

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL
REGULATION AND ENFORCEMENT

REGISTER OFFICE
SERVICE PLAN 2018/2019

4. Introduction to the Service and the Service Plan

Statutory requirements

The Registration Service Act 1953 requires every local authority to provide a Registration Service. The service is a statutory service and local authorities in general are obliged by law to provide accommodation and staffing to enable the registration of all civil events within a statutory time frame. Such events include the registration of births, deaths, stillbirths, marriages and civil partnerships, the provision of a certificate service and the provision of Citizenship Ceremonies. Various other Acts, such as the Marriage Act 1949 and the Birth and Death Registration Act 1953, place a statutory requirement on the public to register such events.

Although the Registration Service is regulated by the Registrar General, whose office is part of the Identity and Passport Service, the local and legal responsibility for the provision of the Service is given to a senior council officer called the Proper Officer for Registration Matters. The Proper Officer for Birmingham City Council is Jacqui Kennedy, Place Corporate Director.

4.1 The Core Statutory Elements of the Service are to:

- Register all births occurring within Birmingham within 42 days.
- Register all deaths occurring within Birmingham within 5 days.
- Attest declarations for births and deaths occurring outside Birmingham.
- Provide and certify copies of all registrations to the Registrar General.
- Provide a service as a Designated Register Office for persons who are subject to Immigration Control and who may or may not be Birmingham citizens.
- Undertake the legal preliminaries to marriage and civil partnership.
- Provide certificates of birth, death, marriage and civil partnership.
- Attend, provide a ceremony for and register civil marriages and civil partnerships at the Register Office.
- Attend and register marriages and civil partnerships taking place at registered buildings.
- Assist in the registration of places of worship.
- Attend, provide a ceremony for and register civil marriages and civil partnerships at approved premises.
- Assist in the certification of registered buildings as a place for the solemnization of marriages.
- Make statutory payments to authorised persons for making returns of marriage ceremonies in religious buildings.
- Arrange and provide citizenship ceremonies.
- Assist the public with corrections to registrations.
- Re-register births in accordance with the Registration Acts.
- Provide statistical information to the Registrar General and Birmingham City Council.
- Ensure the security, maintenance and restoration of registers and indexes.
- Arrange for the approval of buildings to be used as venues for civil marriage and civil partnership ceremonies.
- Arrange for the approval of religious buildings to be used as venues for the registration of civil partnership.

- Provide a conversion procedure for Civil Partners
- Report Sham marriages to the Home Office (UKVI) and fraudulent applications for certificates to the Registrar General.

4.2 Non-statutory services provided

The Service provides a range of non-statutory services (some of which are income generating to cover business costs) as set out below:

- Civil ceremonies, for example baby naming and renewal of vows.
- Nationality Checking Service.
- European Passport Return Service.
- Provision of advice, searches and copy certificates for use in genealogical research.
- Provision of advice on name changes, bereavement procedures, Tell Us Once.
- Provision of an Emergency Bereavement Service outside normal office hours e.g. at weekends and bank holidays including short notice out of England removal orders.

The legislation that regulates the Registration Service is listed below:

4.3 The Registration of Births Deaths and Still Births

- Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953.
- Population (Statistics) Act 1960.
- The Registration Service Act 2007.
- Registration of Births and Deaths Regulations 1987.
- Marriage (Registrar General's Licence) Act 1970.
- Legitimacy Act 1976.
- The Deregulation (Still-Birth and Death Registration) Order 1996.
- The Contracting Out (functions of the Registrar General in relation to authoring re-registration of births) Order 1997.
- The Deregulation (Correction of Birth and Death Entries in Registers of Other Records) Order 2002.
- The Registration of Births and Deaths (Electronic Communications and Electronic Storage) Order 2006.
- Legitimacy Act 1976.
- Adoptions and Children's Act 2002.
- The Adopted Children and Adoption Contact Register Regulations 2005.
- The Adoption Information and Intermediary Services (Pre-commencement) Adoptions Regulations.
- Gender Recognition Act 2004.
- The Gender Recognition Register Regulations 2005.
- The Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Regulations 1968.
- The Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Amendment) Regulations 2007.
- The Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Amendment) No 2 Regulations 2007.
- Perjury Act 1911.
- The Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Amendment) Regulations 2005.

