

Clergy Newsletter

Introduction

Hello and welcome to the third edition of the Clergy Newsletter.

We would like to start this issue by again thanking those of you who have provided us with their feedback on the previous two editions - we continue to be pleased with the overwhelmingly positive response. We have noted your comments and have continued to make changes to the layout and content in the hope of creating a quick, easily digested newsletter that provides a diverse range of information that is of value to you.

In this issue we will be covering a number of subjects including changes that are taking place from Stock and Security, the price structure for registration service fees and to the removal of time restrictions for the solemnization of a marriage.

We also have an article highlighting two ongoing issues with quarterly returns. We have covered these in previous newsletters but they do continue to cause us problems. With your help we hope to reduce the number of occurrences and make the process more efficient.

We hope you enjoy the issue.

The Training and Improvement Team

Stock and Security Reviews

One of IPS' key principles is 'trusted and secure'. In support of this principle GRO has initiated a review of the issue and accountability for certificate stock.

The overall aim is to improve the understanding of responsibilities by all people handling certificates, through clear procedures and guidance, and to have a robust process in place to aid the reporting and investigation for missing or stolen certificates.

Further details will be reported in future Newsletters, with the aim of implementing improved practices during 2013.



All issues of the clergy newsletter (and supporting documentation) are available on the Home Office website at the following address -
<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/agencies-public-bodies/ips/civil-registration/marriage-reg/>

New Secure Delivery Provider

Subject to finalising the commercial arrangements and undergoing an internal business change approval process, as from the 1st August 2012, the company DX has replaced Parcel Force as the secure delivery provider for IPS.

The service transition should appear seamless to you. The courier will be uniformed and provide an identity card and they will continue to ask for a receipt signature. If DX are unable to deliver a parcel they will leave a card with details of how to organise a redelivery (provided it is to the same address).

Please remember, when requesting replacement supplies, that a responsible person is available to sign for them at the address you supply.



Change in registration service fees

From the 1st of April 2012 there were a small number of changes in the statutory fees charged by the local registration service.

The fee for a certified copy of a marriage register entry increased from £3.50 to £4.00, issued at the time of registration, and from £9.00 to £10.00 when in a completed register.

The fee for issuing after the time of registration, but whilst the register is not yet full, remains at £7.00. The fee for giving Notice of Marriage to a Superintendent Registrar is now £35.00, up from £33.50.

And finally, a registrar will now charge £84.00 to attend a registered building, up from £80.00.



Removal of time restrictions on marriage

You may already be aware that from the 1st of October 2012 there will no longer be a restriction in law on the time of day (or night) at which a marriage can be solemnized.

This new measure will be coming into force as one of the provisions of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. The provision to remove the time restriction was put into that Act as a result of suggestions from the public on the Government's "Your Freedom" website in 2011. This website allowed members of the public to put forward suggestions for what they considered to be unnecessary laws which should be repealed.

Please be aware, however, that under Canon Law, the hours during which a marriage in a church or chapel of the Church of England may take place remains between 8am and 6pm. If a member of the clergy were to solemnise a marriage outside these hours then it would amount to an offence under the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003.

The Church in Wales is not covered by the Canon Laws of the Church of England, or the 2003 measure, although it is unlikely that a member of the Church in Wales clergy will solemnise marriages outside the hours of 8am to 6pm.

Quarterly Returns Reminders

In our previous newsletters we have provided you with hints on tips on how to correctly register a marriage and complete your quarterly returns.

We would like to thank you for taking this advice as the quality of returns that our Keying team is now receiving has greatly improved. However, to date our keying team has sent out just under 5,000 letters to individuals asking for clarification on the information on returns, which I am sure you will understand is a costly and time consuming exercise but one we believe is necessary if we are to have an accurate central record of Marriages.

In this article we have listed two of the most common issues we continue to experience. Please take the time to read them so you can be sure you are following this guidance and putting it into practice when preparing your returns for September.

1. In our first newsletter we highlighted the importance of submitting your quarterly returns, including "nils", to your Superintendent Register by the required date. Unfortunately we are still receiving some returns after the prescribed deadlines.

As such we would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the importance of submitting your quarterly returns within the required timeframe as this allows us to produce a full public index without delay.

2. The second issue that we continue to experience is that we receive a large number of returns that have multiple quarters on one single sheet.

Unfortunately, in these instances, we are required to photocopy each of the sheets so that we can separate the entries. As you can imagine this is quite a resource intensive process and is something that could be easily avoided. We would be grateful if you could ensure that each quarters end does not include copies made in another quarter.

Thank you for your continuing support in these matters, we see the production of our public indexes as very much a collaborative effort and we will report on progress in future editions of this newsletter.

