



HM Passport
Office

General Register Office

Secretary for Marriages Newsletter Issue 8: February 2021

Introduction

Welcome to the 8th edition of the Secretary for Marriages newsletter.

In this issue, you will find an update to issue 7 which provided an introduction and background to the forthcoming changes resulting from the Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths (Registration etc.) Act 2019 in relation to the registration of marriages.

We recognise that during the current emergency period, that weddings may not be taking place and that you have other pressures at this time. However, we wanted to keep you informed of developments as you will already be aware that changes were being discussed.

This newsletter will outline the current position future proposals and support available in more detail.

The Training and Business Improvement Team, General Register Office

The Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths (Registration etc.) Act 2019

You will recall the key changes the above legislation will introduce include:

- A change to the way marriages will be registered; Paper marriage registers will be withdrawn and marriage registrations will be made by the local register office in an electronic register.
- Individual superintendent registrar's certificates will be replaced by the marriage schedule, which is a single form containing all the information about the marriage. This is the document that, the couple, witnesses and secretary for marriages check and sign after the ceremony.
- The completed marriage schedule will be returned to the local register office for the details to be entered onto the electronic register.
- Marriage certificates will only be available from the register office or the General Register Office after the registration has been made at the local register office.

How will this impact the work and responsibilities as a secretary for marriages?

What won't change:

- You will still be required to ensure couples meet the requirements to marry according to your religious rites and are advised to give their notices of marriage in the correct timescale.
- You will still be required to obtain the marriage schedule prior to the date of marriage.
- You will still be required to conduct questioning prior to the marriage and confirm that the details on the marriage schedule are correct before the marriage proceeds.
- The marriage will still be performed by the religious rites relevant to your congregation.
- You will still use registration ink to complete the marriage schedule.

What will change:

- You will no longer register the marriages you attend as a secretary for marriages.
- You will no longer issue marriage certificates.
- You will no longer need to complete quarterly returns for marriages.
- You will no longer have to undertake corrections in marriage registers. After the changes are introduced, all corrections to marriage entries will be carried out by the registration officers.

When are these changes being introduced?

The Covid-19 emergency has impacted work across Government, including completion of the processes to agree the secondary legislation for the marriage schedule system. It is envisaged that the regulations which allow the details of the act to commence will have completed, to enable implementation of the changes later in the spring

What happens next?

Once the regulations have completed their journey through the parliamentary process, GRO will provide details of the process and timescales to close your existing registers. We will also provide you with training materials and instructions for the new procedures that will support the continuation of your role as a secretary for marriages with the introduction of the marriage schedule system.

If you wish to find out more about the 2019 Act then you can access the links below:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2019/12/contents/enacted/data.htm>

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/civilpartnershipsmarriagesanddeathsregistrationetc.html>

If you have any comments about this newsletter, please contact
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