- The Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Amendment) Regulations 2007.
- Family Law Reform Act 1987.
- Guardianship of Minors Act 1971.
- Affiliation Proceeding Act 1957.
- Statutory Declaration Act 1836.
- Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990.
- Human Fertilisation and Embryology (Deceased Fathers) Act 2003.
- Baptismal Registers Measure 1961.
- National Health Service Act 2006.
- Education Act 1996.
- Population (Statistics) Act 1938 and 1960.
- The Anglo Spanish Consular Convention 1963.

Marriages and Civil Partnerships

- Marriage Act 1949.
- The Marriage Act 1976.
- The Marriage Act 1983.
- Perjury Act 1911.
- The Marriage (Prohibited Degrees of Relationship) Act 1986.
- The Marriage Act 1994.
- The Registration Service Act 2007.
- The Registration of Marriages Regulations 1986.
- The Marriage Act 1994 (Approved Premises).
- The Registrar General's Act 1970.
- The Reporting of Suspicious Marriages and Registration of Marriages (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2000.
- The Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants) Act 2004.
- The Immigration (Procedure for Marriage) Regulations 2005.
- The Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Fees) Order 2002.
- Marriage Act 1983 (Housebound and detained persons).
- Marriage (Registrar General's Licence) Act 1970.
- Marriage (Scotland) Act 1956 as amended by the Marriage (Scotland) Act 1977.
- Marriage (Ireland) Act 1846.
- Marriage of British (Facilities) Acts 1915 and 1916.
- Marriage with Foreigners Act 1906.
- Marriage with foreigners Act 1892-1988.
- The Foreign Marriage Order 1970.
- Places of Worship Registration Act 1855.
- The Civil Partnership Act 2004.
- Civil Partnership Act 2005.
- The Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005.
- The Reporting of Suspicious Civil Partnerships Regulations 2005.
- The Civil Partnership (Registration Provisions) Regulations 2005.
- The Immigration (Procedure for Formation of Civil Partnerships) Regulations 2005.
- The Registration of Civil Partnerships (Fees) (No. 2) Order 2005.
- The Marriages Act (Same Sex Couples) 2013.

- The Immigration Act 2014.

Registration Service and Certificates

- Marriage Act 1949.
- Birth and Deaths Registration Act 1953.
- Civil Partnership Act 2004.
- Civil Partnership Act 2005.
- The Registration Service Act 2007.
- Legitimacy Act 1976.
- Gender Recognition Act 2004.
- Places of Worship Registration Act 1855.
- The Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005.
- The Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Fees) Order 2002.
- Baptismal Registers Measure 1966.

4.4 Service Plan

This Service Plan details the work undertaken by the service, both in terms of quantity and quality, how this contributes to, and supports, the high level intended outcomes of the City; customer feedback; intended improvements; financial, people, IT and accommodation resources; and details what service will be provided.

4.5 Planned Service Improvements in 2018/2019 and beyond

- To continue to progress new income generation schemes.
- To market and promote the service.
- To further enhance the ceremony suite.
- To provide ceremony suite viewings.
- To continue to review processes to achieve more efficiencies.
- To extend electronic payment facilities to speed up processes and improve the customer journey.
- To continue with partnership working with hospitals and GP's to improve the quality of death certificates issued by doctor's in order to decrease the return of incorrect certificates, speed up death registration and improve communication channels.
- To continue to work towards the implementation of a full registration service on a Saturday.
- To improve flexibility and business resilience by implementing succession planning and progressing the service area training plan.
- To provide online death appointments by the close of the current financial year.

4.6 Current Organisational Assessment

- The sustained intensive workload of the Register Office, has continued to provide the driver to make further improvements to processes and procedures. Various processes and procedures have been reviewed over the past year and improvements implemented in the certificates and births and deaths registration sections to make the processes leaner. Improvements include the further employment of the Stopford electronic diary system with the availability to book multiple births and death registration appointments online and greater availability of more appointments to reduce waiting times. Job roles have been

reviewed and where appropriate combined to create greater flexibility and achieve efficiencies.

