

Consultation Stage Impact Assessment

Title: Tying the Knot: Reforming weddings law in England and Wales

Type of measure: **Regulatory Provision**

Department or agency: Ministry of Justice

IA number: MoJ008/2026

RPC reference number: ...

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Date: 16/07/2026

This is a Consultation Stage Impact Assessment. It will be updated and finalised for the Final Stage Impact Assessment. This Consultation Stage Impact Assessment is therefore for consultation purposes only.

This Impact Assessment builds on previous analytical work, including an Options Assessment that has been submitted to the Regulatory Policy Committee (RPC) and is subject to their independent scrutiny. We will consider and incorporate any feedback from the RPC, where appropriate, in the Final Stage Impact Assessment.

1. Summary of proposal

On 2 October 2025, the Government announced its intention to deliver the biggest overhaul of marriage law since the 19th century. The Government confirmed that these reforms will be underpinned by two key features, which were recommended by the Law Commission's 2022 report *Celebrating Marriage: A New Weddings Law*.¹

1. An official-based system: Removing restrictions on where weddings may take place, providing ceremonies meet requirements to ensure they remain seemly and dignified. This would allow weddings to take place in a wider range of locations, making it easier for couples to marry in a way that reflects their beliefs and circumstances.

2. Universal rules: Introducing a single set of universal rules for all weddings, with the exception of Anglican weddings, to simplify the process of getting married and create a level playing field for all groups, including enabling non-religious belief groups, such as Humanists, to be able to conduct legally binding weddings for the first time.

¹ Law Commission, *Celebrating Marriage: A New Weddings Law* (Law Com No 408, 2022)

The Government's overarching objective for reforming weddings law is to strengthen the institution of marriage by ensuring that the law supports, rather than frustrates, couples who wish to get married. The Government wants to make the process of getting married simpler and less expensive for couples and provide greater choice in how and where couples can marry, within a simple, fair and consistent legal structure.

The Principles Underpinning the Consultation

The Government's approach to reform is guided by the following principles:

1. **Providing a simple, fair and inclusive framework:** Establishing a clear, coherent and consistent legal structure for weddings, ensuring fairness across different groups through a common set of rules and enabling non-religious belief organisations, including Humanists, to conduct legally binding ceremonies.
2. **Expanding choice as to how and where couples marry:** Allowing greater flexibility over the location and form of weddings, so ceremonies can better reflect couples' beliefs, backgrounds and circumstances.
3. **Upholding the dignity and significance of marriage:** Ensuring all weddings meet clear and consistent standards of dignity through a comprehensive framework governing ceremonies and locations, supported by oversight of officiants and clear criteria for organisations to preserve the integrity of marriage.
4. **Protecting against forced, predatory and sham marriages:** Strengthening safeguards through a more effective system of checks and greater transparency to ensure marriages are entered into freely, with informed consent and that marriages are not used to gain unfair advantage.

The preferred option includes wide-ranging reform, involving primary and secondary legislation used in conjunction with additional guidance to facilitate a clear legal framework governing weddings. Civil registration officers, Anglican clergy, officiants nominated by religious and non-religious belief organisations and independent officiants would all be able to officiate at legally binding weddings. Maritime officiants would also be permitted to officiate at weddings on UK-flagged cruise ships registered to a port of choice in England and Wales. This would give couples more choice over the nature and location of their weddings.

These changes should lead to savings for businesses, including small and medium-sized business (SMBs) as officiants would be responsible for determining whether locations are suitable for weddings, on a largely case-by-case basis. Therefore, this measure should reduce the barriers to entry for the weddings industry, particularly benefitting SMBs, which have fewer available financial resources than larger firms.

These changes would mean that marriage law reflects modern Britain, making it more straightforward for couples to have legally binding religious ceremonies that are meaningful for them, including Sikh, Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu weddings and allowing non-religious belief groups, such as Humanists, to conduct legally binding ceremonies for the first time.

By removing cost barriers and increasing choice, these reforms would uphold and strengthen one of our most important institutions; we predict that it may lead to a 3% increase in the number of weddings. Additionally, we estimate it would bring circa £238.5m into the UK economy over a decade, both through increased savings for couples seeking to get married and by reducing the regulatory burden on businesses hosting weddings. It could also lead to an increase in the numbers of workers and businesses involved within the weddings sector, contributing to economic growth.

The Ministry of Justice is consulting on the proposed changes and, after the consultation, is planning to introduce legislation to reform marriage law when parliamentary time allows. Therefore, the options discussed within this assessment are not yet final and could be subject to change based on the consultation results.

2. Strategic case for proposed regulation

2.1 Overview of the Current Legal Framework

2.1.1 Current Position - Policy Baseline

Marriage law in England and Wales is still primarily governed by legislation from 1836. Most legally recognised marriages must take place:

- In a registered place of worship with an authorised religious officiant or a registrar;

- On approved premises (civil venues licensed by the local authority) or at a register office, officiated by both a superintendent registrar and a registrar; or
- In church or chapel (for Anglican weddings).

Under the current legal framework, a limited number of religious groups are subject to different rules governing how marriages are solemnised. All couples must generally comply with civil preliminaries, such as giving notice, with the exception that couples marrying in Anglican ceremonies may proceed through Anglican preliminaries, including publishing banns or obtaining a common or special licence. Religious weddings (other than Jewish, Quaker and some Anglican weddings) must take place in a registered place of worship. Anglican weddings are generally required by the Marriage Act 1949 to take place in a church or chapel. Where a special licence is granted, the marriage may take place in any location. Jewish and Quaker weddings have no statutory restrictions on location.

Civil preliminaries impose requirements on couples, including:

- Giving notice in person in the registration district of residence; and
- A 7-day residence requirement in that district prior to giving notice.

The buildings-based requirements can create administrative and financial burdens by requiring religious organisations to register premises for marriages and comply with associated regulatory requirements. This may be more challenging for smaller or less established religious groups, which are less likely to own or operate registered places of worship or may face higher relative costs in doing so. As a result, some groups may be unable to have their marriage ceremonies legally recognised in settings that reflect their beliefs.

2.1.2 Current Distribution and Types of Weddings

In 2023, there were 224,402 legally recognised marriages in England and Wales.² Of these:

- 85% (191,833) were civil marriages:
 - 9% of civil ceremonies took place in register offices;
 - 90% of civil wedding ceremonies occurred in approved premises such as hotels, barns and country houses.
- 15% (32,569) were religious ceremonies.

ONS statistics only capture legally recognised marriages, meaning official data does not capture non-qualifying ceremonies occurring outside the legal framework. However, academic research suggests that some religious and non-religious belief minority groups routinely conduct weddings which are meaningful to the couple but not legally binding (e.g. Muslim Nikah ceremonies, Sikh weddings outside a Gurdwara, Hindu ceremonies in community venues).³ In 2018, there were also 1,058 non-legally recognised weddings by Humanists UK in England and Wales, up by 268% since 2004.⁴

The weddings market is supplied by:

- Over 7,000 approved premises for civil marriages, mostly hotels, converted barns, heritage properties and event venues as well as register offices.⁵

² Office for National Statistics, 'Marriages in England and Wales: 2013' (ONS dataset) <<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/marriagecohabitationandcivilpartnerships/datasets/marriagesinenglandandwales2013>>

³ Rebecca Probert, Rajnaara Akhtar and Sharon Blake, *When Is a Wedding Not a Marriage? Exploring Non-Legally Binding Ceremonies* (Final Report, March 2022) <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/law/research/projects/wedding-not-marriage/research-outputs/when_is_a_wedding_not_a_marriage_-_exploring_non-legally_binding_ceremonies-final_report.pdf>

⁴ Humanists UK, 'Humanists UK Wedding Numbers Continue to Grow, Show New Figures' (16 May 2019) <<https://humanists.uk/2019/05/16/humanists-uk-wedding-numbers-continue-to-grow-show-new-figures/>> accessed 29 June 2026

⁵ HM Passport Office, 'Civil Marriages and Partnerships: Approved Premises List' (23 November 2012, last updated 17 October 2025) <<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-marriages-and-partnerships-approved-premises-list>>

- Small and medium-sized enterprises and micro-businesses (SMBs) that providing wedding-related services including venue-hire, catering and photography. Around 400,000 people work in the wedding industry.⁶ While the exact number of SMBs providing these services is unknown, this indicates that many SMBs are likely to be involved.
- Religious places of worship.

2.1.3 Who Currently Performs Weddings

At present, legally binding wedding ceremonies may be performed by:

- Civil registrars and superintendent registrars;
- Anglican clergy (Church of England / Church in Wales); or
- Authorised persons or registrars nominated by certain religious organisations.

In the case of Jewish weddings, there are no legal provisions requiring the presence of a specific person, though it is Jewish custom that a rabbi will usually be present. Likewise, no specific person's attendance is legally required for Quaker weddings, but usually other members of the Society and the person responsible for registering the marriage will be present.

However:

- Non-religious belief organisations (e.g., Humanists) cannot conduct legally binding weddings.
- Independent celebrants cannot conduct legally binding weddings.
- Maritime officiants cannot conduct legally binding weddings.

The above differences create inconsistencies between civil, religious and non-religious belief groups and restrict the availability of personalised or bespoke ceremonies for some couples.

2.1.4 Requirements for Couples and Venues

Couples must:

- Give notice in person at their local registration district (unless marrying according to Anglican rites) and pay a statutory fee for doing so;
- Pay a statutory fee for civil ceremony attendance (unless marrying in Anglican, Jewish or Quaker ceremonies or at a registered place of worship with an authorised officiant); and
- For Anglican weddings, publish banns or obtain a common or special licence.

Venues wishing to host legally binding civil weddings as approved premises must:

- Apply for and renew local authority approval, paying fees (on average, ~£1,900) set on a cost-recovery basis;
- Meet requirements relating to the safety of the premises and the requirement for ceremonies to be "seemly and dignified"; and
- Renew licences every three years.

Evidence from the Law Commission consultation and stakeholder engagement shows that licence fees and compliance requirements can act as a barrier to entry for SMBs, limiting competition and innovation in the weddings market. For example, "modest venues" such as local community centres, may be unable to host weddings under current legal framework.

2.2 Problems with the Current System

⁶ The Power of Events, 'Weddings + Private Events' <<https://www.thepowerofevents.org/uk-events-industry/weddings-private-events/>>

2.2.1 Inequality and Lack of Choice

Under the current legal framework, couples who are not having an Anglican, Jewish or Quaker wedding must choose between the following options to ensure legal recognition:

- A civil ceremony; or
- A religious ceremony in a registered place of worship officiated by an authorised officiant.

This means that there is differential treatment in the following ways:

- Inconsistencies and complexity, with different rules applying to different types of weddings;
- Treatment of non-religious belief groups compared to that afforded to some religious belief groups; and
- Additional costs for some religious and non-religious belief couples, including Humanists, as they often have a non-legally recognised ceremony and an additional civil wedding ceremony. This increases the cost of getting married for these couples.

The lack of flexibility in ceremony form and location means the law is, according to the Law Commission, out of step with modern society and does not reflect the diversity of beliefs across religious and non-religious belief groups in England and Wales.⁷

2.2.2 High Risk of Non-Legally Recognised Marriages

Evidence shows that couples from some religious groups undergo non-legally binding wedding ceremonies and can sometimes wrongly assume they are legally married when they are not. This creates significant harm, including when relationships break down, because:

- Parties cannot access the financial remedies available to spouses/civil partners and may also face disadvantages in the event of the death of their partner;
- Victims of domestic or economic abuse may be less able to flee abusive relationships, due to lack of financial protections;
- Children may face increased financial vulnerability; and
- The State may incur higher welfare costs when financially weaker parties have no legal rights.

The lack of legal protection is a concern. If a religious couple (apart from Jewish, Anglican or Quaker) does not have a religious wedding in a registered place of worship or fails to have a civil wedding ceremony, then their marriage is not legally binding. People often only become aware of their lack of legal protections when the relationship breaks down and this can result in the Government bearing the costs when the financially weaker party (often women) and any children of the relationship require social security support.⁸

Evidence indicates that this issue disproportionately affects Muslim couples.⁹ For example, a 2014 study involving 50 Muslim women found that 41 of those surveyed were in religious-only marriages but over half (23) were unaware of their lack of legal rights.¹⁰ With only 205 registered Islamic places of worship in 2011 for a population of 2.7 million Muslims, many couples may marry in unauthorised venues.¹¹ The 2018 “Independent Review into Sharia Law” confirmed that non-qualifying ceremonies leave women without spousal rights and benefits, forcing them to rely on Sharia councils, which lack legal authority and sometimes exhibit poor

⁷ Law Commission, *Celebrating Marriage: A New Weddings Law* (Law Com No 408, 2022)

⁸ *The Price of Safety: The Cost of Leaving an Abuser and Rebuilding a Safe, Independent Life* (Women’s Aid Federation of England, September 2024) <<https://womensaid.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Price-of-Safety-Report-2024-Final-Version.pdf>>

⁹ Home Office, *Applying Sharia Law in England and Wales: Independent Review* (Cm 9560, 1 February 2018) <<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/applying-sharia-law-in-england-and-wales-independent-review>>

¹⁰ *Equal and Free? 50 Muslim Women’s Experiences of Marriage in Britain Today* (Aurat, December 2014) <<https://www.secularism.org.uk/uploads/aurat-report-dec2014.pdf>>

¹¹ Catherine Fairbairn, *Islamic Marriage and Divorce in England and Wales* (House of Commons Library, Briefing Paper No 08747, 18 February 2020) <<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8747/CBP-8747.pdf>>

practices, such as pressuring women into financial concessions.¹² Without reform, these gaps will perpetuate inequality and increase the risk of economic and other forms of domestic abuse, such as coercive control.

2.2.3 Burdensome and Outdated Regulatory Requirements

Current rules impose an unnecessary administrative burden on couples and venues:

- The 7-day residence rule for civil preliminaries before giving notice of intention to marry can require international couples to make multiple trips to England and Wales to marry in the jurisdiction;
- For civil preliminaries, couples living in different districts must give notice separately in the district where they each live;
- Both a registrar and superintendent registrar are required for civil wedding ceremonies at approved premises;
- A registrar is required for ceremonies at registered places of worship that do not have any authorised persons, such as ministers of religion, meaning the couple must pay for their attendance to ensure the legal requirements are met; and
- Businesses must pay significant fees to become approved premises and meet regulatory conditions and requirements for upholding safety and dignity.

These rules:

- Increase costs for couples;
- Inhibit the creation of a more diverse wedding sector (including wedding venues); and
- Create barriers to SMBs entering the weddings market.

2.2.4 Constraints on Venues and Innovation

Because weddings are tied to buildings rather than officiants:

- Weddings cannot take place in many “meaningful” locations (beaches, homes, gardens, community spaces); and
- Businesses face burdensome licensing requirements.

Couples may face higher costs because they are limited to venues that already meet approval requirements and the costs of licensing and compliance are typically reflected in venue hire prices. This limits choice, raises costs and inhibits innovation in a multi-billion-pound weddings sector, estimated to have been worth £14 billion in 2023 in the UK.¹³

3. Rationale and policy objectives for intervention

Rationale for Intervention

Intervention is justified on the grounds of both efficiency and fairness.

From an efficiency perspective, the current framework places unnecessary administrative and regulatory burdens on those conducting legally recognised weddings. Intervention would make the system easier to operate, reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and help ensure that more ceremonies result in legally recognised marriages.

