



HM Passport Office

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Craig Jeffs
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Reference: FOICR 58690/20

21 May 2020

Dear Mr Jeffs

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

Thank you for your email of 6 May in which you ask for information on the guidance issued to local authorities regarding marriage during the pandemic period.

Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Please may you publish the guidance provided to local authorities regarding marriage during the pandemic period.

I am able to disclose the information set out in the enclosed Annex.

Please may you also confirm what you believe the 'pandemic period' to mean, and whether marriage is likely in the coming months.

The above question is requesting an opinion and does not qualify as an FOI request. The FOIA provides the public with the right to be informed if information is held and to request recorded information is disclosed; the FOIA cannot be used to seek opinions.

Yours sincerely

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Freedom of Information Team

Freedom of Information FOICR 58690/20 Craig Jeffs**Please may you publish the guidance provided to local authorities regarding marriage during the pandemic period.**

The following information regarding Marriage/Civil Partnerships was issued on 24 March to the local registration service.

Marriage/Civil Partnerships

- Marriage and Civil Partnership ceremonies should no longer be undertaken in line with the Prime Ministers announcement.
- Notices of Marriage and Civil Partnership should be deferred until we are through the current pandemic period.
- Registrar General Licence requests for marriage/civil partnerships should be risk assessed and considered locally. Advice from Public Health England and staff safety should be considered before proceeding with any request to undertake ceremonies for customers diagnosed with COVID-19. Engagement should take place with GRO in the normal manner before proceeding.
- Applications to reduce the waiting period for marriages or civil partnerships will no longer be processed. Any applications received or in progress will be refunded.
- Approved Premise licences cannot be suspended during this period. However, local authorities are advised to consider extensions to existing licences where appropriate.

GRO marriage/civil partnership and corrections and re-registration call lines will be closed.

The emergency marriage provision provided at GRO on Saturdays between 09:00 – 15:00 will cease for now and any urgent RGL requests should be made through the on call mobile numbers as is the usual process out of service hours.

The additional guidance below was issued on 11 May.

The Prime Minister yesterday evening announced his plans to restart the economy and ease lockdown restrictions across the UK. Further details behind the announcement are due to be discussed in parliament later today at which stage GRO will carefully consider any impact for civil registration and how this relates to the local registration service.

GRO will need to study the details once published and will be liaising closely with the National Panel for Registration to provide further advice and guidance in the coming days.

The registration service should continue to adhere to current guidance until such a time as GRO issues updated versions.

The additional guidance below was issued on 12 May.

The government has now (12 May) published its latest guidance on coronavirus recovery. It includes examining how to enable slightly larger groups to gather for events such as

small weddings during stage 2, which will not be before 1 June and only if the correct conditions are met. While no further detail is available yet, GRO is working closely with partners from across government to develop plans for how this may operate. The National Panel for Registration are being engaged on a regular basis and will continue to be closely consulted as proposals develop.

Until otherwise advised by GRO, the registration service should continue to adhere to the existing GRO guidance for births, still-births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships.