have received this newsletter and you are no longer a Responsible Authorised Person please could you let us know so we can amend our records.



## And finally - Did you know...?

- There are currently over 29,500 Authorised Persons.
- You submit just over 23,000 quarterly marriage returns each year.
- The legislation which governs the appointment of authorised persons dates back to 1952 – although it was "modernised" in 1971!!!