From a fairness perspective, the current framework does not provide a consistent set of rules for all weddings. Different types of ceremonies can be subject to different requirements and this can create confusion about

¹²*The Independent Review into the Application of Sharia Law in England and Wales* (Home Office, Cm 9560, February 2018) <<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/applying-sharia-law-in-england-and-wales-independent-review>>

¹³ Beyond Vows: Unveiling the Staggering Worth of the Wedding Industry 2024' (5 January 2024) <<https://www.weddingindustrynews.com/post/beyond-vows-unveiling-the-staggering-worth-of-the-wedding-industry>>

whether a ceremony is legally recognised. Intervention would create a system based on clearer, more universal rules, helping to ensure that couples are treated more consistently regardless of the type, form, or setting of their wedding.

Policy Objectives

The intended effect of the proposals is to update the law governing each aspect of the process of getting married. At this stage of policy development, the objectives are to:

- Provide a simple, fair and inclusive framework;
- Expand choice as to how and where couples marry;
- Uphold the dignity and significance of marriage; and
- Protect against forced, predatory and sham marriages.

The work closely aligns with the Government's aims for economic growth by removing unnecessary red tape, such as the mandatory requirement for premises to obtain and pay for approval licences to host legally recognised weddings (though venues would be able to apply to be "pre-authorised").

4. Description of the proposed intervention and explanation of how it achieves the objectives of the policy

Brief description of preferred option: The preferred option is to reform weddings law through primary and secondary legislation, supported by guidance. The reforms would shift the regulation of weddings away from approved buildings and towards authorised officiants, creating a clearer and more flexible legal framework. The proposals would enable registration officers, Anglican clergy, officiants nominated by religious and non-religious belief organisations, independent officiants and maritime officiants to conduct legally binding weddings in suitable locations.

Summary of proposed reforms

The Government intends to modernise weddings law through a package of reforms informed by the Law Commission's recommendations. The main reforms are:

Objective 1: Providing a simple, fair and inclusive framework

- **Universal rules** - All religious weddings will be subject to the same framework (with the exception of Anglican weddings).
- **Humanist weddings** - Non-religious belief organisations, including Humanists, will be able to conduct legally binding weddings for the first time.
- **Consistent regulation** - All officiants (except for State-employed registrars) will be accountable in the same way, first to their organisation and, in turn, to a central regulator.
- **Belief in civil ceremonies** - Belief content will be permitted in civil ceremonies, provided that the ceremony remains identifiably civil, particularly to support mixed-faith and LGBTQ+ couples.

Objective 2: Expanding choice as to how and where couples marry

- **No fixed rules about location** - Couples will be able to marry in any location, subject to meeting dignity and safety requirements.
- **Non-oral consent mechanisms** - Consent to marry may be expressed through actions (including rituals) in belief ceremonies.
- **Independent officiants** - Civil weddings will be permitted to be conducted by officiants who are independent of the State which will enable more personalised ceremonies and will particularly benefit both mixed-faith and inter-faith couples (21% of couples).
- **Weddings on water** - Weddings will be able to take place in territorial seas, inland waters and on cruise ships in international waters, creating choice and growing the economy.

Objective 3: Upholding the dignity and significance of marriage

- **Dignity framework** - A comprehensive framework, which goes further than international comparators, will define expectations about dignity and set out factors which officiants must consider when approving both the location and the form of the ceremony.
- **Consequences for failure** - Officiants who fail to uphold their legal duties and standards will face sanctions, including deauthorisation.
- **Clear eligibility criteria for officiants** - Religious, independent and non-religious belief officiants will have to meet certain requirements in order to be able to conduct weddings. This will safeguard against insincere, undignified or poorly-governed groups. There will be additional checks for independent officiants.

Objective 4: Protecting against forced, predatory and sham marriages

- **Two-stage preliminaries process** - There will be a two-stage process for giving notice for civil preliminaries. The first part will be demonstrating eligibility to marry and provide personal information online. The second part will be an in-person interview. This will allow an online system to include information on forced, predatory and sham marriage protections and provide time for the registrar to explore these issues at interview.
- **Publishing notices online** - Making it easier to become aware of an intended wedding, emphasising the public interest in weddings and the intention to marry legally. It will also make it easier for those who know of an impediment to the marriage to discover it is taking place.
- **Pre-emptive caveats** - Where a person (e.g. friend or family member) has legitimate concerns that someone may be at risk of being coerced into marriage, they will be able to ask for a caveat to be recorded before any notice of marriage has been given.
- **Legal duties on officiants** - Officiants will retain the legal duty to ensure that the parties freely express consent to marry each other. A wedding will not be able to take place unless an officiant is satisfied of this.

How the Intervention Achieves the Policy Objectives

The new law governing weddings would ensure that the requirements to get married would be simplified, meaning that couples would be able to marry in any suitable, dignified location through ceremonies that reflect their own beliefs. In addition, businesses would no longer be mandated to obtain licenced approval in order to host legally binding wedding ceremonies on their premises.

Under the preferred option, only one civil registration officer would be required to attend civil weddings and no civil registration officers would be required to attend religious weddings. This would mean that couples would save on the administrative costs of weddings. Likewise, a legal framework that permits non-religious belief organisations (such as Humanists), independent officiants and maritime officiants to conduct legally binding weddings, would also achieve this policy objective.

Permitting civil registration officers, Anglican clergy, officiants nominated by religious and non-religious belief organisations, independent officiants and maritime officiants to be able to or continue to conduct legally binding weddings would significantly reduce the risk that couples inadvertently enter marriages that are not legally recognised.

The proposed reforms would benefit SMBs, who are estimated to account for 50% of the total businesses in the weddings sector, by reducing barriers to entry and increasing revenue opportunities.¹⁴

The greater choice available for couples may also increase the number of weddings that take place in England and Wales. Currently, some residents choose to marry in other jurisdictions due to greater flexibility over the nature of their wedding ceremonies. More domestic and overseas residents may also choose to marry in England and Wales due to the reforms. Given that the average wedding is estimated to cost between ~£20,600 and ~£21,990, this could generate additional economic activity through market expansion, which may also lead to the creation of new jobs.¹⁵

Furthermore, allowing weddings on UK-flagged cruise ships registered to a port of choice in England and Wales is likely to increase the number of cruise ships on the UK ship register which could lead to economic benefits for the UK through job creation and investment within the sector. The inability to offer weddings at sea has contributed to a significant decline in ships on the UK register.

¹⁴ Weddings Taskforce: What It Meant For Businesses' (Guides for Brides, updated 1 January 2026)

<<https://guidesforbrides.co.uk/business-information/weddings-taskforce-proposal-what-it-means-for-your-business>>

¹⁵ Bridebook, *The UK Wedding Report 2026* (Bridebook, 2026) <https://partners.bridebook.com/uk/wedding-report-2026>; How Much Does a Wedding Cost in 2026? Average UK Wedding Now Costs £21,990' (Hitched, updated 12 January 2026) <https://www.hitched.co.uk/wedding-planning/organising-and-planning/the-average-wedding-cost-in-the-uk-revealed/> ; David Mouriquand, 'Copenhagen Ever After: Why Are Foreign Couples Flocking to Denmark to Get Married?' (Euronews, 31 July 2025) <https://www.euronews.com/culture/2025/07/31/copenhagen-ever-after-why-are-foreign-couples-flocking-to-denmark-to-get-married>.

The reflagging of cruises to the UK would lead to growth potential in gross tonnage, which, in turn, could lead to economic benefits from associated activities to the UK.¹⁶ At present the only major ship registries that permit weddings on board their vessels are Bermuda, the Bahamas and Malta. As Bermuda does not permit same-sex weddings, the UK doing so could provide a comparative advantage and encourage more companies to register ships under the UK flag.

All major cruise operators are seeking to expand the global “destination weddings” market which is expected to grow from \$36.49 billion USD (£27.12 billion) in 2024 to over \$135 billion USD (£100.33 billion) by 2029. In 2024, P&O Cruises saw a 12% increase from 2023 in the number of weddings and “taking vows” ceremonies it conducted and growth is expected to continue into 2025.¹⁷

5. Options Under Consideration

The following options were determined following an extensive Law Commission consultation in 2020 which involved a wide array of stakeholders and the Law Commission’s 2022 report *Celebrating Marriage: A New Weddings Law*.¹⁸

The Government confirmed that the reforms would be underpinned by the principles of “an officiant-based system” and “universal rules.” **Option 2** and **Option 3** are deemed to satisfy these requirements and so have been carried forward as shortlisted options with **Option 1** being retained as the “business-as-usual and baseline” option. The shortlisted options are as follows:

Option 1- Business-as-usual and baseline option.

This is the business-as-usual and baseline option. Under this option, no changes would be made to existing legal framework meaning that the various problems identified in section 2 would remain.

Option 2 - Partial reform of weddings law (including changes to officiants and administrative requirements).

This option shifts the regulation of weddings away from the building in which a wedding takes place towards the officiant responsible for the ceremony. Under this option, registration officers, Anglican clergy and officiants nominated by religious and non-religious belief organisations would be able to (or continue to be able to) conduct legally binding weddings but independent officiants would not. Maritime officiants would, however, be permitted to officiate legally binding wedding ceremonies on cruise ships registered to the port of choice in England and Wales.

This option would also include:

- Individuals being able to give notice of marriage in any registration district (and not just in the district where they reside) or give notice online using a new online system for civil preliminaries;
- Two civil registration officers would still be required to attend the majority of civil weddings, whilst only one authorised officiant would be required to attend religious, non-religious belief, independent and maritime weddings;
- The civil preliminaries residence requirement that means each member of a couple must reside in the registration district where they give notice for seven days prior to giving notice would be removed;
- Businesses would no longer need to pay local authorities for licence approvals to host weddings on their premises, although businesses could choose to apply for pre-authorisation to host weddings on their premises for a defined period; and
- Officiants would be responsible for ensuring that locations are suitable for hosting wedding ceremonies.

¹⁶ UK Chamber of Shipping, *Written Evidence to the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee: Industrial Strategy (ISG0068)* (27 September 2016) <<https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/71997/pdf/>> & Department for Transport and Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), *UK Cruise Growth Plan* (Department for Transport, 2025) <<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68d2650a275fc9339a248b6e/uk-cruise-growth-plan.pdf>>

¹⁷ P&O Cruises Registers “Record Number” of Wedding Bookings’ (Travel Weekly, 14 January 2025) <<https://travelweekly.co.uk/news/po-cruises-registers-record-number-of-wedding-bookings>>

¹⁸ Law Commission, *Getting Married: A Consultation Paper on Weddings Law* (Consultation Paper No 247, 3 September 2020); Law Commission, *Celebrating Marriage: A New Weddings Law* (Law Com No 408, 2022)

This option would allow couples to have legally binding weddings in any suitable location, in accordance with their own beliefs. It would make the minimum changes needed to simplify requirements and remedy the difference in treatment identified in *R (Harrison and others) v Secretary of State for Justice*¹⁹.

Option 3 - Comprehensive reform of weddings law (recommended option)

Under this option, registration officers, Anglican clergy, officiants nominated by religious and non-religious belief organisations, independent officiants and maritime officiants would be able to conduct legally binding weddings.

This option would still include removal of the requirement for businesses to obtain licence approvals from local authority approval to host weddings on their premises. Businesses could however choose voluntarily to become “pre-authorised” to host legally binding weddings. Removing this regulatory requirement is expected to lead to savings for businesses, including SMB. It could also reduce the barriers to entry for the weddings industry, particularly benefitting SMBs, for whom fixed approval costs are likely to represent a larger relative burden than for larger firms.

Key proposed changes to current legal framework:

- Independent and maritime officiants would be able to conduct legally binding wedding ceremonies (only officiating of weddings by independent officiants has been included and monetised within this appraisal due to data limitations);
- Individuals would be able to give notice of marriage in any registration district (not just in the district where they reside) or give notice online for civil preliminaries;
- Only one civil registration officer would be required to attend civil weddings, whilst only one authorised officiant would be required to attend religious, non-religious belief and maritime weddings on UK-flagged cruises;
- The civil preliminaries residence requirement that means each member of a couple must reside in the registration district where they give notice for seven days prior to giving notice would be removed;
- Businesses would no longer need to pay local authorities for licence approvals to host weddings on their premises for weddings on approved premises although businesses could choose to apply for pre-authorisation to host weddings on their premises for a fixed period; and
- Officiants would be responsible for ensuring that locations are suitable for hosting wedding ceremonies.

The main differences between Option 3 and Option 2 are that:

- Option 3 would permit independent officiants to officiate legally recognised wedding ceremonies, unlike Option 2; and
- Only one civil registration officer would be required to attend civil registration weddings under Option 3, whilst two civil registration officers would still be required to attend civil weddings on approved premises under Option 2.

6.1. Economic appraisal of options under consideration

For clarity, we have discussed our economic appraisal of options 2 and 3, apportioning costs and benefits where possible between three different areas:

- Couples getting married;
- Officiants and nominating bodies; and
- Businesses (primarily venues hosting weddings).

For simplicity, we have assumed (noting that reforms would take longer to come into effect) that:

- The reforms come into effect in FY 26/27 and that transition costs are incurred in the financial year FY 25/26;
- All costs are in real FY 25/26 prices; and
- The costs and benefits of the options have been appraised using a standard 3.5% discount rate and 10-year appraisal period.

¹⁹ *R (Harrison & Ors) v Secretary of State for Justice* [2020] EWHC 2096

The “**Summary: Economic Analysis and Evidence**” section provides an overview of the findings of the economic analysis and the “**Detailed Economic Appraisal**” (in the **Annex**) provides a full explanation of the modelling approach used to appraise Option 2 (partial reforms of weddings law option) and Option 3 (the preferred option).

It should be noted that the modelling is currently limited by:

- Uncertainty regarding the number of weddings that would occur post-reform;
- Uncertainty regarding the overall costs incurred by couples getting married and businesses; and
- Uncertainty regarding the overall benefits to couples getting married and businesses.

As a result, sensitivity analysis has been applied and low, central and high net present social value (NPSV) estimates are provided for the appraised Option 2 and Option 3.

The NPSV of Option 2 (partial reform of weddings law) is £142.5m under the central scenario. £36.4m-£306.4m is the range of NPSVs across all scenarios for our Partial Reform of Weddings Law option.

The NPSV of Option 3 (the preferred option) is £238.5m under the central scenario. £76.9m-£462.1m is the range of NPSVs across all scenarios for our preferred option.

For a full discussion of non-monetisable costs and benefits and how the number of weddings occurring post-reform have been estimated for options 2 and 3, please refer to the **Annex**.

6.2. Summary: Economic Analysis and evidence

Option 2 Appraisal:

In Option 2, 10.3% of couples are estimated to marry in Anglican wedding ceremonies, 32.1% are estimated to marry in non-Anglican religious wedding ceremonies, 22.8% are assumed to marry in non-religious belief organisation (such as Humanist) wedding ceremonies, 0.2% are assumed to marry in maritime officiant weddings on UK-flagged cruise ships and 34.6% are assumed to marry in civil weddings officiated by registration officers following the reforms. Details about the number of weddings and how they are estimated can be found in the end of this chapter.

It should be noted that Option 3 permits both independent and maritime officiants, whilst Option 2 permits maritime officiants to conduct legally binding weddings, but not independent officiants, for comparison between these options. Consequently, the estimates in the number of weddings by each type of officiant in Option 2 differ from Option 3 (below) as, under Option 3, independent officiants are assumed to be permitted to conduct legally binding civil wedding ceremonies. Therefore, we have estimated fewer civil wedding ceremonies under Option 3 by civil registrar officiants than Option 2 as some individuals will choose to have independent officiant wedding ceremonies rather than civil registrar officiant wedding ceremonies.

Costs:

Familiarisation costs to officiants conducting wedding ceremonies:

Some familiarisation costs are likely across a range of users from local authorities (registration officers), religious officiants, non-religious belief organisation (NRBO) officiants who will need to review the updated procedures and new guidance and it is expected that the entire set of guidance will need to be read. Using readingsoft.com as a reference point, an estimate of the time needed to understand the new requirements can be produced.

