

Why has the Marriage Law being reformed?

The Marriage Law has been reformed because it was outdated, (the law dated back to 1919), overcomplicated and not inclusive to all members of society.

The Policy & Resources Committee ('P&R') prioritised a review of the marriage law to replace the law to: make it simpler; fit the needs of a modern society and to be more inclusive; while still having sufficient safeguards to prevent illegal, sham or forced marriage.

The reform will give couples more flexibility and control over their arrangements, which could increase the number of non-residents who decide to marry here, in turn providing benefit to local businesses and the economy.

Today, there is a growing demand for an alternative to traditional religious and civil marriage ceremonies, with people who do not follow a religion or who have different beliefs wanting the option to personalise their ceremony to better reflect who they are. Humanist and other non-religious marriages have seen a significant increase in popularity and for this reason the reform will enable these types of ceremonies to be legally recognised, if it is conducted by an authorised civil celebrant.

Under the new law can I get married at night?

Yes, under the new law couples will be able to get married at night time and any other time of the day, so long as the chosen celebrant and the location owners where they intend to marry agrees before they give notice of marriage.

Will the new law allow people to get married on a beach?

Yes, couples will be able to get married on a beach, so long as there is agreement with the celebrant before giving notice of their intention to marry.

The new law allows marriage ceremonies to be held in any building or outdoor space, so long as the owner's permission has been given and it has been agreed with the celebrant in advance. All locations will need to comply with existing legislation and regulations for publicly accessed locations, for example health & safety legislation and venue capacity restrictions.

Under the new law will I be able to get married at sea?

Yes, under the new law couples will be able to marry at sea in territorial waters and in the Bailiwick's airspace, so long as the minimal legal requirements are met to legally recognise the ceremony.

Will I be able to get married in my family Church grounds?

Potentially, yes, so long as the Church gives consent. It is advised that couples contact the Church directly to discuss if this would be possible.

Where can I not get married under the new law?

The only restrictions on marriage locations under the new law will be that the celebrant and the legal owners need to consent to the location being used. For example, this means that it will not be possible to have a non-religious ceremony in a place of worship unless the celebrant or the registered owner/s agree. The same applies to any privately owned land or premises.

I am part of the LGBT community and want to marry in Guernsey, will this law affect me and my partner?

All changes under the new law will apply equally to all marriage types. Civil marriage ceremonies are already legally recognised under the Same-Sex marriage law. Like all residents and non-residents couples can have their wedding where and when they want, so long as this is with the consent of the locations legal owner and in agreement with the chosen celebrant.

I am a Humanist, under the new law can I have a Humanist wedding? Yes, under the new law a Humanist ceremony will be legally valid providing that the Humanist celebrant has been authorised by the Registrar-General.

I am a religious celebrant and want to know if I can still conduct marriages when the new marriage law is in place.

Yes, existing authorised celebrants will be able to carry out marriages under the new law. Grandfather rights (where if you have been authorised to carry our marriages under the old law your authorisation will continue under the new law) will apply to all religious celebrants, including Anglican celebrants.

What do I need to know as a non-resident who wishes to marry in the Bailiwick (Guernsey Sark, or Alderney)?

If one or both of the couple requires immigration permission they will need to provide the necessary immigration documentation, such as a marriage visa, before notice of marriage will be accepted.

For more information regarding immigration law in Guernsey please contact the Passport and Immigration Office at the Guernsey Border Agency by emailing immigration@gba.gov.gg Tel. no. (01481) 726911

How do my partner and I give notice of marriage?

Under the new law both partners must give notice of their intention to marry a minimum of 21 days before the marriage takes place. Notice can be given up to one year in advance of the marriage date. This process will be possible electronically as well as in person at the Greffe, this will make the process of giving notice simpler, especially for non-residents.

Both partners will have to attend the Greffe in-person for identity checks and to verify the original documentation such as the freedom to marry documentation. This must be done a minimum of a

day before the date of marriage. This applies to non-residents and residents alike. Non-residents are encouraged not to leave this to the last moment, because travel problems such as storms or fog could prevent the checks being done in time and the marriage not being able to take place.

Will I be able to create my own vows?

Yes, in a civil ceremony couple can add their own vows to the legal declarations. The wording has been modernised, but is still required to ensure each party freely consents to marriage. The wording is only two sentences.

"I do solemnly declare that I know not of any lawful impediment why I, ..., may not be joined in matrimony to ..."

"I call upon the persons here present to witness that I, ..., do take you, ..., to be my lawful wedded wife/husband".

Where can I find further information?

Website: <http://www.guernseyroyalcourt.gg/article/1914/Marriages>

Telephone: +44 (0) 1481 725277 Email: registrar@guernseyroyalcourt.gg