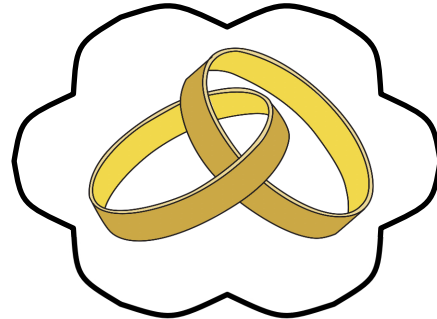




**Law
Commission**
Reforming the law



Getting married: What do you think about these ideas to change the law on weddings?

**Please let us know what you think by:
Thursday 3 December 2020.**

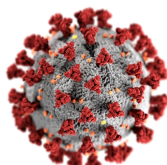


EasyRead version of:
**Getting Married: A Summary of the Weddings
Law Consultation Paper**



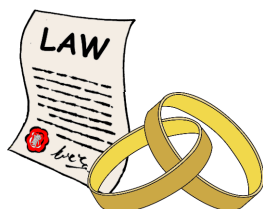
1. Introduction

1



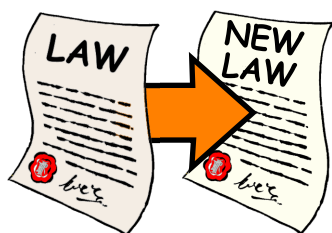
2. The coronavirus pandemic

4



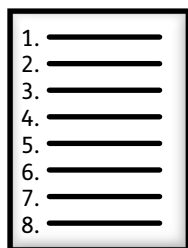
3. The law on weddings today

5



4. Why the Law Commission wants the law on weddings to change

8



5. 8 main ideas for changes to the law

10



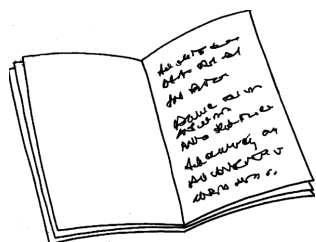
6. More information on these changes

13



7. Tell the Law Commission what you think

27



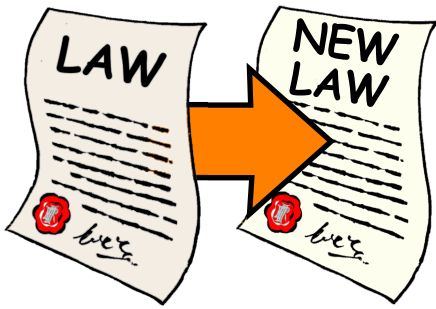
8. What the words mean

29

Some new or difficult words are in **bold**.

We explain what they mean at the end of this paper.

1. Introduction



The Law Commission is an organisation that makes suggestions to the Government on changes to the law.



The Law Commission has some ideas about changing the law on getting married.



We want to know what you think about our ideas.



We have some questions here for you to answer:

<https://consult.justice.gov.uk/law-commission/weddings/>

These are not in EasyRead.



You do not have to answer all the questions if you do not want to. You can choose the questions you want to answer.



You can also email us at:
weddings@lawcommission.gov.uk



Or you can post your answers to:
The Weddings Team
Law Commission
1st Floor, 52 Queen Anne's Gate
London SW1H 9AG.

December 2020						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

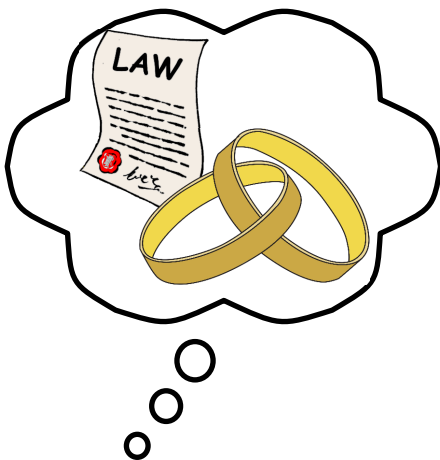
You must tell us what you think by
Thursday 3 December 2020.



We will then read through everything people have sent us.



This feedback will help us write a final report.



The final report will have ideas for the Government on how to change the law on getting married.

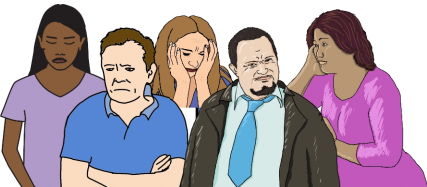
2. The coronavirus pandemic



The coronavirus pandemic has changed everyone's lives.



When the lockdown happened, all weddings had to be stopped. This was because the Government wanted to stop coronavirus spreading.