Table 1: Typical reading profile

Screen	Paper	Comprehension	Reader Profile
100 wpm	110 wpm	50%	Insufficient
200 wpm	240 wpm	60%	Average reader
300 wpm	400 wpm	80%	Good reader
700 wpm	1000 wpm	85%	Excellent reader

Source: readingsoft.com²⁰

Using the information provided above and imposing the following assumptions allows an estimate of additional familiarisation costs to be provided:

1. One-time costs affecting wedding officiants under Option 2, where under the implementation of the reforms, civil weddings (registration officers and maritime officiants), religious weddings (Anglican clergy and officiants nominated by religious belief organisations) and non-religious belief weddings (officiants nominated by NRBOs) are permitted.
2. The Anglican clergy are excluded from these costs. They will incur some familiarisation costs in respect of our recommended scheme, but we are not able to quantify these. It is likely that any guidance to Anglican clergy would be provided by the Church of England and/or the Church in Wales.
3. New guidance will documents will be 5 - 10 pages longer [with 8 pages being the central estimate].

²⁰ ReadingSoft, 'About ReadingSoft: A Revolutionary Approach to Efficient Reading' (ReadingSoft.com, 2023) <<https://readingsoft.com/>>

4. Superintendent Registrars / Registrars at local authorities are expected to read all of the guidance – with possibly an additional one [central estimate] or two pages [high estimate].
5. Research indicates that the vast majority of independent celebrants are self-employed, working as sole traders. We have therefore, by way of a salary proxy, applied the national minimum wage through to the average GB salary with an 18% uplift for non-wage costs when calculating the familiarisation costs for NRBO officiants (and independent officiants in option 3).

Table 2: Familiarisation costs (in £'000s) for religious officiants, local authorities' registration officers and NRBO officiants

	Low Estimate	Central estimate	High Estimate
Number of Religious Officiants	32,964	38,458	43,952
Number of Local Authority Officiants (Registration Officers)	1,420	1,780	2,130
Number of NRBO Officiants	200	250	300
Religious Officiants Cost (FY 25/26 Prices)	£65.64	£105.06	£131.35
Local Authorities' Officiants Costs (FY 25/26 Prices)	£1.47	£3.02	£4.40
NRBO Officiant Cost (FY 25/26 Prices)	£0.27	£0.58	£0.90
Total Costs for Option 2 (FY 25/26 Prices)	£68.40	£110.54	£139.13

Training costs for officiants conducting weddings:

Under new requirements, officiants would need to learn about their duties in respect of the ceremony, the locations and their overall responsibilities. It is anticipated that all staff will require training to ensure awareness of new legal responsibilities. Currently, most weddings are civil weddings carried out by registration officers in receipt of regular training by local authorities.

For Anglican weddings, Anglican clergy would undertake training provided by the Church of England / Church in Wales, as would other types of religious officiants with their respective organisations.

Existing officiants of religious belief organisations will require training on the new systems/procedures but, for new entrants, training would form part of the revised provision new entrants are expected to undergo. All qualifying religious and non-religious belief groups which meet the criteria will have their own processes and administrative checks for their officiants.

It is anticipated that the General Register Office (GRO) will need to update the guidance to local authority staff and the central regulator will need to provide a level of training. We assume training content will be of a similar volume to that required under sham marriage provisions. Half a day of training for around 400 staff is estimated to cost around £0.4m including updating handbooks and guidance. Given the higher local authority staff complement (in the region of just over 1,400 to about 2,100) but with the benefit of economies of scale, we envisage costs will be in the region of 2-3 times and will therefore cost between £0.89m to £1.33m in 2025/26 prices.

The Law Commission proposed that training should be directly overseen by a central regulator who would also provide the training directly to independent and maritime officiants. However, the consultation is testing whether independent officiants should be overseen by relevant membership organisations who would deliver the training directly, with oversight from a central regulator. The consultation also considers whether the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) could take on the role of the membership organisation for maritime officiants, delivering their training. The identity and make-up of the central regulator will be determined following the conclusion of the consultation.

We expect that training will cover the requirement for officiants to ensure that wedding locations are appropriate, including maintaining the dignity of the ceremony and applying the legal framework governing suitable locations. However, we are unable to speculate on the level of costs that the central regulator will incur in providing such training, nor the fees that it will charge to officiants or nominating bodies.

New systems and procedures costs for giving notice to marry:

A new IT system will likely be required to support an online process for giving notice and publishing notices of intended marriage. The system would need to be accessible to members of the public. We have assumed that the required system change will be on a similar in scale to changes made to implement the sham marriage provisions in the Immigration Act 2014, which cost just under £0.7m. This is starting assumption and actual costs may be higher.

Costs to couples getting married of having a location agreed by officiants:

Under Option 2, officiants will be responsible for deciding whether to approve the location of each wedding, having considered the safety and dignity of the location. It is possible that officiants may charge couples a fee to agree the location.

In the case of registration officers, there will be the ability for a fee to be charged in considering whether a location is safe and dignified, but whether that fee is prescribed by regulations or determined by local authorities is a matter for Government to determine. Table 3 below estimates the cost to a couple of a registration officer agreeing a location.

The following assumptions have been used to calculate the costs of having a location agreed by civil registration officers:

1. We have assumed a low, median and high figure for the fee charged to agree a location, based on the approach taken by registration officers in Scotland, where the fee for agreeing a location is often combined with the fee for conducting a wedding. The Law Commission report gives examples of the difference in fees charged by some local authorities for conducting weddings at any other location, compared to weddings on their premises, from £75.90 to £126.50 in FY 2025/26 prices, or charging a fee for weddings at venues which, because they are not popular, need to be assessed.²¹
2. Under Option 2, we estimate that 79,999 civil weddings (central estimate) will be officiated by registration officers each year. Of these, we estimate that 88% of couples having civil weddings officiated by registration officers will have a wedding at a location not owned or controlled by the local authority, in line with the Law Commission's previous Impact Assessment. This equates to approximately 70,399 civil weddings annually.

Humanists currently conduct non-legally binding ceremonies in a variety of locations and it is understood that Humanists and independent celebrants typically visit the venue prior to the day of the ceremony, either to assess the location or as part of ceremony rehearsal. Accordingly, we have not anticipated an additional cost arising from the requirement for officiants authorised by non-religious belief organisations and independent officiants to agree a location.

Also, whilst it is possible that some religious officiants will charge couples more to conduct weddings at locations other than places of worship, such as to reflect

²¹Renfrewshire Council, 'Fees for Marriages and Civil Partnerships' (22 June 2026) <<https://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/3208/Marriage-Fees>> ; West Lothian Council, 'Wedding Fees' <<https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/50516/WeddingFees>>; Perth & Kinross Council, *Marriage and civil partnership fees* <<https://www.pkc.gov.uk/article/15029/Marriage-and-civil-partnership-fees>> ; Midlothian Council, *Arranging a marriage* <https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/640/birth_marriage_and_death/47/arranging_a_marriage>

additional time travelling to the wedding venue, we think it is most likely that religious officiants will continue to charge low fees, or no fee at all, to officiate at weddings and that the ability to marry in a wide range of places will not result in any material cost to couples.

We have not estimated the range of fees that may be charged by NRBO officiants or maritime officiants, or whether the fees that they currently charge might change if they are authorised to conduct legally recognised weddings and subject to the duties and responsibilities under our recommended scheme. The consultation will aim to improve our understanding of this.²²

Table 3: Annual Cost of Location Approval

	Low Estimate	Central Estimate	High Estimate
A. Cost of Approving a Location (FY 25/26 Prices)	£-	£75.90	£126.50
B. Number of Civil Weddings in Option 2	79,223	79,999	80,776
C. Percentage of civil weddings which will take place on non-local authority properties	88%	88%	88%
D. Estimated Cost to couples of fee for approving locations (B*C*A)	£-	£5.34m	£8.99m

Annual Cost (Central Estimate): £5.34m

Present Value Over 10-Years: £45.99m

Civil preliminaries, losses to businesses from removing the 7-day residence requirement for couples to live in a registration district before giving notice of marriage:

Removing the requirement for each member of a couple to reside in the registration district where they give notice for seven days may benefit couples where one or both is resident overseas. For example, presently, a person may:

1. Need to travel to England and Wales twice (once to meet the residence requirement and give notice and then again to marry). This may apply to people living abroad but relatively close to England or Wales or who have commitments meaning they cannot stay in the jurisdiction for a longer period.
2. Need to travel to England and Wales at least five weeks in advance of the wedding (to meet the residency requirement and then wait 28 days to marry). This could apply to those who face more expensive travel costs and can stay for the five-week period.

Home Office data show that 2,692 Marriage Visitor visas were granted in 2024. These visas are issued to people who intend to marry or enter into a civil partnership in the UK but do not intend to settle here. We therefore assume that this cohort may be affected by the reforms, particularly where changes to the residence requirement reduce the time they need to spend in England and Wales before marrying.

In the absence of data on overseas residents marrying in the UK, we assume that a small proportion (5% of all overseas residents entering the UK on marriage visitor visas under the low estimate, 10% under the central estimate and 20% under the high estimate) of those entering the UK to marry do so in England and

²² Law Commission, *Celebrating Marriage: A New Weddings Law* (Law Com No 408, 2022)

Wales and may spend less time in the jurisdiction due to the reforms. In line with HMT Greenbook appraisals, this means reduced spend by overseas residents in England and Wales and so economic losses for firms.

Table 4: Losses to UK Economy from Reduced Spend by Overseas Residents

	Low Estimate	Central Estimate	High Estimate
A. Cost of travelling to England and Wales to give notice and marry (FY 2025/26 prices)	£569.25	£2,403.49	£7,020.73
B. Cost under the recommended reforms (FY 2025/26 prices)	£442.75	£1,517.99	£3,567.29
C. Savings per individual (A-B) (FY 2025/26 prices)	£126.50	£885.50	£3,453.44
D. Overseas residents marrying in England and Wales assumed to be affected by the reform each year	135	269	538
E. Total Savings to overseas residents marrying in England and Wales and so costs to UK businesses (C*D) (FY 25/26 Prices)	£17,026.84	£238,375.81	£1,859,331.30

Annual Costs (Central Estimate): £0.24m

Present Value of Costs Over 10-Year Appraisal Period: £1.81m

Ongoing benefits to couples who wish to marry:

Civil preliminaries, benefits to some couples from being able to attend in-person interviews at any registration district:

Allowing an individual to attend their in-person interview at any registration district will enable them to do so at the registration district most convenient to them, such where they work. Couples will also be able to have their in-person interviews at the same location, even if they live in different districts, though their interviews will remain separate.

This greater flexibility provided to couples is expected to benefit couples who are employed but commute significant distances to work. This is because such individuals may use annual leave, resulting in the opportunity cost of leisure time away from work. We have used the median wage (£19.67 in FY 25/26 prices) as a proxy for the value of the opportunity cost of leisure time in the absence of better data.²³ For each individual circumstance, we do not know if couples need to use annual leave or unpaid leave for this and this may be the choice of the individual or their employer.

²³ Office for National Statistics, *Travel to Work, England and Wales: Census 2021* (8 December 2022)

<<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/traveltoworkenglandandwales/census2021>>

Using our assumed number of individuals in scope (people having weddings undertaking civil preliminaries), “ONS travel to work England and Wales: Census 2021 data” and the “ONS Employee earnings in the UK: 2025” data for median hourly wages, we have estimated the potential avoided opportunity cost for couples from not needing to use annual leave to attend in-person interviews. ²⁴

We have assumed that individuals intending to marry and travelling over 60 kilometres and working mainly away from home may benefit from being able to attend in-person interviews closer to their workplace. ONS data shows that 1.4% of employed individuals work mainly away from home and travel 60 or more km to work. ²⁵ 401,416 individuals marry under the authority of civil preliminaries per annum and therefore have to attend in-person interviews to give notice of their intention to marry at least 29 days before their marriage date. ²⁶

Applying the employment rate (75.1% from ONS data) and the 1.4% of employed individuals travelling 60 or more kilometres and working mainly away from home and assuming that only half of this cohort intending to marry would prefer to attend an in-person interview at a location closer to work than in their home location, this gives an estimated total of 2,110 individuals that would benefit from this reform in our central and high estimates. ²⁷ Under the low estimate, we have assumed that no individuals would benefit from this change.

According to Wakefield Council, an appointment to give notice to marry takes approximately 20 minutes. ²⁸ Under our central estimate, we have assumed that it would take individuals an hour to travel to and from the registration office from their workplace and 20 minutes to attend the interview (incurring an opportunity cost of annual leave time of £26.23). Under the high estimate, we have assumed that it would take individuals two hours to travel to and from the registration office from their workplace and 20 minutes to attend the interview (incurring an opportunity cost of annual leave time of £45.90).

Table 5: Savings from Reduced Time Spent Attending Interviews

	Low Estimate	Central Estimate	High Estimate
A. Opportunity Costs of Leisure Time Saved by Attending In-Person Interview at Convenient Location (Using ONS Figures for Median Earnings for 2025)	£-	£26.23	£45.90
B. Number of individuals travelling 60 or more km to their workplace assumed to want to attend an in-person interview at a registration office closer to their workplace	2,110	2,110	2,110
C. Total Cost Savings to Couples (A*B)	£-	£55,344.63	£96,853.10

²⁴ Office for National Statistics, *Travel to Work, England and Wales: Census 2021* (8 December 2022)

<<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/traveltoworkenglandandwales/census2021>>

²⁵ Office for National Statistics, *Travel to Work, England and Wales: Census 2021* (8 December 2022)

<<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/traveltoworkenglandandwales/census2021>>

²⁶ Office for National Statistics, *Marriages and Civil Partnerships in England and Wales: 2023* (18 November 2025)

<<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/marriagecohabitationandcivilpartnerships/bulletins/marriagesinenglandandwalesprovisional/2023>>

²⁷ Office for National Statistics, *Employment in the UK: June 2026* (18 June 2026)

<<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/employmentintheuk/latest>>

²⁸ Wakefield Council, ‘Marriage and Civil Partnership Ceremonies’ <<https://www.wakefield.gov.uk/births-marriages-and-deaths/ceremonies/marriage-and-civil-partnership-ceremonies>>

Annual Savings (Central Estimate): £0.06m
Present Value Savings Over 10-Years: £0.42m

Benefits to some couples from not being required to have registration officers at religious weddings for legal recognition:

Under the reforms, religious organisations would be able to nominate officiants, subject to meeting certain criteria. This is expected to reduce costs for couples who would otherwise need to pay for a registration officer to attend a religious ceremony where no authorised person is present.

The Law Commission estimated that 55% of registered places of worship had at least one authorised person present, meaning 45% did not.²⁹ According to the most recent available data for May 2026 from the HM Passport Office, there were 21,976 registered places of worship.³⁰

Applying the figure of 45% to the 9,469 couples assumed to be having religious weddings currently, this gives a total number of 4,261 couples who require the attendance of a civil registration officer at their religious wedding for legal recognition and therefore this is the number of couples forecast to make savings as they no longer need to pay fees for the attendance of civil registration officers following our reforms.

Table 7: Savings from not needing civil registration officers attending religious officiated weddings

	Estimate
A. No of Couples Having a Religious Wedding who Require Attendance of Registration Officer	4,261
B. Prescribed Fee for Attendance of Registration Officer (FY 25/26 Prices) ³¹	£114.50
C. Total Savings to Couples from Our Recommendations (A*B) (FY 25/26 Prices)	£487,890.23

Annual Savings: £0.49m
Present Value Savings Over 10-Years: £3.71m

Benefits to some couples from not needing to have an additional wedding for legal recognition:

Under the reforms, fewer couples will need to have an additional legally recognised wedding as a result of not being able to legally marry in accordance with their beliefs.

