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Office

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General Register Office

Clergy Newsletter

Immigration Act 2016

Introduction

Hello and welcome to the 7th edition of the Clergy Newsletter.

In this issue you will find information on the forthcoming changes resulting from the Immigration Act 2016 in relation to new fees for services. There are also some reminders on best practice in relation to the quarterly return process.

We hope you find this information useful.

**The Training and Improvement
Team
General Register Office**

The Immigration Act 2016, Section 89 together with Schedule 15 provides a legislative vehicle enabling the Secretary of State to introduce secondary legislation for new civil registration fees. These fees will be introduced in a phased approach with the first phase being implemented on 1 November 2017.

The particular areas that may be of interest to you are as follows:

- Applications for a correction to a marriage entry – from 1 November these will incur a consideration fee of £90. Applications will need to be made via the Register Office in the area where the marriage occurred. The Register Office will take the fee on behalf of the Register General. All applications for a marriage correction will then be forwarded to GRO for consideration. The same process applies equally to civil and religious marriages.
- Consideration of a divorce, nullity or dissolution obtained outside the British Isles – From 1 November individuals wishing to re-marry in England and Wales and who have a previous divorce, nullity or dissolution obtained outside the British Isles will need to pay a fee for the consideration of the document before they are able to re-marry. The fee of £50 or £75 depending on whether it can be considered by the Local Registration Service or GRO will need to be paid via the register office in the area where the person intends to marry.

The Register General and registration officers will have the power to, reduce, waive or refund a fee, for example, under circumstances where the ability to pay may restrict access to services.

If you require any further information the regulations, the Births, Deaths, Marriages and Civil Partnership (Fees)(Amendment) Regulations 2017 can be found at:
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2017/947/contents/made>

Quarterly Marriage Returns

Reminders

In our previous newsletters we have provided you with hints and tips on how to correctly register a marriage and complete your quarterly returns. We would like to thank you for reading this advice and in this newsletter we have listed some of the most common issues we continue to experience. Please take the time to read them and put them into practice when preparing your next returns:

- **Illegible** - Please use pencil notes in the margin to clarify details where information may be illegible, in particular witnesses and Officiating Ministers' signatures.
- **Omissions** - Please ensure all boxes in the main body of the entry are complete when registering. However where there are omissions please include horizontal lines in any boxes that are blank in the register.
- **Certification** - Please ensure all quarterly copies are certified. GRO cannot accept any returns that have not been certified. Returns that have not been certified are sent back to the Register Office. These cannot be accepted for input.
- **Multiples** - A significant number of returns continue to be received with multiple quarters on a single sheet. Unfortunately in these instances we are required to photocopy each of the sheets so that we can separate the entries. The Clergy/AP handbook advises different quarters should be on separate returns. GRO file under separate quarters. Assistance in adhering to this is appreciated for GRO administration purposes.
- **Timeliness** - Please submit your return to your Superintendent Registrar by the required date even where it is a nil return. This is a legal requirement of the Marriage Act 1949.

Registration Supplies

- Requests for ink should be directed to Ecclesiastical Stationary Supplies on 01440 760360 or email: ink@kerbury.co.uk – Registration Supplies Unit does not supply ink to Authorised Persons or the Clergy.
- When registers are full, one should be forwarded to your local Register Office and the other should be retained.
- Orders for certificates and registers can be emailed to registration.supplies@gro.gov.uk – please supply the following information; name and address of the church, a delivery address where the delivery can be signed for.
- Requests for quarterly and nil return forms can be made via registration.supplies@gro.gov.uk or by telephoning 0151 471 4247, 0151 471 4655 or 0151 471 4275.
- Request for Banns certificates should be directed to your local diocese – Registration Supplies Unit does not supply Banns certificates.

Revised Guidance

We have updated the guidebook for authorised persons to reflect the changes from the Immigration Act 2016.

The guidebook can be found on GOV.UK at the following address:

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