- Service managers have strengthened partnership working with faith advocacy groups, GPs and hospitals to help reduce factors which delay the death registration process.
- Private Citizenship ceremonies have gained in popularity and are proving a welcome service enhancement.
- Service managers have continued to work with other service areas to help resource the Register Office.
- The fees and charges were reviewed and following a benchmarking exercise a number of non statutory fees were revised which has helped improve the Services' financial position.
- The content of marriage ceremonies has been reviewed and a range of marriage packages are now available to provide couples with more choice and the options to have a bespoke ceremony.
- The ceremonies suite has been redecorated to improve the customer experience.
- The telephony system was upgraded in January which has improved the resilience of the service. This improvement, together with the achievement of 60% birth appointments now being made online has led to a reduction in the volume of incoming calls and improved call response times.
- The office is opened earlier to reduce waiting times.
- A range of keepsakes have been introduced.
- The European Passport Return Service has been introduced.
- The first phase of new statutory services for which fees are applicable came into effect in November 2017.
- Although the service is restricted in the ways in which it can generate income in that the majority of fees are statutory and do not reflect the cost of delivery, review of non- statutory services has resulted in an increase in the fees charged for non -statutory to reflect the cost of delivery.
- In recent years staffing levels have been significantly reduced and some posts held vacant to mitigate a challenging income target. A further loss of posts this year has further impacted on the ability of the service to meet the nationally agreed KPIs timeliness registration targets which are reflected in the measures table below which has attracted GRO intervention. It should be noted that failure to provide some duties is an offence. Given the available resources, the Service is operating effectively.
- The appointments system has been reviewed and appointments rationalised which has improved the timeliness of birth registration considerably, however, this approach is not sustainable in the long term as it has impacted negatively on the ability of the service to meet the demand for taking notices of marriage thereby impacting on income. Limited recruitment is therefore necessary.

4.7 Key Performance Indicators

The Key Performance Indicators for the local registration service are set nationally.

They are as follows:

- 98% of all births registered within 42 days.
- 98% of all stillbirths registered within 42 days.
- 95% of all deaths registered within 5 days of occurrence.

- 95% of appointments made to register births are within 5 working days of the request.
- 95% of appointments made to register deaths are within 2 working days of the request.
- To see 95% of all customers, who have an appointment, within 10 minutes of their appointed time.
- To see 95% of other customers i.e. those without an appointment, within 30 minutes of their arrival.
- 95% of all applications for certificates dealt with within 5 working days from receipt of application.
- 92.5% of customers surveyed expressing satisfaction with the service.
- Total number of complaints not to exceed 0.3% of all registrations.
- To provide all new citizens with a Citizenship Ceremony with 3 months of being notified that their application to become a British Citizen has been successful.

4.8 **National Returns**

A local Registration Service is required by law to make annual and quarterly returns to the General Register Office.

An annual report is also required about performance and achievement this report is made to the Registrar General after the end of the financial year.

4.9 **Outcomes from Nationally Agreed Performance Indicators**

The Registration Service reports on a series of nationally agreed key performance indicators. The outcomes for the last and previous years are shown below. Performance levels for death and birth registrations in 2017 were particularly affected by unusually high levels of sickness and death rates which impacted on the NHS and Coroners Court.

Type of Indicator	Indicator	Performance	
National Good Practice Guide Indicators	% of births registered within 42 days of birth	2014	89%
		2015	94%
		2016	63%
		2017	88%
	% of deaths (excluding post mortem and inquest cases) registered within 5 days of occurrence	2014	75%
		2015	66%
		2016	58%
		2017	55%
	% of applicants for certificates dealt with in 5 working days from receipt of application	2014	100%
		2015	100%
		2016	100%
		2017	100%
	**% of appointments for birth registrations that are within 5 working days of the request	2014	36%
		2015	44%
		2016	42%
		2017	34%

	% of appointments for death registrations that are within 2 working days of the request	2013 2014 2015 2016 2017	97% 97% 93% 93% 90%
	% of customers, who have an appointment, who are seen early, on time or within 10 minutes of their appointment time	2014 2015 2016 2017	94% 92% 93% 92%
Regulation and Enforcement Local Indicators – customer satisfaction	We will respond to correspondence within 5 days	2013 2014 2015 2016 2017	100% 100% 100% 90% 97%
Registration Service Local Indicators – speed of dealing with customer requests	To issue copy certificates on the same day as application to customers attending the office	2013 2014 2015 2016 2017	100% 100% 100% 100% 100%
	To issue copy certificates within five working days to customers applying by post or online.	2013 2014 2015 2016 2017	100% 100% 100% 100% 100%