The estimated number of couples having an additional register office wedding under current legal framework is calculated by multiplying the percentage of couples marrying in a register office simply to have an additional legally recognised wedding in the LC's Weddings IA (15,000 of 17,802 couples getting married in register office weddings in 2019 were assumed to do so in an additional wedding for legal recognition, around 84%) by the number of weddings occurring in register offices

²⁹ Law Commission, *Celebrating Marriage: A New Weddings Law – Impact Assessment (IA No LAWCOM0079)* (19 July 2022)

³⁰ HM Passport Office, *Places of Worship Registered for Marriage* (17 March 2015, updated 8 June 2026) <<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/places-of-worship-registered-for-marriage>>

³¹ HM Government, *Plan your ceremony* <https://www.gov.uk/marriages-civil-partnerships/plan-your-ceremony>, Fees are £114.50 for the attendance of a registrar at a registered religious building.

(19,080) to give 16,077 weddings.³² Post-reform, these couples will benefit from savings from not having to have additional register office weddings as their initial ceremony will be legally binding.

We estimate that ~32.1% of all weddings will be religious (non-Anglican, non-Jewish, non-Quaker), giving ~74,303 weddings. Added to this, the most recent available estimates suggest that 10,000 independent celebrant ceremonies and 1,000 Humanist ceremonies occur per year³³, but, as these are not legally binding, couples will need to have an additional civil wedding for legal coverage³⁴. These couples will benefit from saving on needing an additional legal weddings.

In Option 2, the reason the 1,000 Humanist ceremonies figures are used rather than the ~52,675 NRBO (including Humanist) weddings forecast to happen post-reform (see Annex), is because we assumed that many atheist, secular, agnostic and other non-religious belief couples currently choose to have just one civil wedding ceremony for legal recognition. Although many of these individuals would prefer to have legally binding wedding ceremonies officiated by NRBO officiants, they cannot do so under the current legal framework and so elect to only have one singular legally binding civil wedding ceremony.

Therefore, we assume the majority of people who have non-religious beliefs currently choose to simply have a civil ceremony only to attain legal recognition and do not pay for Humanist celebrant weddings under the present law. Only the ~1,000 couples estimated to have Humanist non-legally binding wedding ceremonies every year are assumed to benefit from the reform. This is supported by the limited evidence we have available, although our approach is conservative. Therefore, 49,758 couples are assumed to benefit from no longer needing to have an additional civil wedding ceremony away from a register office for legal recognition per annum.

Table 8: Savings to couples not having an additional legal wedding

	Low	Central	High
A. Statutory cost of a register office wedding ³⁵	£62.00	£62.00	£62.00
B. Estimated number of couples having an additional register office wedding	16,077	16,077	16,077
C. Cost saving of couples No Longer Having an Additional Legal Wedding in the Register Office (A*B)	£996,764.41	£996,764.41	£996,764.41
D. Estimated cost of an additional legally binding ceremony outside the register office	£62.00	£189.75	£417.45
E. Estimated Number of Couples Saving on no longer needing to have an additional legal wedding outside register office	49,758	49,758	49,758
F. Cost saving of couples no longer having an additional legal wedding outside register office (d*e)	£3,084,965.59	£9,441,456.02	£20,771,203.25

³² Law Commission, *Celebrating Marriage: A New Weddings Law – Impact Assessment* (IA No LAWCOM0079) (19 July 2022)

³³ House of Commons Library, *Humanist marriage ceremonies in England and Wales* (Research Briefing No 05864, 11 March 2026) <<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN05864/SN05864.pdf>>

³⁴ S Pywell, “The day of their dreams: celebrant-led wedding celebration ceremonies” [2020] *Child and Family Law Quarterly* 177, 181.

³⁵ HM Government, ‘Plan Your Ceremony’ (GOV.UK) <<https://www.gov.uk/marriages-civil-partnerships/plan-your-ceremony>>, fees information was correct at the time of analysis (2026). Fees increased to £62.00 for a civil wedding at a register office in 2026.

G. Total cost saving (c+f)	£4,081,729.99	£10,438,220.43	£21,767,967.65
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Annual Savings: £10.43m

Present Value Saving Over 10-Years: £79.41m

Officiants and Nominating Bodies:

Authorisation, training and monitoring costs for officiants and nominating bodies:

It has not been possible to estimate the authorisation, training and monitoring costs expected to be incurred by nominating officiant bodies, such as non-religious belief groups and maritime officiants to assure compliance with regulatory requirements set by the regulator.

Ongoing benefits for officiants and nominating bodies:

It has not been possible to quantify any benefits relating to officiants and nominating bodies as a result of the reforms but more detail on non-monetised benefits can be found on pages 33-38.

Ongoing benefits to businesses (primarily venues hosting wedding ceremonies):

Benefits to businesses from removing mandatory regulatory costs for businesses hosting weddings:

Under the Government's proposed reforms, businesses and other venues will not be mandated to obtain the approval of the local authority to host legal weddings on their premises. This means that the fees venues must pay when applying or renewing their approval under the Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005, as well as any costs that venues need to incur to comply with the requirements of the Regulations or the conditions of the approval, will be eliminated.

However, businesses would still be able to voluntarily apply for pre-authorisation to host weddings on their premises as detailed below. Officiants would be responsible for considering whether the venue is safe and dignified for any particular wedding and this is expected to be less regulatory and cheaper for businesses. Businesses wishing to apply for pre-authorisation would also need to be assessed as suitable to host weddings, but once approved, this will allow the premises to host legally binding weddings for a yet-to-be determined period without needing to be repeatedly visited for location approval by officiants.

At this stage, it is unknown what fees may (or may not) be associated with this service and whether these costs will be passed through to couples getting married, who would be permitted to grant pre-authorisation venues and how many businesses are likely to use the pre-authorisation scheme. Any costs associated with the setup and maintenance of the pre-authorisation scheme are also unknown at this stage due to this being a nascent policy area.

If businesses do choose to use the pre-authorisation scheme and are charged fees, which may be analogous to current licence fees charged by local authorities, then the net savings to businesses forecast here would be smaller. Hence, the estimated £103.3m net savings to businesses here should be viewed as the upper bound of savings to businesses due to the reforms. These would only be realised if very few businesses decide to use the pre-authorisation avenue to obtain approval to host weddings on their premises. Moreover, couples who choose to get married in pre-approved venues may benefit from not having to pay officiants to visit venues to ensure they are appropriate for their wedding ceremonies, by potentially reducing the costs of location approval borne by couples.

The following assumptions have been made to calculate the numbers in Table 9 below:

1. There are currently approximately 7,155 approved premises, according to the most recent list from HM Passport Office.³⁶
2. The median fee paid by a venue to the local authority to apply to become an approved premises is £1,897. This is based on previous Law Commission research for their consultation paper, with the low and high estimates representing the lowest and highest fees identified in the research.³⁷ Most of these costs are assumed to be passed through to couples getting married at venues because businesses can set fees to hire venues in such a way to recover these costs.

Table 9: Annual savings from reduced regulatory costs for businesses

	Low Estimate	Central Estimate	High Estimate
A. Number of Approved Premises	7,155	7,155	7,155
B. Fee Across England and Wales for Approving a Premises for Weddings (FY 25/26 Prices)	£63.25	£1,897.49	£4,060.64
Savings (A*B)	£452,552.24	£13,576,567.35	£29,053,854.13

Annual Savings to Businesses (Central Estimate): £13.58m

Present Value of Benefits Over 10-Year Appraisal Period: £103.29m

For the detailed economic analysis, please refer to the Annex.

Option 3 Appraisal:

In Option 3, 10.3% of couples are estimated to marry in Anglican weddings, 32.1% of couples are estimated to marry in non-Anglican religious weddings, 22.8% are estimated to marry in non-religious belief weddings (such as Humanist ceremonies), 0.2% are estimated to marry in maritime officiant weddings, 22.8% are estimated to marry in weddings officiated by independent officiants and 11.8% are estimated to marry in civil weddings officiated by civil registration officers. For full details, please refer to the Annex.

Costs:

Familiarisation Costs to officiants conducting wedding ceremonies:

As in Option 2, familiarisation costs will occur as non-religious belief, religious belief, civil registration and maritime officiants will need to familiarise themselves with the new guidance. As independent officiants also need to familiarise themselves with the new guidance, then familiarisation costs are greater under Option 3 than under Option 2. The same methodology is used here as in Option 2 to estimate familiarisation costs.

Table 10: Familiarisation costs (in £'000) for religious officiants, local authorities' registration officers and NRBO officiants

	Low Estimate	Central estimate	High Estimate

³⁶ HM Passport Office, *Civil Marriages and Partnerships: Approved Premises List* (23 November 2012, updated 17 October 2025)

³⁷ Law Commission, *Getting Married: A Consultation Paper on Wedding Law* (Consultation Paper No 247, 3 September 2020), para 7.61

Number of Religious Officiants	32,964	38,458	43,952
Number of Local Authority Officiants (Registration Officers)	1,420	1,780	2,130
Number of NRBO Officiants	200	250	300
Number of Independent Officiants	1,000	1,100	1,200
Religious Officiants Cost (FY 25/26 Prices)	£65,635.98	£105,064.37	£131,349.28
Local Authorities' Officiants Costs (FY 25/26 Prices)	£1,467.40	£3,023.34	£4,402.19
NRBO Officiant Cost (FY 25/26 Prices)	£265.65	£581.90	£898.15
Independent Officiant Cost (FY 25/26 Prices)	£1,328.25	£2,555.29	£3,592.59
Total Costs for Option 3 (FY 25/26 Prices)	£68,697.27	£111,224.90	£140,242.20

Training costs for officiants conducting weddings:

As in Option 2, the central regulator will likely be responsible for either providing or approving training for officiants. Under Option 3, this will also include independent officiants. However, we are unable to estimate the training costs incurred by the regulator in Option 3 or speculate on whether these costs may be recuperated through the charging of fees.

New systems and procedures costs for giving notice to marry online:

As in Option 2, new IT requirements are indicated through the need for a national online database for giving notice initially online and displaying notices of intended marriage and this is estimated to cost just under £0.7m.

Ongoing costs to couples who wish to marry

Costs to couples getting married of having a location agreed by officiants:

Under Option 3, officiants will be responsible for deciding whether to approve the location of each wedding, having considered the safety and dignity of the location; it is possible that officiants may charge couples a fee to agree the location.

In the case of registration officers, there will be a power for a fee to be charged for registration officers considering whether a location is safe and dignified, but whether that fee is prescribed by regulations or determined by local authorities is a matter for Government to determine. The table below estimates the cost to a couple of a registration officer agreeing a location.

The same assumptions as set out under Option 2 have been used to calculate the total fees charged to couples for location approvals by civil registration officers. Under Option 3, a smaller number of civil weddings are forecast (27,059-27,589 per annum) than under Option 2 and so the total costs of location approval fees charged by civil registration officers to couples are smaller under Option 3 than Option 2.

Humanists and independent celebrants currently conduct non-legally binding ceremonies in a variety of locations and it is understood that Humanists and independent celebrants typically visit the venue prior to the day of the ceremony, either to assess the location or as part of ceremony rehearsal. Accordingly, we have not anticipated an additional cost arising from the requirement for officiants authorised by non-religious bodies and independent officiants to agree a location. As in Option 2, we also have not estimated religious officiants charging couples fees for location approvals.

Table 11: Annual Cost of Location Approval

	Low Estimate	Central Estimate	High Estimate
Cost of Approving a Location (FY 2019/20 Prices)	£-	£60.00	£100.00
A. Cost of Approving a Location (FY 2025/26 Prices)	£-	£75.90	£126.50
B. Number of Civil Weddings	27,059	27,324	27,589
C. Percentage which take place on non-local authority properties	88%	88%	88%
D. Estimated Cost to couples of fee for approving locations ((B*C)*A)	£-	£1,825,030.28	£3,071,248.36

Annual Costs (Central Estimate): £1.83m

Present Value of Costs Over 10-Year Appraisal Period: £13.88m

Civil preliminaries, losses to businesses from removing the 7-day residence requirement for couples to live in a registration district before giving notice of marriage:

As in Option 2, the removal of the requirement for each member of a couple to reside in the registration district where they give notice for seven days may lead to overseas residents marrying in England and Wales spending less time and therefore money, in the jurisdiction, leading to losses for English and Welsh businesses. For Option 3, we have estimated the losses to the economy using the same assumptions as Option 2. This means that the annual losses to the economy are estimated to be between £0.02m-£1.9m, with a central estimate of £0.24m.

Annual Costs (Central Estimate): £0.24m

Present Value of Costs Over 10-Year Appraisal Period: £1.81m

Ongoing benefits to couples who wish to marry:

Civil preliminaries, benefits to some couples from being able to attend in-person interviews at any registration district:

Allowing an individual to attend their in-person interview at any registration district will enable them to attend the interview at the registration district most convenient to them, such as in the registration district where they work. Couples will also be able to have their in-person interviews at the same location, even if they live in different districts, though their interviews will remain separate. This greater flexibility provided to couples is assumed to benefit couples who are employed but commute significant distances to work. This is because such individuals will likely need to take time off from work, resulting in lost economic output.

The benefits of this for couples through avoided opportunity costs in terms of lost work output have been estimated using the same assumptions and methodology as set out in Option 2. The total cost savings to couples per annum are estimated between £0.0m-£0.10m with a central estimate of £0.06m.

Annual Savings (Central Estimate): £0.06m
Present Value Savings Over 10-Years: £0.42m

Benefits to some couples from the requirement for only one registration officer to attend a civil wedding for legal recognition:

Under the reforms, only one civil registration officer, rather than two as is needed presently, will be required to attend civil weddings and ensure that the wedding ceremony is legally recognised.

Using our central estimate of the number of civil weddings under Option 3 (27,324) and assuming that 89.7% of weddings (165,348 civil ceremonies on approved premises of 184,428 civil ceremonies in ONS 2023 data) will occur outside of registration offices, then 24,497 couples are estimated to save on reduced fees as only one civil registration officer will be required to officiate at the wedding. Multiplying the number of couples saving on fees for the attendance of civil registration officers then provides the per annum savings for couples.

Table 12: Requirement for Only One Registration Officer to Attend a Civil Wedding on Approved Premises

	Low Estimate	Central Estimate	High Estimate
Cost of Attendance by registrar and superintendent registrar under current legal framework (FY 25/26 Prices)	£385.82	£588.22	£847.55
B. Cost of Attendance by One Registrar Under Recommendations (50% of A) (FY 25/26 Prices)	£192.91	£294.11	£423.77
C. Cost Savings Per Couple (A-B) (FY 25/26 Prices)	£192.91	£294.11	£423.77
D. Estimated Number of Couples Marrying in Civil Weddings Outside Register Office	24,497	24,497	24,497
E. Total Savings (C*D) (FY 25/26 Prices)	£4,725,829.88	£7,204,953.76	£10,381,331.22

Annual Savings: £7.2m
Present Value Savings Over 10-Years: £54.8m

Benefits to some couples from not being required to have registration officers at religious weddings for legal recognition:

Under the reforms, religious organisations will be able to nominate officiants (subject to meeting certain criteria) and this will reduce the costs incurred as a result of the requirement that a registration officer officiate at a religious wedding where an authorised person is not present.

We have estimated the economic benefits of this for couples using the same methodology and assumptions as under Option 2.

Annual Savings: £0.49m
Present Value Savings Over 10-Years: £3.71m

Benefits to some couples from not needing to have an additional wedding for legal recognition:

Under the reforms, couples would no longer need to have two weddings in order to adhere to both their religion and the legal requirements because all weddings will be subject to the regulation of the officiant conducting the wedding rather than the building or location in which the wedding would take place.

