

## **M20 Corrections to marriage entries**

### **Summary of Learning Points**

When you have read this Chapter you will have learnt the following:

		<b>Paragraph</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>That in no circumstances may a registrar correct or alter any error or accidental blot by over writing or erasure</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>When a register entry is complete</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>How to correct an error in an incomplete entry</b>	<b>3 - 7</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>What action to take if an error is discovered in a complete entry</b>	<b>8 - 19</b>

**Examples of corrected entries – see list at the end of the chapter**

## M20 Corrections to marriage entries

1. Where an error in a register is to be corrected, the correction must be made only in accordance with the legal procedures. **In no circumstances** may a registrar correct or alter any error in a register by writing over it. No writing, not even an accidental blot, may be removed from a register by erasure, ink eradicator, correcting fluid or masking tape. Any such correction, alteration or removal or any attempt at such correction, alteration or removal will be treated as a criminal offence under section 76(1) of the Marriage Act 1949.

2. There are different procedures for the correction of errors discovered in entries before they are completed and for their correction after entries are completed. An entry is complete when the registrar by whom it is made has signed it and added his official description.

### Errors in incomplete entries

3. Where a registrar is required to correct a marriage entry before it is complete, he shall, subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, make the correction in the following manner:

- a. if a word is incorrect, it should be struck out by drawing a line through it, so that the word remains legible. The correct word should then be written above it;
- b. if in any group of figures one or more figures is incorrect, all the figures in the group should be struck out by drawing a line through them so that they remain legible. The correct figures should then be written above them.
- c. if a word has been omitted, a caret should be placed where the omission occurs and the omitted word written above it. If there is space to write the omitted word in the place of the omission, the word should be written there and underlined.
- d. all errors corrected in the ways listed above shall be numbered consecutively by the registrar from the beginning of the register starting with 'one'. Every time a correction is made, the registrar should write the number of the error in figures against the correction in the body of the entry. The same number in words should be written in the margin of the entry and the registrar's initials added.
- e. if the particulars to be entered in any two columns have been inadvertently transposed, the registrar shall, without any other correction, write a note of the error in the margin of the entry in pencil in the following form: "The particulars in ..... and ..... inadvertently transposed", and add his initials. The details should be entered in the correct columns on any certificates issued and the marginal note should not be reproduced
- f. if the particulars required to be entered in respect of the parties to a marriage, or the fathers of the parties, have been inadvertently transposed, the registrar shall, without any other correction, write a note in pencil in the margin of the entry to that effect, specifying the particulars to which the note

relates, and add his initials. The details should be entered in the correct columns on any certificates issued and the marginal note should not be reproduced.

4. If it appears that an error has been made in the signature of one of the parties or witnesses to a marriage, the signatory and not the registrar shall make the correction, and the registrar shall number the error and make an entry in the margin as provided in paragraph 3 (d).
5. A newly appointed registrar taking over a register should continue the series of numbered corrections, if any, started by their predecessor. Except as provided for in paragraph 6, once an error has been numbered the number must not be altered.
6. Where a number has been duplicated in a register and the quarterly copy of the entry in question has not been submitted to the Registrar General, the matter may be referred to the superintendent registrar who may advise the registrar or deputy who made the entry to amend in his or her presence the erroneous number by adding the letter "A" to the number, both in the body and in the margin of the entry. The superintendent registrar must keep a record of all such amendments for inclusion in his or her quarterly report of errors (Form 72). Any duplicate numbered error discovered subsequently or unnumbered error discovered at any time should be referred to the General Register Office.
7. A registrar must never make a numbered correction after the entry has been completed.

### **Errors in completed marriage entries**

8. No distinction is drawn between clerical errors and errors of fact or substance in marriage entries. Any correction that is made in a completed marriage entry must be by a note in the margin without alteration of the original entry. The correction must be made in the presence of the parties married, or in the presence of the superintendent registrar and two credible witnesses. No fee is payable for the correction.
9. Any error in a marriage register which comes to the notice of a superintendent registrar or registrar must be reported by him to the General Register Office, and no attempt should be made to correct the error until instructions are received.
10. The registration officer should send any appropriate documentary evidence that may be available, together with a copy of the entry and any other information that the Registrar General may require.
11. Where an error can be proved by the production of documentary evidence, the evidence should be produced to the Registrar General before the correction is authorised. Where the applicant is not able or refuses to produce evidence of the error, the facts should still be reported to the General Register Office.
12. Where the evidence required is a certificate of birth, death, marriage or civil partnership and the applicant for the correction has the certificate, the superintendent should take a copy, certify it to say that the original has been seen and forward the certified copy to the General Register Office.

13. Where the notice of marriage shows the correct information that should have been entered into the marriage register, a copy will suffice as evidence without any further evidence being required.