4.10 Quantity of work

Year	Number of Certificates issued	Number of Births registered	Number of Deaths Registered	Number of marriages at Register Office
2013	134,628	23,636	10,001	1,749
2014	132,785	23,791	10,160	1,637
2015	130,564	22,707	10,172	1,315
2016	137,475	24,425	9,990	1,377
2017	134,456	23,664	10,249	1,275

Year	Number attending citizenship ceremonies	Number of search room post and email applications	Number of search room personal applicants	Total Primary Customers attending the Register Office
2012	4,977	13,981	17,093	84,565
2013	5,534	15,718	15,718	84,861
2014	3,332	15,984	16,088	73,816
2015	2,076	14,882	11,551	66,516
2016	3,327	16,150	9,938	69,055
2017	2,228	16,535	7,578	64,109

The table below details the service provision for the year and links it to outcome measures.

Service Provision	Outcome	Measure	Target	Actual
To be available to Register births and deaths within statutory time limits	To provide an efficient and timely Registration service for our customers	Customer Satisfaction with the overall quality of our services	92.5%	98%
		Waiting times	95% of customers seen within 10 minutes with appointment	93%
To be available to Register births and deaths within statutory time limits	To provide an efficient and timely Registration service for our customers	Ability to make an appointment % of appointments for registration of births within 42 working days of birth	98%	88%
		% of appointments for registration of deaths within 2 working days of request	95%	90%
To respond to all written applications for certificates within five working days	To provide an efficient and responsive Registration service for our customers	Customer Satisfaction with the overall quality of our services	92.5%	100%

4.11 **Customer Research and Feedback**

As Birmingham is one of the Designated Register Offices and registers births and deaths for non-Birmingham residents not all service users are council taxpaying citizens of Birmingham. A significant number of births and deaths registered are for residents living in other authorities.

Applicants for certificates are from all over the world. There is also a growing number of customers who live around the world and who contact us to marry in Birmingham or ask about marrying in the UK in general.

In order to gauge how the customer views our service to them we have traditionally provided three separate customer satisfaction questionnaires which relate to the service received in the three main service areas of Ceremonies, Certificates and Registration.

Very high levels of satisfaction are achieved and we react to customer feedback where possible when comments or suggestions are made which will

improve future service provision. Customer satisfaction levels for the service area are 98%.

4.12 Needs of Stakeholders

The Service is continually seeking ways to improve the service and accordingly officers attend meetings with various stakeholder groups. The regular meetings with the Senior Coroner for Birmingham and Solihull, twice yearly Funeral Directors meetings and Faith Advocacy Group meetings have proved invaluable in helping to move the service forward to better meet customer needs.

4.13 Likely Future Developments

- It is expected that approval of the revised budget, alongside the approval of the new fee structure will allow the Register Office to operate without causing a financial pressure to Regulatory Services or Birmingham City Council in the immediate future.
- Plans to introduce additional chargeable services and income generation schemes should help the service to return income to the city.
- Marriage law is under revision and it will become compulsory for the majority of marriages to be registered at a Register Office; this will assist with verification of marriages and has the potential to be an income generating stream.

4.14 Potential for Services to be provided by outside organisations

The Registration Service is a statutory function governed by the Registrar General and is not open to provision by outside organisations or competition from outside the council. The law requires the service to be provided by local authorities even though it is a national requirement.

4.15 Service Delivery

The service will continue to provide excellent services including the following:

- Registration services for the Citizens of Birmingham and beyond, as required in legislation.
- The reporting of sham marriages and fraudulent applications for certificates.
- The forwarding of any submitted foreign divorces accepted at the time of giving notice of marriage or civil partnership, to the Registrar General, within two working days of receipt.
- All requests for corrections requiring the authority of the Registrar General, will be forwarded to the General Register Office, within two working days of receipt from the customer.
- All correspondence will be answered, where possible, within 48 hours.
- The treatment of customers will be carried out in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Birmingham Promise and the Service Area's Customer Care guidelines.

4.16 The service clearly and directly supports the Council Vision and Priorities 2017-2020:

- i) In respect of the priority of helping to create a safe and secure city for our children to learn and grow in, the service helps to prevent family breakdown with the provision of weddings and civil partnership services and by reducing waiting times for registrations supports safeguarding of new borns by providing them with an identity as soon as possible.
- ii) In respect of the priority of Birmingham being a great City to succeed in, the Service supports DWP work placements and work experience placements.