Couples who choose to have a wedding conducted in accordance with their non-religious beliefs, or by independent celebrants who cannot conduct weddings under the existing framework, will also no longer need an additional legally recognised wedding where they are married by a nominated or independent officiant under the reformed scheme and will benefit from saving the associated costs of having two weddings.

The estimated number of couples having an additional register office wedding is calculated by multiplying the percentage of couples marrying in a register office simply to have an additional legally recognised wedding in the Law Commissions’ Impact Assessment (~84%) by the number of weddings occurring in register offices (19,080) to give 16,077 weddings. These couples would save the cost of an additional register office ceremony, as their initial ceremony would result in a legally recognised marriage.

We estimate that ~32.1% of all weddings will be religious (non-Anglican, non-Jewish, non-Quaker), giving ~74,303 weddings. Added to this, the most recent available estimates suggest that 10,000 independent celebrant ceremonies and 1,000 Humanist ceremonies occur per year.³⁸ These ceremonies do not currently result in legally recognised marriages, meaning couples may need to have an additional civil ceremony to secure legal recognition. Under the reforms, these couples would save the cost of that additional civil ceremony.

The reason the 10,000 independent celebrant and 1,000 Humanist ceremonies figures are used rather than the ~52,675 NRBO (including Humanist) weddings and the ~52,675 independent officiant weddings forecast to happen post-reform, is because we assumed that many atheist, secular, agnostic and other non-religious belief couples will likely choose to have just one civil ceremony only to ensure legal coverage. Although many of these individuals would prefer to have ceremonies officiated by NRBO or independent officiants, they cannot under the current legal framework and so elect to only have civil ceremonies.

Hence, we assume the majority of people who have non-religious beliefs choose to simply have a civil ceremony only currently to attain legal recognition and do not pay for Humanist or independent celebrant weddings under the present law. Only the 10,000 couples estimated to have non-legally binding wedding ceremonies with independent celebrants and the 1,000 couples estimated to have non-legally binding wedding ceremonies every year are assumed to benefit from the reforms. This is supported by the limited evidence we have available, although our approach is conservative. Therefore, 59,758 couples are assumed to benefit from no longer having an additional civil wedding for legal recognition per annum.

Table 13: Savings to couples not having an additional legal wedding

	Low	Central	High
A. Statutory Cost of Religious Wedding	£62.00	£62.00	£62.00
B. Estimated Number of Couples Having an Additional Register Office Wedding	16,077	16,077	16,077

³⁸ Lisa Rowland, *Humanist Marriage Ceremonies in England and Wales* (House of Commons Library, Research Briefing No 05864, 11 March 2026).

C. Cost Saving of Couples No Longer Having an Additional Legal Wedding in the Register Office (A*B)	£996,764.41	£996,764.41	£996,764.41
D. Estimated Cost of an Additional Legally Binding Ceremony Outside the Register Office	£62.00	£189.75	£417.45
E. Estimated Number of Couples Saving on Need to Have an Additional Legal Wedding Outside Register Office	59,758	59,758	59,758
F. Cost Saving of Couples No Longer Having an Additional Legal Wedding Outside Register Office (D*E)	£3,704,965.59	£ 11,338,949.71	£ 24,945,689.36
G. Total Cost Saving (C+F)	£4,701,729.99	£12,335,714.12	£25,942,453.77

Annual Savings (Central Estimate): £12.34m

Present Value of Savings Over 10-Year Appraisal Period: £93.85m

Officiants and Nominating Bodies:

Authorisation, training and monitoring costs for officiants and nominating bodies:

It has not been possible to estimate the authorisation, training and monitoring costs expected to be incurred by nominating officiant bodies, such as non-religious belief groups or maritime officiants to assure compliance with regulatory requirements set by an agreed State regulator.

Ongoing benefits to officiants and nominating bodies:

It has not been possible to quantify any benefits relating to officiants and nominating bodies as a result of the reforms but more detail on non-monetised benefits can be found later in the Impact Assessment.

Ongoing benefits to businesses (primarily venues hosting wedding ceremonies)

Benefits to businesses from removing mandatory regulatory costs for businesses hosting weddings:

Under our reforms, to host legal weddings on their premises, businesses and other venues will not be mandated to obtain the approval of the local authority. Therefore, the fees venues must pay when applying or renewing their approval under the Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005³⁹ and any costs that venues need to incur to comply with the requirements of the Regulations or the conditions of the approval will be eliminated, although businesses will still be able to voluntarily apply for pre-authorisation to host weddings on their premises. Officiants will be responsible for considering whether the venue is safe and dignified for any particular wedding and this is expected to be less regulatory and cheaper for businesses.

We have used the same methodology and assumptions as in option 2 to estimate the savings to businesses of this reform. Savings to businesses hosting weddings on their premises are estimated to range between £0.45m-£29.1m with a central estimate of £13.58m.

Annual Savings to Businesses (Central Estimate): £13.58m

Present Value of Benefits Over 10-Year Appraisal Period: £103.29m

³⁹ The Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005, SI 2005 No 3168

Non-monetisable Costs Discussion:

Cost	Description	Scale Under Option 2	Scale Under Option 3
Couples getting married			
Training costs for officiants who are not civil registrars. There is insufficient information, at this time, to estimate the cost of this.	Religious, non-religious belief officiants, independent officiants and maritime officiants will all require training. Training is anticipated to take 1-3 days and this training may take place online.	The cost of rolling out training to officiants in Option 2 are unknown. It is also not known whether the central regulator, or the General Register Office, if they decide to take that role, will be able to recover costs through the charging of fees to officiants or nominating bodies for training.	The cost of rolling out training to officiants in option 3 are unknown. It is also not known whether the central regulator will be able to recover costs through the charging of fees to officiants or nominating bodies for training. However, the costs of rolling out training in Option 3 may be greater than in Option 2 due to the permitting of independent officiants to officiate legally binding weddings.
Cost of religious officiant's charges to conduct weddings outside a place of worship	Weddings will be permitted to take place in wider locations. This means that some religious officiants may charge couples more to conduct weddings outside of places of worship, to reflect additional time or costs incurred travelling to wedding venues.	Low as we assume that it is most likely that religious officiants will continue to charge couples low fees or no fees at all to officiate weddings in external locations.	Identically to Option 2, the cost of fees charged to couples by religious officiants to conduct weddings outside of a place of worship is estimated to be low.
Cost of fees charged by officiants	Religious, NRBO and maritime and independent (in Option 3, not 2) officiants will all be able to officiate weddings. We assume that most religious officiants will continue to charge couples low fees or not charge fees at all to officiate at weddings. We have not attempted to estimate the range of fees that may be charged by NRBO, maritime or independent officiants or whether the fees that they currently charge might change if they are authorised to conduct legally recognised weddings and are subjected to the duties and responsibilities of our reforms.	Unknown. According to the Humanists UK website, fees for Humanist celebrants to conduct wedding ceremonies can range from £450-£1,500. Travel costs may also be charged separately. We cannot say if the additional administrative responsibilities that Humanist celebrants would need to complete for legal recognition of weddings would increase these costs.	Unknown. Similarly to Option 2, we are unable to estimate the likely fees that officiants will charge to officiate weddings and whether these fees will be higher due to the greater administrative and regulatory requirements they are expected to complete.
Officiants and nominating bodies			
Authorisation, training and monitoring costs	There will be ongoing costs to nominating bodies and officiants to comply with training and monitoring requirements. These costs will be incurred by nominating bodies, nominating officiants and also to	Unknown, these costs will depend on the level of fees set by the central regulator, or the General Register Office if they agree to undertake this role, for authorisation and the provision of training.	Unknown, these costs will depend on the level of fees set by the central regulator, or the General Register Office, if they agree to undertake this role, for authorisation and the provision of training.

	independent officiants for authorisation, training and development.		
Businesses (primarily venues hosting wedding ceremonies)			
Sunk costs from obtaining or working to obtain licence approvals to host weddings on their premises from local authorities	Under the reforms, venues will no longer need to become approved premises. Hence, the fees spent on approving premises for a minimum period of three years will be lost. The sunk cost of obtaining approval for premises will have disproportionately affected SMBs, which have fewer financial revenues available. Businesses may also have incurred costs in making required improvements to premises to obtain approval.	Unknown.	Unknown
Internal costs			
Costs to Home Office Immigration Enforcement arising from consequential reforms to the sham marriage referral and investigation scheme	Under the reforms, a new two stage preliminaries process will be implemented. The current preliminary process enables a referral to Home Office for the investigation of potential sham marriages. Depending on how the new process is implemented, this may result in an additional one-off cost to updated systems to manage the change in process as well as costs for training updates for investigators and triage staff which could be absorbed internally. There will also be costs if the Home Office Immigration Enforcement team if they are required to facilitate training on sham marriage safeguarding and legal duties for all new types of officiants.	Unknown. These costs will depend on how the new two-stage process is implemented and the extent of the training that staff will require to familiarise themselves with new processes. The cost of training officiants, and where that cost sits, will also depend on the model that is chosen for the regulation and oversight of officiants, which is to be determined following the consultation.	Unknown. These costs will depend on how the new two-stage process is implemented and the extent of the training that staff will require to familiarise themselves with new processes. The cost of training officiants, and who that cost sits with, will also depend on the model that is chosen for the regulation and oversight of officiants, which is yet to be determined following the consultation.

Non-monetisable Benefits Discussion:

Benefit	Description	Scale Under Option 2	Scale Under Option 3
Couples getting married			
The ability for couples to give notice online and book their in-	At present, couples must give notice to marry in person, which may incur costs including	Large as all couples intending to marry must give notice and so the ~401,416 individuals we estimate to marry under the authority of civil preliminaries are in scope to benefit from	Large as all couples intending to marry must give notice and so the ~401,416 individuals we estimate to marry under the authority of civil preliminaries are in scope to benefit from

person interviews should remove the need for booking fees to be charged for couples.	booking fees, along with travel and time costs to attend interviews.	this reform. However, we cannot quantify this as we do not know how many couples will choose to give notice online, nor any changes in booking fees.	this reform. However, we cannot quantify this as we do not know how many couples will choose to give notice online, nor any changes in booking fees.
Under our reforms, only one registration officer will need to officiate at a civil wedding, which will likely make the register office wedding a cheaper service for local authorities to provide. This may therefore make this service more widely available for couples who desire it.	At present, both the superintendent registrar and registrar attend register office weddings. This is arguably inefficient and may be straining local authority resources, particularly affecting the availability of civil registration officers to conduct other duties. By changing regulation so that only one civil registration officer is required to officiate register office weddings, this is likely to save resources and incur less costs for local authorities.	Option 2 does not change the requirement for two civil registration officers to officiate at civil weddings and so there are fewer savings to couples.	We anticipate the savings to couples here to be relatively small although more couples are likely to benefit from the reduced cost of register office weddings. These benefits will particularly affect the welfare of more economically disadvantaged couples who have fewer financial resources.
Reduced cost of marrying in approved premises	Under the reforms, weddings will be legally permitted to take place in wider location and locations should not require pre-approval, which will remove the cost to venues of applying/renewing regulatory approval from the local authority. Couples may benefit from this measure because businesses may no longer pass through some of the costs for regulatory approval to couples, which would lead to lower prices for couples to get married in such venues.	Small, likely to be insignificant. Couples will have the ability to marry in any suitable location and so it is unlikely that there will be any meaningful savings to couples due to the reduced regulatory burden on venues. For example, couples choosing to marry outdoors will not benefit at all from this as outdoor weddings are not currently legally recognised. Additionally, it is unknown whether businesses will lower prices in response to the reduced regulatory burden.	Small, likely to be insignificant and identical to Option 2.
Lower cost wedding options	Couples will be able to marry in any location agreed by their chosen officiant. This will enable couples to choose lower cost wedding venue options, such as community venues or even at home. A wider range of venues and locations will become available, increasing competition and choice for consumers whilst likely leading to lower prices.	Unknown, but the benefits of this extend beyond potential savings to couples because couples are likely to be better able to have meaningful wedding ceremonies that reflect their preferences. This benefit cannot be monetised.	Unknown, but the benefits of this extend beyond potential savings to couples because couples are likely to be better able to have meaningful wedding ceremonies that reflect their preferences. This benefit cannot be monetised.

Modernising the legal system	Reform will provide the benefit of modernising the legal system. Current legal framework has not been reformed in any significant way since the Marriages Act of 1836, whilst the societal attitudes and religious and non-religious beliefs of the population of England and Wales have subsequently changed dramatically. As a result, the current law no longer accommodates the wishes and beliefs of the majority of couples who wish to get married. Hence, modernising the law will ensure that the law remains relevant for our modern society.	Large as the number of Anglican weddings is falling over time as is the proportion of the population adhering to Christian beliefs. A greater and increasing proportion of the population identifies with having no religious beliefs as well as other religious belief groups. Therefore, the current legal framework, which reflects a primarily Anglican and Christian society, does not adequately permit an increasingly non-Christian population to marry according to its own preferences.	Large, impacts likely to be similar to Option 2.
Respecting Choice through allowing greater ceremonial choice for couples	Under the reforms, all ceremonies will be conducted according to the form and ceremony agreed between the couple and the officiant, with the main requirement of any valid wedding ceremony being that each party consents to the marriage. This will permit couples to have a wedding ceremony that reflects their beliefs and wishes.	Unknown, but previous consultation evidence revealed that many couples have non-legally recognised marriage ceremonies to reflect their wishes and preferences as well as an additional legally recognised civil wedding to ensure the validity of their marriage. Couples will experience unquantifiable benefits from having a more meaningful ceremony that reflects their beliefs and wishes.	Unknown, but potentially greater than Option 2 because some couples will likely express a preference to marry under the authority of an independent officiant in highly personalised ceremonies.
Facilitating couples to be legally married	Under the reforms, it will be easier for religious weddings (other than Anglicans, Quakers and Jews which already benefit from bespoke rules) to comply with legal requirements. This will reduce the risk of couples inadvertently entering non-legally binding religious marriages, which can lead to major financial vulnerabilities for financially weaker parties should the marriage breakdown, under current law. Courts will be able to make financial orders as it sees fit, protecting the welfare of financially weaker partners and any children of the relationship.	Unknown, but potentially large. Evidence on the number of couples in non-legally recognised religious only marriages is poor as these figures are not captured in official data. However, there is evidence that suggests that a disproportionate number of couples from religious minorities are in non-legally recognised marriages and so are left potentially vulnerable if the relationship breaks down.	Unknown, but potentially large with the same scale of impact as Option 2.
Encouraging couples to marry	Under the reforms, couples will be afforded greater choice over their wedding ceremonies and more low-cost options will be available than currently. This may encourage a greater number of couples to	Unknown, but the increase in the number of marriages could be significant. The Marriage Foundation in 2021 noted that the cost of weddings is a barrier to marriage for less economically wealthy couples, so the reforms	Unknown, but the increase in the number of marriages could be significant. The Marriage Foundation in 2021 noted that the cost of weddings is a barrier to marriage for less economically wealthy couples, so the reforms

	get married, thereby strengthening the institution of marriage in society.	could feasibly lead to an increase in the number of weddings.	could feasibly lead to an increase in the number of weddings.
Officiants and nominating bodies			
No fees for registering places of worship	Under current law, any building other than Church of England churches or chapels used as a meeting place for religious worship may be certified as such to the Registrar General, upon payment of the fee set by regulation. Once the building has been certified, an application can be made for it to host legally recognised weddings which also incurs a fee. The reforms will mean there is no need for certified places of worship to be registered to conduct weddings, saving them fees.	Unknown. Given there are currently 21,976 registered places of worship, then the potential savings could be significant here.	Unknown. Given there are currently 21,976 registered places of worship, then the potential savings could be significant here.
Officiants are able to provide belief weddings for their community	An important non-monetisable benefit of the reforms is that officiants will have the ability to offer legally binding weddings that reflect the religious or non-religious beliefs of the groups to which they belong and the couples they are serving.	Large, 74,303 non-Anglican religious weddings and 52,675 non-religious belief weddings are estimated to occur every annum post-reform under our central estimates. Hence, ~126,978 religious and non-religious belief officiated weddings are in-scope to benefit in this way.	Large and the same scale as under Option 2.
Officiants will be able to conduct non-legally binding ceremonies for couples who want them	As under current law, post-reform, officiants will still be able to conduct non-legally binding ceremonies for couples who want them. This may generate revenue earning opportunities for officiants and businesses.	Unknown, there is no data available to estimate this.	Unknown, there is no data available to estimate this.
Businesses (primarily venues hosting wedding ceremonies)			
Removing barriers for new entrants to the market	Under the reforms, rules preventing outdoor and private locations from being able to host weddings will be removed. This will likely eliminate the costs of obtaining approval and increase competition amongst venues. The regulatory burden for businesses will be reduced, particularly for SMBs. Also, the increase in the number of weddings could lead to market expansion and positive multiplier effects through greater revenue earning opportunities. For example, industries such as florists and others would benefit from a larger market to serve.	Unknown, though depending on the local authority, location approval and renewal fees vary. The removal of these fees is likely to stimulate market entry by businesses that wish to host weddings, but we are unable to estimate this.	Unknown, but likely the same impact as under Option 2.

Reducing lost income for venues who have been affected by the unavailability of registration officers to officiate at weddings	The requirement for two local authority civil registration officers to officiate at civil weddings may limit the availability of registration officers to officiate at weddings. This could lead to some businesses losing revenue earning opportunities. This may lead to greater availability and therefore revenue earning opportunities for firms.	Unknown as we do not know whether businesses that host weddings on their premises have foregone revenue earning opportunities due to the unavailability of civil registration officers.	Unknown for the same reason as described under Option 2.
More competition amongst businesses	Under the reforms, businesses will no longer need to obtain licence approvals to host legally recognised weddings on their premises. The removal of this regulatory barrier to entry is likely to lead to an opening up of the market and a greater number of firms entering the market to compete. This will lead to greater choice and potentially lower prices for couples as well as driving further efficiencies within the industry	Unknown, but the reducing of the regulatory burden will particularly benefit SMBs, which make up 50% of all firms in the weddings industry. This could therefore lead to greater competition and the benefits thereof.	Unknown, but the impact is assumed to be the same as under Option 2.
The economy as a whole			
Increasing the number of overseas couples having weddings in England and Wales and reducing the number of English and Welsh couples leaving the jurisdiction to get married	Under the reforms, England and Wales will become a more attractive choice of jurisdiction to marry as couples will have increased flexibility to marry in ceremonies that reflect their beliefs and preferences. This could lead to an increase in the number of overseas resident couples who choose to marry in the jurisdiction and lead to economic benefits for tourism, hospitality and other businesses in the weddings industry. Similarly, it is possible that fewer couples from England and Wales leave the jurisdiction to get married due to the greater choice they have over their wedding ceremonies within the jurisdiction.	Unknown. There is no available data to quantify this, but England and Wales are popular tourist destinations and the ability for couples to marry within the jurisdiction according to their own preferences could lead to an increase in the number of overseas resident couples entering England and Wales to benefit from “destination weddings.” Fewer couples from England and Wales may choose to get married outside of the jurisdiction as they have greater choice over their wedding ceremonies within England and Wales.	Unknown. There is no available data to quantify this, but England and Wales are popular tourist destinations and the ability for couples to marry within the jurisdiction according to their own preferences could lead to an increase in the number of overseas resident couples entering England and Wales to benefit from “destination weddings.” Fewer couples from England and Wales may choose to get married outside of the jurisdiction as they have greater choice over their wedding ceremonies within England and Wales. There are likely to be greater impacts here than under Option 2 due to the permitting of independent officiants, subject to Government decision, of legally binding wedding ceremonies which may reflect couple’s preferences.
Permitting maritime officiants to officiate weddings on cruise	Permitting maritime officiants to officiate weddings on cruise ships registered under the UK flag would make the UK a more	Unknown, but given that only the Bahamas, Bermuda and Malta permit the officiating of weddings on cruise ships flagged to these States, the UK would become relatively more attractive for cruise operators to flag their	Unknown, but impacts are assumed to be the same as under Option 2.

ships registered under the UK flag.	attractive country for cruise ship registration and support the cruise industry.	ships to. Carnival Cruises specifically cited weddings at sea as being a driving factor for this. All major cruise operators are seeking to exploit the global “destination weddings” market which is expected to grow from \$36.49 billion in 2024 to over \$135 billion by 2029. Weddings at sea can contribute to up to 10% of a cruise ship's turnover, with individual ceremonies often generating £100,000 or more. In 2024, P&O Cruises saw a 12% increase from 2023 in the number of weddings and “taking vows” ceremonies it conducted and growth is expected to continue into 2025. More business personnel may also be moved to the UK meaning greater socioeconomic benefits for local areas.	
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7. Regulatory scorecard for preferred option

Part A: Overall and stakeholder impacts

(1) Overall impacts on total welfare		Directional rating
		Note: Below are examples only
Description of overall expected impact	The preferred approach would simplify requirements for weddings by removing unnecessary red tape; provide a framework that could allow non-religious belief officiants, independent officiants and maritime officiants to conduct legally binding weddings; offer couples greater flexibility over the form their wedding ceremonies take; and ensure that fewer weddings result in a marriage that is not legally recognised. The removal of red tape and greater flexibility about where weddings can be held would give couples greater choice and support them to have ceremonies that better suit their preferences, thereby having a positive impact on social welfare. Many couples would also save money as they would no longer need to pay for two ceremonies nor would they need to pay for a civil registration officer to attend their religious wedding, which is currently required when they do not have an authorised officiant. Businesses would benefit from no longer needing to pay local authorities for licences to host weddings, potentially increasing economic activity and lowering the regulatory burden. There are no net losses to local authorities as a result of fewer couples paying fees for civil registration officers to officiate wedding ceremonies or from a loss of licence fees from businesses hosting weddings, as local authorities may only charge these fees on a cost-recovery basis. Permitting weddings at a greater range of locations that are deemed suitable by officiants may attract more overseas residents to marry within England and Wales, which would increase economic activity. In addition, if maritime officiants are permitted, it could make the UK more attractive to maritime cruise operators and increase economic activity within the UK jurisdiction.	Positive Based on all impacts (incl. non-monetised)
Monetised impacts	Total Net Present Social Value (NPSV) is estimated to be £238.5m, with a range from £77.1m-£462.2m over the entire 10-year appraisal period.	Positive Based on likely NPSV of £238.5m
Non-monetised impacts	We have not been able to monetise the potential costs incurred by the State regulator for delivering or developing training for religious, non-religious belief, independent and maritime officiants, nor any fees that officiants may be charged for this. We have not been able to estimate any fees that religious, non-religious belief, independent and maritime officiants would charge couples to officiate their weddings. It is possible that religious, non-religious belief and independent officiants may charge couples separately for officiating and approval of their ceremony location. Alternatively, both services could be included in a single fee.	Positive

	The removal of the need for licence approvals for businesses to host legally recognised weddings on their premises may lead to more businesses entering the weddings market which could drive efficiencies, increase choice for couples and lower prices. However, we cannot estimate the benefits of this for couples. We cannot monetise the potential additional economic benefits for businesses that are operating and serving the weddings industry as a result of more couples choosing to get married due to the reforms. This is because we cannot know the likely nature of such weddings. Whilst the less restrictive legal framework proposed under reforms may lead to an increase in overseas residents entering England and Wales to marry, as they will make it a more attractive location for “destination weddings”, there is no data that can be used to monetise this for our appraisal. The economic benefits anticipated from permitting maritime officiants cannot be quantified as there is no available data. However, we anticipate that cruise operators would benefit from revenue earning opportunities from hosting weddings on their cruise ships; the UK would benefit from more cruise ships being registered under the UK flag; coastal towns may benefit from increased tourism revenues and footfall; and there may be a multiplier effect for firms serving the cruise industry, for example, catering services. There may be additional costs to the Home Office Immigration Enforcement team due to reforms to their processes as a result of the introduction of the new two-stage preliminaries process. The costs are currently unknown as it will depend on the implementation model. There may also be new costs for facilitating training on sham marriage safeguarding and legal duties for all new types of officiants but how much, and where this will sit, is yet to be determined as part of the development of the regulation and oversight model.	
Any significant or adverse distributional impacts?	There are no significant or adverse distributional impacts arising from our preferred approach. Businesses would no longer be required to pay local authorities for approval to host weddings, meaning that this barrier to entry would be removed for all businesses, including SMBs and micro-businesses which would increase competition within the weddings industry and support economic activity. The Law Commission’s consultation noted that some microbusinesses and SMBs did not apply for approval to host weddings as the cost of obtaining approval was considered too high. These businesses, which face greater financial constraints than larger ones, would benefit from our preferred approach. In addition, we predict that over 59,000 couples will benefit from cost savings as they will no longer need to have an additional wedding at a register office for legal recognition. This would particularly benefit couples with lower incomes.	Positive

(2) Expected impacts on businesses		
Description of overall business impact	Many businesses are expected to benefit from reforms as they will no longer be required to pay local authorities for approval to host weddings. This will result in fewer barriers to entering the weddings market, leading to greater opportunity for individual businesses, particularly micro businesses and SMBs for whom the approval licence fees for weddings were too expensive. The additional competition would also likely drive efficiencies within the weddings industry, making businesses more competitive and innovative and counteracting the market power that some businesses currently enjoy, meaning that more businesses will benefit from couples choosing their venue or services for their wedding. Many	Positive

	businesses are expected to benefit from reforms as they will no longer be required to pay local authorities for approval to host weddings. This will result in fewer barriers to entering the weddings market leading to greater opportunity for individual businesses, particularly micro businesses and SMBs for whom the approval licence fees for weddings were too expensive. The additional competition would also likely drive efficiencies within the weddings industry, making businesses more competitive and innovative than they are currently and counteracting the market power that some businesses currently enjoy, meaning that more businesses will benefit from couples choosing their venue or services for their wedding. As couples will have more choice over where to have their wedding ceremony, more businesses are likely to benefit. As weddings would be permitted to occur in any location that officiants deem appropriate, businesses would likely benefit from an increase in the number of couples who wish to marry in such locations. Cruise operators would be able to host weddings in international waters on UK-flagged cruise ships, which would allow these firms to benefit from the growing maritime weddings market. In addition, there would likely be a multiplier effect as cruise operating companies would bring significant economic opportunities to hospitality, maintenance and other industries on the coast. Other businesses based in England and Wales would also benefit from weddings in territorial seas and inland waters. These weddings could take place on canal boats and narrowboats, river cruise boats (such as those on the Thames) and historic or decommissioned ships like HMS <i>Belfast</i> which already hosts weddings. Larger vessels in coastal waters, such as chartered passenger ferries and yachts or sailing boats, which are popular in many coastal areas such as Cornwall, Anglesey and Merseyside, would also be able to host weddings.	
Monetised impacts	There will be a Business Net Present Value (NPV) of £101.5m over the ten-year appraisal period. This is comprised of £103.3m of savings to businesses from no longer needing to pay to obtain/renew their licence approval to host weddings and £1.8m of reduced revenue earning opportunities as a result of removing the 7-day residency requirement for overseas residents, which would lead to reduced revenue earning opportunities for UK businesses including airline carriers, hotels and other hospitality and tourist sector businesses. The only monetisable benefit for the NPVs of businesses which has been included within our appraisal is the forecast saving to businesses from no longer needing to pay licence approval fees to host weddings, but this should be viewed as the theoretical upper bound. Independent officiants are likely to face some opportunity costs from familiarisation with requirements to officiate legally binding wedding ceremonies, which we estimate to be between £1,328-£3,593 and £2,555 under our central scenario. Independent and maritime officiants would also likely incur training costs which may be charged by a state regulator, but we are not in a position to estimate these costs at this time. Hence, an EANDCB cannot be provided but we do not expect these costs to be overly burdensome. Officiants would be required to undergo periodic re-authorisation (expected every 5 years), including confirmation of training and ongoing compliance. This is assumed to generate recurring, but currently unquantified, administrative and time costs. Under the reforms, removing the requirement for each member of a couple to reside in the registration district where they give notice, for	Positive Based on likely business NPV of £101.5m

	seven days prior to giving notice would benefit couples where one or both is resident overseas. This means that overseas residents can spend less time in England and Wales before getting married. This is likely to lead to a small number of overseas residents entering England and Wales to marry, spending less time within the jurisdiction and therefore lost revenues to UK businesses in the travel, tourism and hospitality sector and overall losses to UK businesses of around £1.8m over the entire 10-year appraisal period.	
Non-monetised impacts	Primarily, we expect that many businesses would benefit from reduced costs and increased opportunities to host weddings meaning they could earn revenues under a reduced regulatory regime. However, data is not available to estimate the increased entry and revenues earned in the weddings industry because of this reduced regulatory burden, nor is it available for the number of businesses expected to enter the weddings industry. Under the reforms, venues would no longer be required to become approved premises to host weddings and so many businesses would no longer need to pay application or renewal fees. SMBs are disproportionately affected by approval fees, which incur a median estimated figure of £1,897, as such costs remain the same irrespective of the size of the business. As 50% of businesses operating within the weddings industry are SMBs, the removal of this barrier to entry is likely to stimulate increased economic activity and market entry. Businesses may also incur lower costs as they will no longer need to make adjustments to their premises for the purposes of obtaining approval to host weddings, under reforms. This may also reduce barriers to entry in the weddings market, both increasing competition and increasing opportunity for SMBs to enter and compete in the weddings market, thereby increasing revenue earning opportunities. As couples will be able to marry in a greater range of locations, including suitable locations that meet their preferences and will have greater choice over the form of their ceremony, the jurisdiction of England and Wales would likely become more attractive for overseas residents to marry in and have a “destination wedding.” Whilst not directly comparable, Denmark has experienced a significant increase in overseas residents getting married within the nation due to liberalising weddings law and 3.8% of weddings occurring in Scotland are between foreign resident couples, bringing economic benefits to local businesses through increased demand for hospitality, retail, travel and tourism sectors. Furthermore, under the reforms, maritime officiants would be able to officiate weddings on board cruise ships registered under the UK flag, subject to meeting eligibility requirements. This would allow cruise operating firms to benefit from the growing cruise weddings market and earn revenues, but we have been unable to monetise this as there is no available data. If cruise operating firms relocate some of their operations to coastal towns, this is also likely to increase footfall and revenue earning opportunities for local tourism, hospitality and even maintenance and insurance firms servicing the cruise industry, providing positive spillover effects for businesses.	Positive
Any significant or adverse distributional impacts?	No significant or adverse distributional impacts of the policy are anticipated for specific business sectors. As mentioned above, the removal of location approval fees would benefit many businesses as the regulatory burden would be reduced. Officiants would be responsible for ensuring that locations are suitable to host weddings and businesses would not need to pay for this assessment. This means that many businesses, particularly SMBs, would benefit from fewer barriers to entry.	Positive