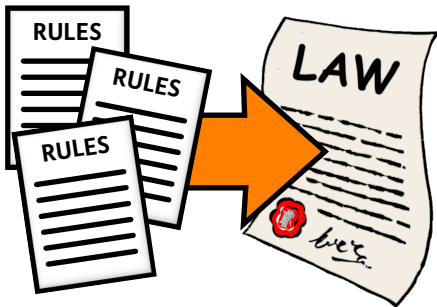
This was hard for a lot of people who had planned to get married.



The Law Commission wants to find ways for people to get married even if there are big emergencies in our country like this coronavirus pandemic.

For example, people could get married using a video call.

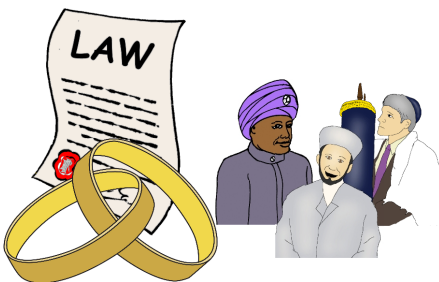
3. The law on weddings today



The law for weddings today is hard to understand. It has lots of different rules that can confuse people.



The law does not give **wedding couples** much choice about what happens in their wedding service.



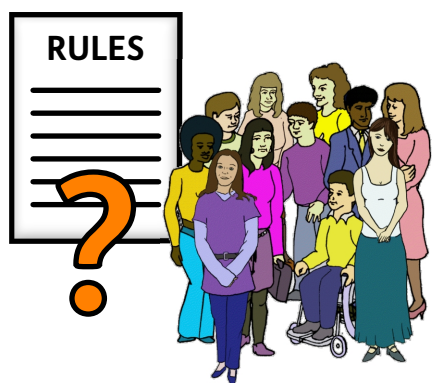
Some legal weddings do not let people include their beliefs. So sometimes, people have to have 2 weddings, one that follows the law and another that includes their own beliefs.



The law today does not give people much choice about where they get married.



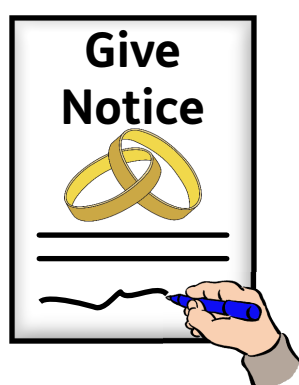
At the moment, most people have to have their wedding in a religious place, like a church, or in a place that is allowed to hold weddings. Most people cannot marry outside.



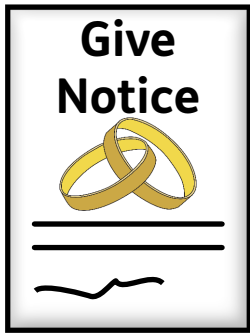
The rules about who must be at a wedding are different depending on the type of wedding and this can be confusing.



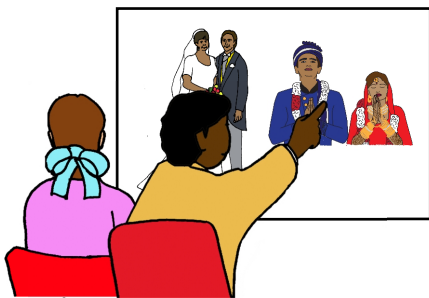
The law about getting permission to get married is not the same for everyone. Some people can get permission from the Anglican church to get married. Other people have to **give notice** at a **register office**.



Give notice is when you have to sign a legal form at your local **register office** to say you want to get married. This form is put up on a board for anyone to see for 28 days. It gives people a chance to say if the wedding should not happen.



The way people have to **give notice** today, is not a good way of finding out if a marriage should not happen. The Law Commission says it does not work well.

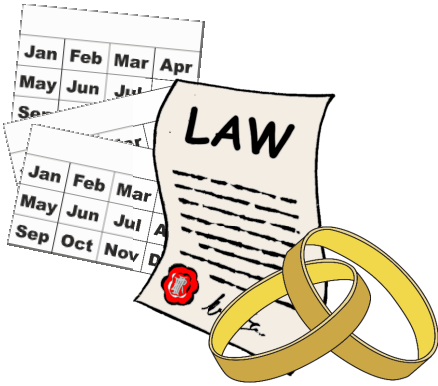


The law today says that people have to choose from certain ceremonies. This can be hard to understand.

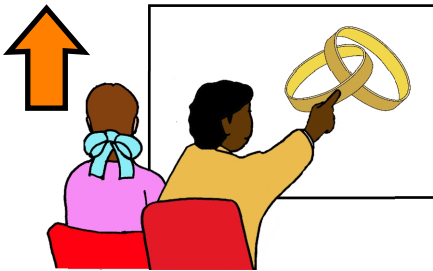


As many of the rules are hard to understand, some couples are not doing the right things to get married. This can mean that their wedding is not legal.