4.17 Financial and Resource Planning Management

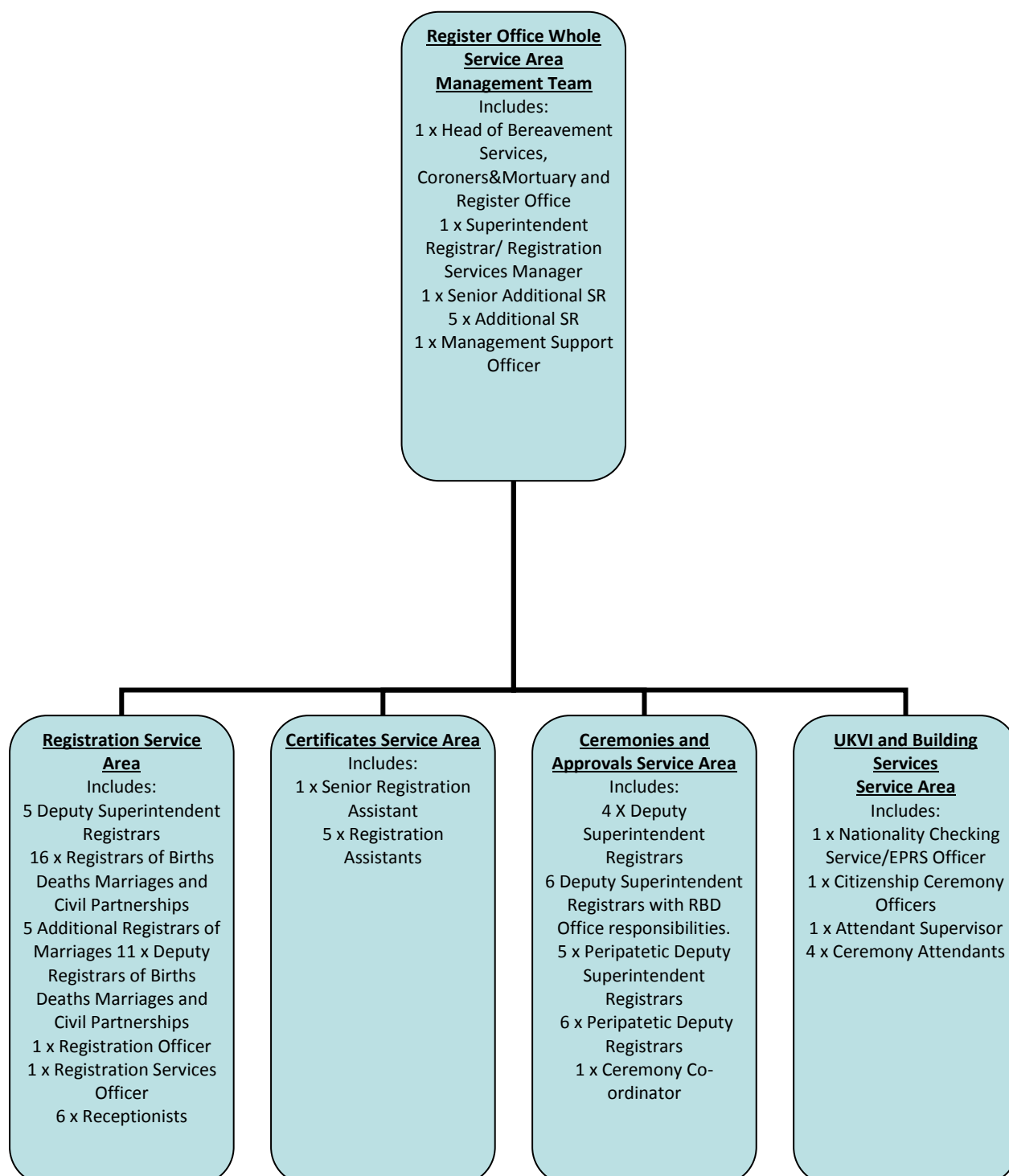
The service has a staffing compliment of 65 FTEs. There are 12 peripatetic staff and 10 weekend only staff, the peripatetic staff attend ceremonies at Approved Premises and Citizenship Ceremonies. The weekend only staff provide ceremonies and registrations at the Register Office and registered religious buildings at weekends as well as the out of hours Emergency Bereavement Service.