	Permitting maritime officiants would also increase revenue earning opportunities for cruise operators using ships registered under the UK flag and so the measures proposed are economically advantageous and conducive to stimulating business activity. In addition, port towns such as Southampton, may benefit from increased activity due to relocation of cruise operating staff and multiplier effects including increased numbers of visitors using hospitality services as well as potentially maintenance, legal and insurance services for cruise ships.	
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(3) Expected impacts on households		
Description of overall household impact	The following discusses the impacts on couples seeking to get married as this is a more relevant cohort to discuss than households more generally. The overall expected impact of the reforms on couples seeking to get married is expected to be positive. Under the reforms, couples would no longer need to have an additional legally recognised wedding, as any ceremony that would have been non-qualifying under the current law would be legally recognised, generating savings for couples. In addition, as the officiant rather than the location will be regulated, couples who currently need to pay for a civil registration officer to officiate at their wedding ceremony would no longer need to do so. Only one registration officer would need to be present at civil weddings, leading to savings for couples as they would no longer need to pay fees for the attendance of two civil registration officers at their wedding. Permitting couples to give notice to marry in any registration district may mean that some couples benefit from not needing to take time off work to attend in-person interviews at registration offices. They may also face less time and travel costs to attend such interviews. Overall, the proposed options help couples by reducing the costs of weddings through removing unnecessary and burdensome regulations.	Positive
Monetised impacts	The overall costs and benefits (NPV) for couples getting married is estimated to be £138.9m over the ten-year appraisal period. The net financial costs for couples seeking to get married are likely to reduce due to the reforms that reduce the bureaucratic requirements that need to be satisfied for weddings to be legally recognised, currently. Couples seeking to get married would save on the following costs (central estimate over the entire 10-year appraisal period): • Couples would save on the opportunity cost of time needed to attend in-person interviews at registration offices to give notice to marry (~£0.4m). • Couples marrying in civil wedding ceremonies would save on reduced fees as only one civil registration officer would need to attend (~£54.8m). • Couples marrying in religious ceremonies in which there is no authorised religious officiant would save on no longer needing to pay for a civil registration officer to officiate the ceremony (~£3.7m). • Many couples would save on no longer needing to have an additional civil wedding on approved premises for legal recognition (~£93.9m). However, under the reforms, couples would need to pay civil registration officers to approve locations for their wedding ceremony (£13.9m). This is	Positive Based on likely household £NPV of £138.9m

	a cost that couples do not face currently. We are also not in a position to estimate whether non-religious belief officiants, religious officiants and independent officiants would charge couples fees to approve locations. As noted in our modelling, we expect that religious officiants may charge couples no additional or low fees for approving locations and non-religious belief and independent officiants may combine location approval fees together with their fees to officiate the weddings for the couples. Overall, we estimate the EANDCH of ~£1.8m in FY 25/26 prices and this represents the net savings to couples due to the reforms which simplify and rationalise the bureaucratic requirements that need to be satisfied for weddings to be legally recognised.	
Non-monetised impacts	Couples would benefit from a significantly reduced risk that their wedding ceremony is not legally recognised. This would ensure that couples would benefit from greater legal rights to property, assets and inheritance, as they would have spousal/civil partnership rights and benefits compared to cohabiting couples, who lack the legal protections of wedded couples. Also, this means that victims of domestic and/or economic abuse who marry, would have greater protection in Family Courts should their relationship break down, rather than needing to rely on complex trust law to make a claim against assets. Although these benefits cannot be quantified, the socioeconomic benefits of this increased protection may be significant as some couples would be better protected from abuse and in relationship breakdowns. In addition, reforms would improve the protections for forced, predatory and sham marriages through the introduction of a new two-stage civil preliminaries process, which cannot be monetised, but would offer positive societal benefits through increased protections for vulnerable people. The process would comprise of stage one where couples submit required personal information and documentary evidence and stage two, where each party attends a separate, mandatory in-person interview with a registrar. By separating out these parts of the process, registrars would not have to spend time in the interview inputting details into an online database but would instead be able to focus more on safeguarding considerations and identifying signs of coercion. Earlier submission of documentation would also mean registrars can identify any issues earlier on in the process.	Positive
Any significant or adverse distributional impacts?	There are no significant or adverse distributional impacts of our preferred approach. The preferred approach would permit couples to get married according to their preferences and remove the need for many couples to have additional weddings for legal recognition. This is likely to generate savings for couples getting married, including low-income groups and couples across all belief groups who wish to get married in ceremonies that would not be legally recognised under current law. Hence, the preferred approach would increase equality in treatment of all couples, irrespective of belief, in the jurisdiction of England and Wales.	Positive

Part B: Impacts on wider Government priorities

Category	Description of impact	Directional rating
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Business environment: Does the measure have an impact on the ease of doing business in the UK?	The measure is expected to increase the ease of doing business in England and Wales (which is the jurisdiction the MoJ has responsibility for regarding weddings legislation on land). This is because the reforms would remove the mandatory requirement for businesses to obtain licence approvals for venues to host legally recognised wedding ceremonies and instead, authorised officiants would be responsible for ensuring that locations are suitable to host weddings. This would reduce regulatory burdens and barriers to entry for businesses wishing to compete in the weddings market. They would no longer need to obtain approval licences, which can involve costly construction work. Theoretically, this would allow more businesses, particularly SMBs, to enter the weddings market, increasing competition and reducing the market power of businesses operating within the weddings market. This may also stimulate businesses to differentiate from rivals by offering personalised and more flexible types of wedding ceremonies to appeal to couples. This will allow for innovation in terms of the services they provide to remain competitive within the industry. Additionally, allowing weddings in international waters is expected to make registering cruise ships under the UK flag more attractive to cruise firms, enabling them to benefit from new commercial opportunities in the maritime sector. If permitted, maritime officiants could conduct weddings on UK-registered cruise ships operating in international waters, provided the vessel has a port of choice in England and Wales. A ship's flag determines the jurisdiction governing it, while the port of choice refers to the port selected for registration. Currently, only Malta, Bermuda and the Bahamas permit weddings aboard cruise ships. As a result, the UK may attract foreign investment from international cruise operators and the relocation of personnel from operators seeking to take advantage of this new legal framework. This will allow firms to profit from increased revenues in the cruise ship weddings market which is expected to grow from \$36.49 billion (£27.12 billion) in 2024 to over \$135 billion (£100.33 billion) by 2029. Weddings in international waters can also contribute up to 10% of a cruise ship's turnover, with individual ceremonies often generating £100,000 or more. In 2024, P&O Cruises saw a 12% increase from 2023 in the number of weddings and "taking vows" ceremonies it conducted. This growth was expected to continue into 2025. However, we have not attempted to quantify the economic benefits that could arise from permitting the maritime weddings on UK-flagged cruise ships due to data unavailability.	Supports
International Considerations : Does the measure support international trade and investment?	The preferred approach does not affect international trade or international investment in any way. If the Government permits maritime officiants on cruise ships, international cruise operators may increase foreign direct investment in the UK to take advantage of laws recognising weddings on UK-flagged vessels. However, aside from this, no significant impacts on international investment are anticipated because of the preferred approach.	Neutral

Natural capital and De-carbonisation: Does the measure support commitments to improve the environment and decarbonise?	The measures proposed do not affect the state of UK natural capital nor the decarbonisation of the economy. There are no significant impacts on the environment or on greenhouse gas emissions as the measures proposed are primarily legal. Potentially, the permitting of UK-registered cruise ships could lead to some increase in greenhouse emissions but there is insufficient evidence to quantify this at this stage. The weddings may also take place on cruise ships that are already registered in the UK, so may not contribute further greenhouse gas emissions. It should be noted that the UK's Cruise Growth Plan, which supports permitting maritime officiants on UK-registered cruise ships, sits alongside HMG's Maritime Decarbonisation Strategy, the net zero agenda and therefore environmental considerations would be considered.	Neutral
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8. Monitoring and evaluation of preferred option

An overall post-implementation review of the policy would be conducted within five years of the implementation of the weddings reforms. This would include reviewing the enabling law implemented as part of the reforms. An overall post-implementation review of the policy would be conducted within five years of the implementation of the weddings reforms. This would include reviewing the enabling law implemented as part of the reforms. Monitoring and evaluation would be proportionate to the reforms included here. Using ONS data on marriages occurring in England and Wales, we would track how many weddings occur and the different types of ceremony post-reform.

This would include monitoring any significant changes in the number of weddings before and after the reforms, though establishing any causal relationship between the reforms and the number of weddings will not be possible. This is because quantitative methods, such as interrupted time series analysis, are unlikely to be able to isolate the impact of the policy reforms from wider changes in societal attitudes over time.

As there is no official data collection on the number of non-legally recognised religious marriages occurring in England and Wales, we will not be able to quantitatively determine whether the policy reforms have reduced their number. However, monitoring changes in the distribution and number of weddings using ONS data will indicate whether there are any changes in the number of civil weddings and any potential impacts on local authority resources at a high level. This is because any increase or decrease in civil weddings post-reform may affect the availability of civil registration officers to complete other tasks.

Once guidance and the required administrative processes for officiants have been developed, we will be better able to estimate the administrative burden on businesses and compare this to the cost of obtaining licence approvals under the current system. This will indicate any changes to the administrative burden placed on businesses hosting weddings due to this reform.

Our original objectives will largely be met through the implementation of the reforms to weddings law. This is because the weddings reforms will reduce the risk of couples inadvertently entering non-legally recognised marriages and remove licence approval fees for businesses.

If resources are available, focus groups or surveys with couples getting married and the wedding industry could be conducted to provide greater insight into the reformed processes. This would also allow us to understand the reformed process and the cost of getting married for couples as well as any unexpected administrative costs or impacts on businesses.

Industry reports, such as those provided by Bridebook will allow us to understand whether the weddings reforms are associated with any increase in economic activity. Surveys or market research may also be analysed to understand the fees charged by non-religious belief, religious, independent and maritime officiants, depending on availability.

If the Government ultimately chooses to permit maritime officiants, then we may choose to engage within the industry to understand whether they have benefitted from increased revenue earning opportunities due to the reforms. DfT Maritime statistics may also be analysed to see if the reforms are associated with an increase in cruise ships registered under the UK flag. ONS data will be reviewed for any potential association between

our reforms and economic activity in regions where cruise operators have invested (such as an increase in tourist footfall, businesses operating in the area and employment data).

Declaration

Department: Ministry of Justice

Contact details for enquiries:

weddingsconsultation@justice.gov.uk

Minister:

Baroness Levitt KC

I have read the Impact Assessment and I am satisfied that, given the available evidence, it represents a reasonable view of the likely costs, benefits and impacts of the leading options.

Signed:



Date:

30/06/2026

Annex: Detailed Economic Appraisal

Price base year: FY 25/26

Present Value (PV) base year: FY 25/26

	Option 1: Business as usual (baseline)	Option 2: Partial Reform of Weddings Law Option	Option 3: Comprehensive Reform of Weddings Law - Preferred way forward
Net present social value	£0m as the baseline option, by definition, does not produce any net costs or benefits.	£142.5m under the central scenario. £36.4m-£306.4m is the range of NPSVs across all scenarios for our Partial Reform of Weddings Law option. Under the central scenario, the following costs and benefits were obtained: Of the ~£44.4m total costs: • ~£1.9m is due to setting up and maintaining the new legal framework (IT capital costs, familiarisation and training costs). • ~£1.8m cost is the result of reduced spending from overseas residents marrying in England and Wales. • ~£40.7m cost is incurred by couples paying civil registration officers to approve locations for their civil weddings away from registration offices. The benefits are as follows: • Couples' in-person interview savings due to reduced time off work as individuals can attend interviews at any registration district (~£0.4m) • Couples saving on not needing to have civil registration officers attend religious officiated weddings (~£3.7m) • Couples, saving on fees from not having additional civil wedding ceremonies for legal recognition (~£79.4m)	£238.5m under the central scenario. £76.9m-£462.1m is the range of NPSVs across all scenarios for our preferred option. Under the central scenario, the following costs and benefits were obtained: Of the ~£17.6m total costs: • ~£1.9m is due to setting up and maintaining the new legal framework (IT capital costs, familiarisation and training costs). ~ • £13.9m cost is incurred by couples paying civil registration officers fees to approve locations for their civil weddings away from registration offices. • ~£1.8m cost is a result of reduced spending from overseas residents marrying in England and Wales. The benefits are as follows: • Couples' in-person interview savings due to reduced time off work as individuals can attend interviews at any registration district (~£0.4m) • Couples only needing one Registration Officer at Civil Weddings (~£54.8m) • Couples needing no Registration Officers at religious weddings (~£3.7m) • Couples saving on fees from not having additional civil wedding ceremonies for legal recognition (~£93.9m)

		• Businesses no longer needing to pay licence fees to host legally recognised weddings on their premises. (~£103.3m) • Total benefits are ~£186.8m.	• Businesses, no longer needing to pay licence fees to host legally recognised weddings on their premises. (~£103.3m) • Total benefits are ~£256.1m.
Public sector financial costs	Under current legislation, local authorities charge cost-recovery fees for registering the notification of marriage and officiating civil marriage ceremonies to couples and location approval activities for wedding premises to businesses. Hence, we expect that the business-as-usual option is cost neutral under this assumption.	At this stage, public sector financial costs arising from our preferred option are not well understood. As a result of the legislative changes, the General Register Office will need to update the guidance and training for local authority staff, which is estimated to cost between ~£0.9m-£1.3m. Religious, non-religious belief and maritime officiants will also require training, but we do not know how this training will be delivered, the likely costs for the central regulator, or whether the central regulator will charge fees to recuperate these costs from organisations. The General Register Office will have to develop a new IT system as there is a need for a national online database for giving notice initially online and displaying notices of intended marriage. The cost of this IT system change is estimated to be ~£0.7m, but this is considered a conservative estimate.	Public sector financial costs arising from our preferred option are not well understood but are assumed to be the same as for option 2.
Significant un-quantified benefits and costs	There are no significant unquantified benefits of this option. There are unknowable costs arising as a result from this option. Currently, some couples are entering into non-legally binding marriages inadvertently, which then means that these couples lack the legal rights afforded to legally married couples which then creates difficulties regarding the distribution of assets if the couple choose to separate and in inheritance. This lack of legal recognition also exposes victim survivors to	<u>Potentially significant unquantified costs:</u> • The costs of training religious, non-religious belief and maritime officiants which would be incurred by the nominating or membership organisation or the central regulator are unknown and we do not know whether they would recover these costs through fees. • We have been unable to estimate the costs to couples of religious officiants conducting weddings outside of places of worship, though we anticipate that religious officiants will only charge couples low or no fees for this.	<u>Potentially significant unquantified costs:</u> • The costs of training religious, non-religious belief, independent and maritime officiants which would be incurred by the nominating or membership organisation or central regulator are unknown and we do not know whether they would recover these costs through fees. • We have been unable to estimate any costs to couples of religious officiants conducting weddings outside of places of worship, though we anticipate that religious officiants will only charge couples low or no fees at all for this. • We have not been able to estimate the cost of fees charged by officiants to officiate at weddings.