14. Where the notice of marriage does not show the correct information, examples of the evidence required as proof of the types of error are as follows:

Nature of error	Example of document required
Date of marriage or	photocopy of superintendent registrar's  minister's diary wedding invitation
Name and surname of a party or parties name, the	contemporary evidence of the correct such as a passport valid at the time of  marriage
Date of birth	birth certificate passport showing the date of birth
Condition or  spouse	-  a copy of the decree absolute of divorce  final order of dissolution or nullity or a certificate of the death of the former  or civil partner.
Occupation	a letter from employer or some other reasonable evidence, such as a letter heading or tax document, for someone who is self-employed
Address	an official letter confirming correct details dated at the time of the marriage
Father's name	birth certificate plus contemporary evidence of the father's name valid at the time of the marriage
Father's occupation	a letter from employer or some other reasonable evidence, such as letter heading or tax document, for someone who is self-employed
Father incorrectly recorded as deceased	Letter from father

15. Any certificates submitted which are in a language other than English or Welsh should be accompanied by a full translation.

16. The officer should state in their report whether the parties themselves will be available to witness the correction. If either of the parties is unable to be present he or she should be asked to supply the name and address of someone who is able to attend in their place.

17. A superintendent registrar is not empowered to correct an error in a marriage register. The correction should be made by the officer or other person who registered the marriage or by their successor in office.

18. When a correction is to be made, the instructions issued will indicate who should make it, the wording of the marginal note, and how and by whom the correction should be witnessed.

19. Where marriage registers are kept in duplicate any correction should be made in both registers. If one of the registers is deposited with the superintendent registrar and he is asked by a clergyman, authorised person, registering officer of the Society of Friends or secretary (for marriages) of a synagogue to deliver it to them for the purpose of correcting an error in it, he should comply with the request.

## **M20 Corrections to marriage entries**

### **Examples of register entries**

#### **Example 1**

Correction of surname in columns 2 and 7 of a marriage entry in a registered building where the marriage was registered by the registrar.

Correction made by the Registrar in the presence of the parties married. The woman has signed the marginal note in her married name.

#### **Example 2.**

Correction of marital condition in column 4 of the duplicate registers of a registered building.

Correction made by the Authorised Person in the presence of the superintendent registrar and two witnesses, one of whom is the groom.

#### **Example 3**

Correction of age in column 3 of a marriage entry

Correction made by the registrar in the presence of the parties married, bride has signed in her maiden surname.

#### **Example 4**

Errors discovered before a marriage entry has been completed.

## **M20 (Welsh) - Corrections to marriage entries**

Where an error or omission is corrected in an entry in a marriage register in Wales the correction shall be made in English if the error or omission occurs in particulars entered in English and in Welsh if the error or omission occurs in particulars entered in Welsh.

(1a) The marginal note will be in Welsh where an error occurs in the Welsh part of a bilingual entry and in English where the error occurs in the English part of such an entry.

(1b) If the error occurs in a name or surname in an entry made on or after 1 April 1971 the marginal note of correction should be in English, but in English **and** Welsh if the entry is bilingual.

1(c) Marginal notes in Welsh should only be entered where an error occurs in the Welsh part of a bilingual entry and **not** for the correction of a Welsh name or word (such as part of an address) in an English only entry or in the English part of a bilingual entry.

1(d) If the error occurs in a name or surname in an entry made on or after 1st April, 1969, the marginal note of correction should be in English if the entry is made in English, but in English **and** Welsh if the entry is bilingual.

## **M20 (Welsh) - Correction of errors in incomplete entries**

3(a) Errors must be numbered from "one" or "un" in each register.

## **M20 Evaluation of Learning**

When you have finished reading this Chapter you may wish to evaluate what you have learnt by answering the following questions. The answers to these questions are at the end of the Handbook.

- Q1** At what point does a marriage entry become 'complete'?
- Q2** When checking his marriage entry before signing a groom notices that his occupation has been recorded as 'Occupational Advisor' instead of 'Occupational Health Advisor'. Explain how the error should be corrected.
- Q3** After the marriage entry has been completed a couple notice that their father's names and details have been put against the wrong party. Although the information is correct, the groom's father's names and occupation are against the details of the bride and vice versa. Explain what action should be taken.
- Q4** A lady contacts the register office to explain that the passport office have noticed an error in her name on her marriage certificate. They will not consider her passport renewal application until the error is corrected. Her old passport shows the correct spelling of her name. On checking the entry in the marriage register it is noted that the error is in the entry too. Explain what advice the lady should be given.
- Q5** A local priest contacts the register office to ask how he can correct an error in the marriage registers. He is the authorised person and when making the entry out last weekend the couple did not notice at the time that both of their ages were one year out. They have since contacted the priest to ask for a correction. What advice should be given to the priest?