Whilst the majority of fees are set nationally by the Registrar General some non-statutory fees are set by the City Council through the Licensing and Public Protection Committee. It has been suggested that many central government agencies use the local registration service as a source of information and data as well as a free service. For example, the DWP use the local registration service to provide the Tell Us Once system and the Office for National Statistics uses the statistics from birth and death registrations freely. It has been further suggested that central government should financially support such a vital, valuable and necessary service. Service managers continue to lobby the GRO.

4.18 The current staffing structure is attached as Appendix 4A.

4.19 The statutory fees charged by the service appears in Appendix 4B.

REGISTER OFFICE ORGANISATION STRUCTURE



STATUTORY REGISTER OFFICE FEES

Statutory or PPC Fees	Current Fees	Statutory or PPC
Superintendent Registrar's Cert of Birth, Death or Marriage	£10	Statutory/National
Registrar's Certificate issued at the time of Registration	£4	Statutory/National
Registrar's Certificate after Registration	£7	Statutory/National
A general search in indexes not exceeding 6 hours	£18	Statutory/National
Certificate of Worship	£29	Statutory/National
Registration of a religious building for marriage	£123	Statutory/National
Registration of a religious building for marriages for same sex couples (that is already registered)	£64	Statutory/National
Notice of Marriage	£35	Statutory/National
Notice of Marriage subject to immigration Act	£47	Statutory/National
Notice of Civil Partnership subject to immigration Act	£47	Statutory/National
Notice of Civil Partnership	£35	Statutory/National
Fee to reduce the legal waiting period of a notice of marriage/civil partnership	£28	Statutory/National
Fee payable to Registrar for marriage Ceremony at register Office	£46	Statutory/National
Fee payable to Registrar for marriage Ceremony at registered building	£86	Statutory/National
Attendance of Civil Partnership Registrar at Register Office	£46	Statutory/National
Notice given at Housebound Person's abode SR attendance	£47	Statutory/National
Notice given at Detained Person's abode SR Attendance	£68	Statutory/National
Attendance of Registrar at Housebound Person's Marriage	£81	Statutory/National
Attendance of Registrar at Detained Person's Marriage	£88	Statutory/National
Attendance of Superintendent Registrar at Housebound Person's marriage	£84	Statutory/National
Attendance of Superintendent Registrar at Detained Person's marriage	£94	Statutory/National
Attendance of CP Registrar at Housebound Person's CP	£81	Statutory/National
Attendance of CP Registrar at Detained Person's CP	£88	Statutory/National
Registrar General's Licence for Marriage	£15	Statutory/National
Standard Conversion Civil partnership to marriage	£45	Statutory/National
Two stage procedure stage 1 conversion civil partnership to marriage	£27	Statutory/National
SR attendance Conversion Civil partnership to marriage according to Jews / Society of Friends	£91	Statutory/National
SR attendance Conversion Civil partnership to marriage Housebound	£99	Statutory/National
SR attendance Conversion Civil partnership to marriage detained	£117	Statutory/National
Registrar General's Licence for Civil Partnership	£15	Statutory/National
CP Registrar's attendance at religious building	£86	PPC/Local
CP certificate issued at time of registration	£4	Statutory/National
CP certificate issued after registration	£10	Statutory/National

Additional Services for which a fee was payable from 1st Nov 2017	£	Statutory/National
First short birth certificate issued at time of registration	£4.00	Statutory/National
Consideration by a Superintendent Registrar of a divorce/Civil Partnership dissolution	£50.00	Statutory/National
Consideration by Registrar/ Superintendent Registrar of a correction application	£75.00	Statutory/National
Consideration by the Registrar General of a correction application	90*	Statutory/National
Consideration by the Registrar General of a divorce/civil partnership dissolution obtained outside the British Isles	75*	Statutory/National
Consideration of a reduction in the 28 day notice to marry/civil partnership	60*	Statutory/National
Amendment - to a record	£40.00	Statutory/National

*The Local Registration Service provides an administrative service on behalf of the General

Register Office in relation to these fees for which a set fee element is retained

£32 of the £90 fee is retained by the local registration service

£28 of the £75 fee is retained by the local registration service

£ 20 of the £60 fee is retained by the local registration service