



Marriage Schedule System Frequently Asked Questions
CHURCH OF ENGLAND / CHURCH IN WALES

No	Question	Answer
General		
1.	Will training be provided before the new system is implemented?	Yes, training resources will be made available to you prior to the implementation date of 4 May 2021. To compliment the training materials the General Register Office will host 'live' digital Q & A sessions. Details will be provided in due course via your usual church communication channels
2.	Does the Marriage Schedule System apply to marriages taking place by Banns or common licence?	Both, it is only the registration of the marriage that is changing. The processes for marriage preliminaries, whether ecclesiastical or civil remain unchanged.
3.	If Banns have been called prior to the 4 May 2021, but the marriage is after implementation will I keep a marriage register or use a marriage document?	Any marriage that takes on or after 4 May 2021 following ecclesiastical preliminaries will require a marriage document to record the details of the marriage for the register. All marriage registers will be closed on 4 May 2021.
4.	Do the eligibility/residency requirements also change from 4 May 2021?	No, the processes for determining whether a couple meet the requirements for marrying after completion of ecclesiastical preliminaries or civil preliminaries are unchanged.
5.	Do we still need to refer couples to give notice at a register office if they are subject to immigration rules?	Yes, it is only the registration of the marriage that is changing. Couples who are subject to immigration rules are still required to give their notices at a designated register office.

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6.	How do I get the marriage document?	<p>The type and print marriage document will be made available shortly on the LRSA website which is hosting the training material.</p> <p>The Church of England Evangelism and Discipleship Team will also be providing a printable marriage document as part of the the Live Events Diary.</p> <p>If a manual form is preferred, the type and print template can be printed as a blank form.</p> <p>Using the type and print option will help to avoid illegible handwriting issues.</p>
7.	How do I create a marriage document?	<p>The details in the marriage document will be completed from the information contained in the banns or licence documentation. The marriage document must be completed and issued prior to the marriage</p>
8.	What happens when a couple have given civil preliminaries for an Anglican marriage?	<p>The Local Registration Service (LRS) will issue a marriage schedule, and the couple will take it to the Church for the incumbent to check the details prior to the ceremony. Local arrangements may be in place with the church to receive the paperwork direct, for those couples who are subject to immigration referral.</p>
9.	If the couple used civil preliminaries, do I have to create a marriage document from the details on the marriage schedule?	<p>No, you will use the marriage schedule issued by the register office to record the details of the marriage.</p>
10.	Can the register office issue a marriage document for an Anglican marriage after banns or licence?	<p>The member of the clergy who is to solemnize the marriage must issue the marriage document or ensure that it is issued and provided to them. This means that you are required to issue the marriage document yourself, but you can ask a lay official such as your church warden to prepare the paperwork on your behalf.</p>
11.	Are the marriage document and marriage schedule legal documents?	<p>Yes, both forms will be prescribed in regulations.</p>
12.	Are the details for the marriage document the same as current marriage registers?	<p>No, the legislation has introduced some changes in the registration details. For example, each party to the marriage may include up to 4 parents each on the marriage</p>

No	Question	Answer
		document i.e. mother, father or parent. The dates of birth will be recorded in the marriage document and registration rather than ages of the couple.
13.	Is there a set order that the mother, father or parent's details must be recorded on the marriage document?	No, it is the choice of each party which order the details are recorded on the marriage document and who is named.
14.	Will contact details for the Clergy be included on the Marriage Document?	No.
15.	What happens if the marriage document or schedule is lost or damaged prior to the marriage?	Legislation allows for the marriage document or marriage schedule to be reissued.
16.	Will there be guidance for couples with clear instructions?	Yes, guidance materials for couples will be available including leaflets in advance of implementation and information on www.gov.uk as the changes are implemented
17.	What is the cost of implementation of this system for the couple?	<p>The system itself does not bring any additional charge to the couple. The cost for the marriage will remain the same. There is no charge for registering the marriage.</p> <p>The certificate fee also remains unchanged. In future a certificate may be purchased for the appropriate fee from the register office or the General Register Office.</p> <p>Introduction of the schedule system brings with it the closure of the registers and return of the secure certificate stock. It will therefore no longer be possible to purchase certificates from the church</p>
18.	Are the document/schedule serial numbered on special paper?	No, the marriage document and marriage schedule will be printed on plain white A4 paper.
19.	Are the Clergy required to copy and retain the marriage documents and schedules?	No there is no requirement for you to retain any copies of marriage documents and schedules. The document will be submitted to the register office, who will register the event and retain the signed documentation.
20.	Wouldn't it be so much easier and cheaper to go back and re-print the marriage registers?	In 2014, then Prime Minister, David Cameron asked the General Register Office to look at all options and impacts for modernising marriage registration. The cost for collecting current

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		registers and replacing some 80 000 new ones was at the time considered excessive.
21.	What will happen if there is a system outage when the couple attends the register office to collect their paperwork?	The Registration On-Line (RON) system has been in operation as part of civil registration for over 15 years and has proved to be a stable and reliable system. However, there are contingencies in place with the Local Registration Service and the General Register Office should local issues arise.
22.	Is there still an assumption that women will change their surname to the male?	There is currently no legal requirement for a either party to change their surname after marriage. It would be up to the couple to make that decision.
23.	In terms of parent details could it be neither Mother/Father/Parent recorded e.g.: grandfather?	No, only a mother, father or parent including step-parent may be recorded. It should be recognised that this may be a sensitive area for some couples.
24.	What order should the mother, father, parents be entered on the marriage document?	The order in which parents are entered on the marriage document or schedule and will appear in the registration is the choice of the relevant party to the marriage.
25.	Do all parent details need to be included?	It is the choice of the relevant party how many and who they record in the mother, father, parent space. It is not mandatory to record details in space 7 of the marriage document or schedule. However, a maximum of 4 per party to the marriage may be entered.
26.	Why haven't you got separate space for the Mother/Father so you can distinguish between them?	There is no requirement to distinguish between mother/father/parent on the marriage document or marriage schedule.
27.	There is no reference to how long the person has lived at the address detailed on the marriage document or schedule – why?	The regulations do not require the information to be recorded in the registration. Please see QA no 4 above.
28.	How will couples with low literacy skills be supported?	Support should be provided in the same way as it is now.
29.	What happens in a time of interregnum, when no priest lives in the parish for some time?	This would be a matter for Church to resolve.

No	Question	Answer
30.	Will it be possible to update or amend the type and print versions of the documents? Further to this is there a way of directly sending this form or alert to the LRS?	Yes, the forms can be amended before they are signed by the couple and their witnesses and before the marriage is entered on to the registration online system Amendments should be initialled by the couple. Regulations do not currently provide for the electronic return of the document once it has been signed.
31.	Are bi-lingual arrangements remaining the same?	There will be no changes to language guidelines, this process remains unchanged.
32.	Is it possible to keep a copy of the completed type and print document as the Churches records?	Copies of completed marriage documents should not be kept. The Church of England and the Church in Wales will be providing a Register of Marriage Services in order to keep a record of marriages that have taken place in the church or chapel.
33.	Is the type and print form produced on plain A4 white paper?	Yes, there is no special or coloured paper required.
34.	Will we still be able to complete these forms manually?	Yes, there will always be a facility to complete the marriage document manually if you wish.

Marriage service and registration

35.	If no registration will take place on the day of the marriage, when are the couple legally married?	There is no change to the significance or legality of the ceremony by the rites of the Church. The registration is a record of the event and is an administrative function only.
36.	If there are no marriage registers how will the marriage be registered?	The information from the completed, signed marriage document or marriage schedule will be entered into the electronic marriage register by the Local Registration Service.
37.	Will guidance be provided around the completion of the marriage document and capturing details and signatures?	Yes, the General Register Office will update the Guidance for the Clergy and provide training materials prior to the implementation date of 4 May 2021. This will include a specific guidance on how to complete the marriage document.
38.	What will happen in the marriage service where the couple currently sign the registers?	You will still invite the couple and witnesses to sign the marriage document or marriage schedule in the same way they would have signed the marriage registers.
39.	Is registration ink to be used on	Yes, registration ink must be used.

No	Question	Answer
	the marriage document or marriage schedule?	
40.	Who is responsible for taking the completed marriage document to the register office after the marriage?	It is the responsibility of the officiating clergy to return the completed marriage document / marriage schedule to the register office within 21 days of the marriage, for the registration to take place.
41.	What if there is an error and we need to make an amendment to the marriage document or schedule before the couple sign it?	It is important to carry out the pre marriage checks with the couple prior to the ceremony. If an amendment is required, you should check the details in the guidance for the Clergy issued by the General Register Office which explains what details may be amended and how to carry amendments out before the couple sign the documentation.
42.	What do we need to do for weddings that have been booked to take place after the system changes?	It will be for each minister to decided locally how to advise the couples regarding the changes prior to the day of the marriage. Key points to consider: Option to record up to 4 Mother/Father/Parent details – as this may be contentious for some couples’ and time to consider the options ahead of the wedding day may be welcomed. They will not receive a certificate on the day of the marriage. A customer information leaflet will be available to share with couples to explain these changes.

Registers and marriage certificates

43.	Can I keep one of the green marriage registers issued by The General Register Office for photos?	No, that isn’t possible. The legislation requires that the registers issued by The General Register Office will be closed. The instructions for closure and return of the registers are on the LRSA website.
44.	How shall I return my registers and certificate stock to?	Your closure instructions as mentioned above will provide advice on this process. You will need to make your arrangements with your local register office around the arrangements for return of your registers and certificate stock.
45.	Who is responsible for the storage of the church registers after they have been closed?	The current arrangements will remain in place.
46.	Do I still need to maintain my	The Church of England and the Church in

No	Question	Answer
	Parish records for marriage?	Wales will be providing a Register of Marriage Services in order to keep a record of marriages that have taken place in the church or chapel.
47.	Will I use the existing green marriage registers provided by the General Register Office for my local records?	No, the legislation requires that the registers issued by the General Register Office will be closed. You will be provided with instructions and support to do this.
48.	Will marriage certificates issued for marriages after 4 May 2021 still look the same as they do now?	<p>No, marriage certificates for marriages after 4 May will be in a new portrait format.</p> <p>Certificates for marriages that took place before 4 May will be issued in the existing landscape format, to reflect the registers that the details were recorded in.</p>
49.	Can I issue a certificate from the details on the marriage document on the day of the marriage?	No, from 4 May 2021 there will be no facility in law for you to issue a marriage certificate. All certificates will be issued by the Local Registration Service or the General Register Office. The certificate stock issued to you by the General Register Office must be returned. You will be provided with instructions and support to do this.
50.	Can I still issue certificates from historic records in my registers?	No, after implementation your registers will be closed, and only the local register office and the General Register Office will be able to issue certificate, this includes from historic registers.
51.	Can I use the marriage certificates provided by the General Register Office to issue commemorative certificates from my local marriage registers?	No, the registers will be closed, and certificate stock issued to you by the General Register Office will be returned. You will be provided with instructions and support to do this.
52.	If the registrar will issue the certificate after the registration, will this affect our fees?	<p>Fees charged for a church wedding are a matter for the relevant authorities.</p> <p>There is no charge for registering the event by the register office. A certificate may be purchased for the appropriate fee from the register office or the General Register Office.</p>
53.	After implementation on 4 May 2021, can a couple obtain a marriage certificate on the day of their marriage from Local Registration Service?	As the completed marriage document needs to be delivered to the register office and entered onto the electronic register a certificate will not be issued on the day of the marriage. This is the same for those having either a religious or a civil marriage.

No	Question	Answer
54.	How will a couple obtain a marriage certificate?	They will contact the register office or the General Register Office direct to purchase a certificate.
55.	How long will a couple have to wait to obtain a marriage certificate?	The registration by the register office will be made by the 7 th day after the marriage schedule is received at the register office. A certificate will be available after this time, though local arrangements for issuing of certificates will also be factored into the timescale.
56.	If a couple wants a certificate from a church marriage 5 or 6 years ago what can we do?	If the certificate is for issue on or after 4 May 2021, the couple must contact the local register office or the General Register Office to obtain the certified copy. You are not authorised to issue certificates from this date.
57.	Is posting out such an important document safe and secure?	Yes, the registration service and the General Register Office already use a postal system to provide certificates to customers.

Return of the marriage document and marriage schedule

58.	Do I have to take the completed marriage document or marriage schedule to the register office on the day of the marriage?	No, the law requires it must be submitted for registration to the Local Registration Service within 21 days of the marriage.
59.	Who is responsible for taking the completed marriage document to the register office after the marriage?	It is the responsibility of the officiating clergy to return the completed marriage document / marriage schedule to the register office within 21 days of the marriage, for the registration to take place.
60.	If I have outstanding quarterly returns, do I have to complete them?	Yes, you are required to complete all outstanding quarterly returns and submit them as per the current process for any marriages which take place up-to and including 3 May 2021. You will receive the appropriate fee.
61.	Will I still need to complete quarterly returns after the implementation of marriage schedule system?	No, as you will no longer be registering the marriage, you are not required to complete quarterly returns for marriages taking place after 4 May 2021.
62.	How will the LRS ensure all the Anglican marriages that have taken place have been registered?	There will be a reconciliation system in place between the local churches and the LRS to ensure marriage documents have been returned and registrations are complete.

No	Question	Answer
63.	After implementation how often will I be contacted by the LRS to confirm what marriages have taken place in my church?	This will be up to each local register office to decide on the frequency and method of contact with the churches in their districts.
64.	If the registrar is unable to read the handwriting on a marriage document to complete the registration, can the registrar contact me for clarification?	Yes, that will be a locally agreed process between the LRS and Clergy. However, the introduction of the type and print template should reduce the need for handwritten documents and this issue.
65.	Is the maintaining of a local church record creating an extra layer of bureaucracy, which will place an unnecessary burden on already stretched clergy.	CofE and CofW were keen for local records to be kept as they are for baptisms etc. The requirement to maintain a local record is detailed in legislation. Scotland has successfully used this type of system since 1850s.
66.	Are local Church records kept in Scotland as we are planning to do?	Yes, they do.

Corrections

67.	If I have used incorrect terminology or there is an error on the signed marriage document or schedule, is a correction possible?	Yes, the process to apply for a correction will be just as it is now. Guidance for the Clergy will be updated.
68.	What do I advise the couple to do if they contact me to advise there is an error on their marriage certificate who I married using a document or schedule?	You should advise the couple to complete the application to correct a marriage registration and submit it to the register office where the marriage was registered. You can refer the couple to gov.uk where they will find the relevant forms.
69.	Is the legislation retrospective? Can couples correct existing marriage registrations to include additional parent's details?	No, the legislation is not retrospective.