	increased vulnerability in cases of domestic and economic abuse due to the relatively poorer legal protection. Additionally, current gaps in the legislative regime mean that individuals of different belief groups are treated differently, which can adversely affect the welfare of couples.	• We have not been able to estimate the cost of fees charged by officiants to officiate at weddings. • We have not been able to estimate the costs to nominating bodies and officiants of obtaining authorisation, training and monitoring costs for NRBOs of their officiants. • We have not been able to estimate the sunk costs for businesses from obtaining or working to obtain licence approvals to host weddings on their premises from local authorities. <u>In terms of significant unquantified benefits:</u> • Couples will likely save on booking fees for their in-person interviews as they will be able to arrange these online. • The costs of register office weddings are likely to fall as only one civil registration officer will need to attend, meaning such services will be cheaper and more accessible for lower income couples. • The cost of weddings is also likely to fall due to increased competition for businesses hosting weddings and greater choice in locations. • There will be a reduced risk of couples inadvertently entering non-legally binding marriage ceremonies. This will help protect financially vulnerable partners and any children should the couple choose to separate as courts will be able to make financial remedy orders. • Places of worship will no longer need to pay fees to be registered places of worship, generating unquantifiable savings for religious institutions. • The removal of mandatory approval fees may reduce barriers to entry for SMBs, although any net impact will depend on the costs of complying with the new dignity framework.	• We have not been able to estimate the costs to nominating bodies and officiants of obtaining authorisation, training and monitoring costs for NRBOs of their officiants. • We have not been able to estimate the sunk costs for businesses from obtaining or working to obtain licence approvals to host weddings on their premises from local authorities. <u>In terms of significant unquantified benefits:</u> • Couples will likely save on booking fees for their in-person interviews as they will be able to arrange these online. • The costs of register office weddings are likely to fall as only one civil registration officer will need to attend, meaning such services will be cheaper and more accessible for lower income couples. • The cost of weddings is also likely to fall due to increased competition for businesses hosting weddings, greater choice in locations and greater flexibility in potential options for ceremonies. • There will be a reduced risk of couples inadvertently entering non-legally binding marriage ceremonies. This will help protect financially vulnerable partners and any children should the couple choose to separate as courts will be able to make financial remedy orders. • The two-stage preliminaries process will improve protections against forced, predatory and sham marriages, helping to better protect vulnerable people. • Places of worship will no longer need to pay fees to be registered places of worship, generating unquantifiable savings for religious institutions. • The removal of mandatory approval fees may reduce barriers to entry for SMBs, although the net impact will depend on the costs of complying with the new dignity framework.
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		• The two-stage preliminaries process will improve protections against forced, predatory and sham marriages, helping to better protect vulnerable people. • Due to the less restrictive regime for marriages in England and Wales, more overseas residents may choose to marry in the jurisdiction. This would bring increased demand for the hospitality sector and weddings industry, thereby supporting economic activity and jobs. Similarly, couples that may otherwise have left England and Wales to marry elsewhere, may choose not to due to the greater choice afforded to them by the reforms. However, we are unable to quantify this impact. • Permitting maritime officiants could make the UK Ship Register more attractive to some cruise operators, but the scale of any economic benefit is uncertain and has not been quantified.	• The reforms may make England and Wales a more attractive jurisdiction for some couples, including overseas residents, although this effect is uncertain and has not been quantified. • Permitting maritime officiants could make the UK Ship Register more attractive to some cruise operators, but the scale of any economic benefit is uncertain and has not been quantified.
Key risks	The risks of remaining with the current business as usual legislative regime are as follows: • Ongoing risk that some marriages are not legally recognised. This can lead to the perpetuation of domestic and economic abuse as well as issues with cohabitation settlements. • Concerns will remain because of differing treatment between non-religious and some religious belief groups.	At this stage, risks regarding this policy option are not well understood. The policy is not yet advanced enough for robust analysis of risks regarding the costs of setting up new IT systems, rolling out training and implementation of the new policy. For this reason, no optimism bias has been applied to our cost estimates.	At this stage, risks regarding this policy option are not well understood but are considered to be the same as for option 2.
Results of sensitivity analysis	No sensitivity analysis was necessary for the business-as-usual option.	Different scenarios testing various assumptions on cost and benefits have been calculated. £142.5m under the central scenario. £36.4m-£306.4m is the range of NPSVs across all scenarios for our partial reform of weddings law option.	Different scenarios testing assumptions on costs and benefits has been calculated. £238.5m under the central scenario. £76.9m-£462.1m is the range of NPSVs across all scenarios for our preferred option.

Explanation of how the number of weddings each year has been estimated:

There were 224,402 weddings in 2023 according to ONS data and an increase in weddings of 2%, 3% and 4% has been applied for additional weddings due to the reforms for the Low, Central and High Estimates respectively.⁴⁰ There is no quantitative evidence to suggest that the number of weddings will be greater following the legal reforms. However, the relatively small increase in weddings forecast may occur because people will be better able to have weddings that suit their preferences. For example, some future wedding ceremonies, after the reforms have taken effect, that would not have been legally recognised under current law may be legally recognised post-reform. This could increase the number of recorded marriages in data once the reforms have taken effect.

Under the current law, religious weddings are only legally recognised if they occur in a registered place of worship and are officiated by an authorised religious officiant or civil registrar, except for Anglican weddings, which are generally conducted in a church, chapel or other authorised place and Jewish and Quaker weddings, which may take place anywhere. Therefore, the ONS confirmed that many of the ~85.5% civil weddings recorded in ONS data are in fact additional civil weddings conducted for legal recognition by religious couples and so there is a much greater proportion of weddings by religious couples each year than the ~4.4% recorded in ONS data. For example, a Muslim couple choosing to have a “Nikah” ceremony away from a registered Mosque would also need to have a separate additional civil wedding for legal recognition, which is captured in ONS data, whilst the non-legally recognised religious ceremony is not. Indeed, Sikhs, Hindus, Buddhists and other religious groups choosing to have wedding ceremonies away from approved premises and/or without the attendance of an authorised officiant must have an additional civil wedding on approved premises for legal recognition.⁴¹

Assuming all couples having a wedding want their marriages to be legally recognised, then a proportion of civil weddings recorded in ONS data must involve religious couples who want legal recognition. We have also assumed that the proportion of civil weddings that are done for legal recognition by religious couples reflects the distribution of religious belief within the population itself, accounting for Anglican, Jewish and Quaker individuals who do not need to have civil weddings for legal recognition. Hence, we have used ONS Census data and Lumino data for the breakdown of Christians across denominations to estimate the greater number of “other religious weddings” that will occur and be legally recognised after the reforms.

The number of Catholic and other non-Anglican and non-Quaker Christian denomination weddings have been estimated using the latest ONS Census data for 2021 and a Lumino study as this is the best data currently available that splits Christians by denomination.⁴² From ONS Census 2021 data, scaled slightly to account for non-responses and the percentage of Christians in England and Wales who are neither Anglican nor Quaker, this means that ~21.3% of Christians in England and Wales stand to benefit from our reforms as they will be able to marry under the authority of authorised religious officiants in any suitable location. We therefore assume that these non-Anglican and non-Quaker Christian individuals will choose to marry in “other religious weddings” to reflect their religious beliefs.

We have assumed that 32.1% of weddings will be other religious weddings as this is the proportion of the population in England and Wales according to ONS Census data for 2021 that identify with religions other than Anglican, Jewish and Quaker and so will likely be affected by the reforms. We have also assumed that there is a proportionate decrease in the number of civil wedding ceremonies too as religious individuals will no longer need to have additional civil wedding ceremonies for legal recognition after the reforms.

⁴⁰Office for National Statistics, *Marriages and Civil Partnerships in England and Wales: 2023* (18 November 2025)

⁴¹ There is no official data on the number of non-legally recognised wedding ceremonies occurring in England and Wales. However, it is known that many religious couples choose to have wedding ceremonies away from approved premises and additional civil ceremonies for legal recognition. Evidence from the Law Commission’s previous consultation noted that many Muslim, Hindu, Jain and Buddhist couples do not see their place of worship as a meaningful place to marry. Some Christians, Hindus, Zoroastrians, Pagans and atheists were amongst those having weddings in private homes and gardens.
(<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20231007123143/https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/document/weddings-a-final-report/>).

⁴²<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/religion/bulletins/religionenglandandwales/census2021>; <https://www.brin.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/No-50-November-2019.pdf>

We have assumed that, following the reforms, an equivalent proportion of weddings in England and Wales will be non-religious belief ceremonies as in Scotland. Using the most recent available data from the National Records of Scotland for 2024, 22.8% of weddings post-reform are estimated to be non-religious belief ceremonies, such as Humanist wedding ceremonies⁴³. In the absence of any official or reliable data, the same proportion of 22.8% is also used to estimate the number of independent officiant ceremonies in England and Wales following the reforms (in option 3, which assumes independent officiants are permitted to conduct legally binding wedding ceremonies). This is a weak assumption, but the best that could be applied with the existing limitations⁴⁴.

A very small proportion of weddings, 0.2%, are assumed to be civil weddings officiated by maritime officiants on cruises. This assumption has been informed by evidence previously collated by the Law Commission's Consultation Paper which obtained estimates from Carnival UK.

Overall, this means that in option 2, 10.3% of couples are estimated to marry in Anglican wedding ceremonies, 32.1% are estimated to marry in non-Anglican religious wedding ceremonies, 22.8% are assumed to marry in non-religious belief wedding ceremonies (such as Humanist weddings), 0.2% are assumed to marry in maritime officiant weddings and 34.6% are assumed to marry in civil weddings officiated by registration officers following the reforms. This is a significant forecast change from the current distribution of wedding ceremonies in England and Wales. In 2023, ~85.5% of weddings were civil ceremonies, with another ~10.3% being Anglican ceremonies and the remaining ~4% being other religious ceremonies (non-Anglican, non-Jewish and non-Quaker) in England and Wales. The forecast changes in the types of wedding ceremonies once the reforms have been made shows how the current legal framework may be preventing people from marrying according to their own preferences and the scale of the potential change of the reform.

In option 2, independent celebrants are not authorised to officiate weddings and so we have assumed that there is a greater proportion of civil weddings officiated by registration officers (34.6%) under option 2 than under option 3 (11.8%) as all couples who would have chosen to have a wedding ceremony officiated by an independent celebrant choose to have a civil wedding ceremony.

Whilst this is a large change due to the reforms, a comparison to data in Scotland which does not permit independent officiants and has a greater proportion of the population which are not religious compared with England and Wales (~51% against ~37.2% respectively), the marriage projection used here appears to be plausible. Hence, this is why we have used the outlined approach.

A major limitation of our forecast in the number of weddings per year is that it is a static estimate that does not account for any changes in beliefs or preferences for wedding ceremonies that may occur over the entire 10-year appraisal period. For example, evidence from the ONS Censuses in 2011 and 2021 show that the percentage of individuals in England and Wales identifying as having "no religion" has increased from 25.2% to 37.2%, indicating that a greater proportion of couples may prefer to marry in non-religious ceremonies. According to ONS data, in 2020, 9.5% of marriages were Anglican (though this result is likely to have been

⁴³ <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/publications/vital-events-reference-tables-2024/> Table 7.05 and calculations used to estimate the percentage of Humanist weddings of the total number of weddings in Scotland through the summing up all Humanist weddings and dividing by the total number of weddings in Scotland in 2024.

⁴⁴ At this stage, the nature of requirements, monitoring and training for independent officiants is unknown and so it is not sensible to use data from other jurisdictions or nations as a proxy when requirements for independent officiants are likely to be different. For example, Las Vegas in Nevada, USA, permits independent officiants to officiate an unlimited number of weddings for 5-years, after which a licence approval is required, provided that the individual lives in Clark County, Nevada, applies with the Clark County Clerk, passes the required background check and attends an in-person training course (https://www.clarkcountynv.gov/government/elected_officials/county_clerk/marriage-officiants). In 2024, the Office of the Clark County Clerk recorded 75,324 weddings in the city, meaning Las Vegas hosted more weddings than any other city in the world ([Most wedding ceremonies in a city | Guinness World Records](#)). Evidence also shows that hosting weddings in Las Vegas supports significant business activity, estimated to have been worth \$2.2 billion in 2023 ([The Las Vegas Wedding Industry Battles a New Wave of Economic Uncertainty - Clark County Clerk](#)). On the other hand, the Province of Quebec permits designated officiants to usually officiate up to a maximum of three weddings to accommodate family members or friends to officiate at weddings and prevent the commercialisation of the solemnisation of weddings ([Designated Officiant or One-day Officiant](#)). Therefore, we cannot reasonably estimate the number of independent officiant weddings in England and Wales due to data unavailability and no decision making yet on the requirements for independent officiants to meet.

affected by COVID-19), in 2021 12.9% of marriages were Anglican, 12.5% of marriages were Anglican in 2022 and 10.3% of marriages were Anglican in 2023. Whilst this indicates a broad trend of decline in the proportion of Anglican marriages in England and Wales over time, we do not consider it reasonable to assume that this decline will continue at the same rate for each and every year of the 10-year appraisal period.

Furthermore, changes in migration patterns may also have an impact on the proportion of individuals in society identifying with particular religious beliefs and hence their wedding ceremony preferences. However, we do not have sufficient evidence to reliably estimate this over time and so a static estimate is preferable.

Additionally, as many religious couples (excluding Anglican, Jewish and Quaker couples) must have an additional civil ceremony for legal recognition if their religious wedding ceremony was away from approved religious premises and did not involve an authorised religious officiant, many of the civil ceremonies recorded in ONS data are actually religious ones. Hence, it is not possible to forecast changes in the number of religious weddings each year reliably due to this significant evidence gap.

Although some marriages may be inter-faith, existing evidence suggests that most marriages are homogenous and so we do not expect that our omission of this in our modelling makes any material impact on our analysis.⁴⁵

The assumption that the reforms could lead to an increase in the number of weddings is based on the expectation that reducing regulatory barriers, increasing flexibility in where and how weddings can take place and lowering associated costs may encourage some additional couples to marry. However, this effect is uncertain. While the reforms may enable some couples to convert existing non-legally recognised ceremonies into legally recognised weddings, or reduce the cost of marriage for some groups, longer-term trends in marriage behaviour suggest that the total number of weddings may remain stable or continue to decline. As such, the behavioural response to the reforms is inherently uncertain and has been modelled using a range of scenarios.

Projection of Number of Marriages in England and Wales each year in England and Wales for Option 2 (Do-Minimum Option):

	Low estimate	Central estimate	High estimate
Total number of weddings	224,402	224,402	224,402
<i>Percentage increase</i>	2%	3%	4%
Number of additional weddings	4,488	6,732	8,976
Revised number of total weddings	228,890	231,134	233,378
<i>Percentage of weddings that are Anglican</i>	10.3%	10.3%	10.3%
Number of Anglican weddings	23,464	23,694	23,924
<i>Percentage of weddings that are other religious weddings</i>	32.1%	32.1%	32.1%
Number of other religious weddings	73,582	74,303	75,025
<i>Percentage of weddings that are non-religious weddings</i>	22.8%	22.8%	22.8%
Number of non-religious weddings	52,164	52,675	53,186
<i>Percentage of weddings that are civil weddings by maritime officiants</i>	0.20%	0.20%	0.20%
Number of civil weddings by maritime officiants	458	462	467
<i>Percentage of weddings that are civil weddings by registration officers</i>	34.61%	34.61%	34.61%
Number of civil weddings by registration officers	79,223	79,999	80,776
Total number of weddings	228,890	231,134	233,378

⁴⁵ David Voas, *Religiously Mixed Marriages in England and Wales* (University College London, using 2011 Census Microdata).

Projection of Number of Marriages in England and Wales each year in England and Wales for Option 3:

	Low Estimate	Central Estimate	High Estimate
Total number of weddings	224,402	224,402	224,402
<i>Percentage increase</i>	2%	3%	4%
Number of additional weddings	4,488	6,732	8,976
Revised number of total weddings	228,890	231,134	233,378
<i>Percentage of weddings that are Anglican weddings</i>	10.3%	10.3%	10.3%
Number of Anglican weddings	23,464	23,694	23,924
<i>Percentage of weddings that are other religious weddings</i>	32.1%	32.1%	32.1%
Number of other religious weddings	73,582	74,303	75,025
<i>Percentage of weddings that are non-religious weddings</i>	22.8%	22.8%	22.8%
Number of non-religious weddings	52,164	52,675	53,186
<i>Percentage of weddings that are civil weddings by maritime officiants</i>	0.20%	0.20%	0.20%
Number of civil weddings by maritime officiants	458	462	467
<i>Percentage of weddings that are civil weddings by registration officers</i>	11.82%	11.82%	11.82%
Number of civil weddings by registration officers	27,059	27,324	27,589
<i>Percentage of civil weddings by independent officiants</i>	22.8%	22.8%	22.8%
Number of civil weddings by independent officiants	52,164	52,675	53,186
Total number of weddings	228,890	231,134	233,378