4. Why the Law Commission wants the law on weddings to change



The law on weddings was made a long time ago. Times have changed a lot since these laws were made.



The Law Commission thinks we should make weddings easier and give people more choice.



For example, we want people to have more freedom to include music, wedding promises or religious traditions that are important to them.



We want the laws for getting married to change. We want the law to:

- be simpler and clearer



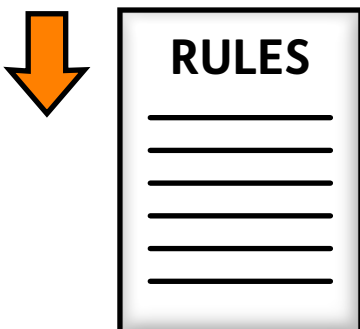
- be fairer and more equal



- protect and be good for the public

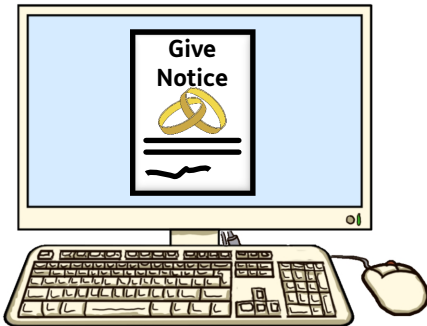


- respect people's wishes and beliefs



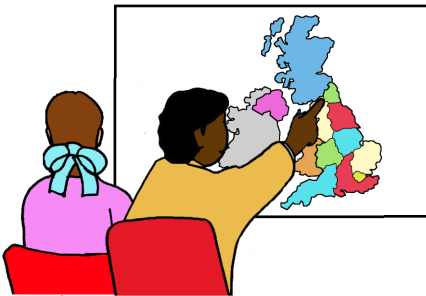
- have less rules. This will give people more choice and make weddings cheaper.

5. 8 main ideas for changes to the law



There are 8 main ideas for change:

1. People could **give notice** using the internet.



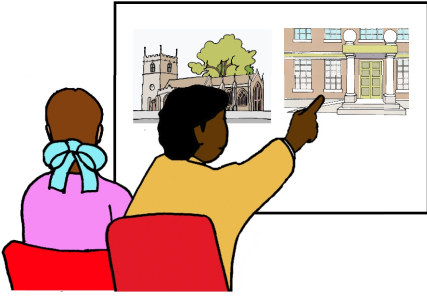
2. People could choose the area where they have their interview about their wedding.



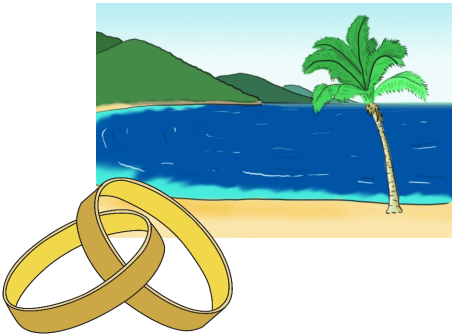
3. A list of weddings coming up could go on the internet for people to see.



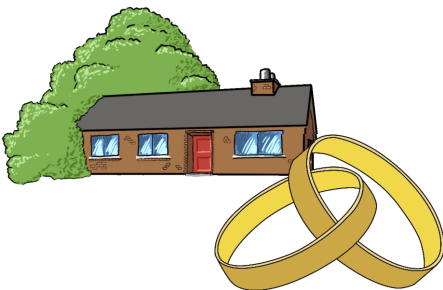
4. There could be a new way to allow the professionals who can be hired to run weddings, called **celebrants**, and organisations that have beliefs but are not religious to lead legal weddings.



5. Groups that are allowed to lead weddings and couples could choose where their weddings will happen.



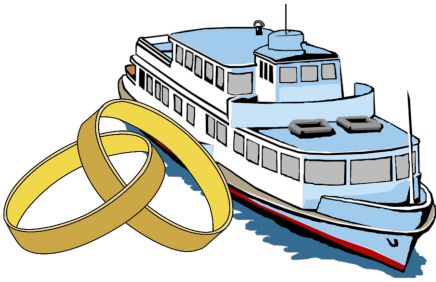
This means that weddings could happen outside in places like parks, beaches, private gardens or the outside areas of wedding buildings.



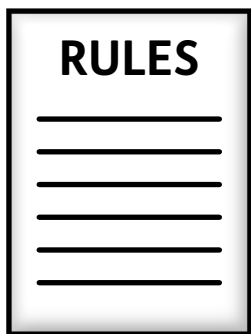
It also means that people could get married in different buildings like their own homes.



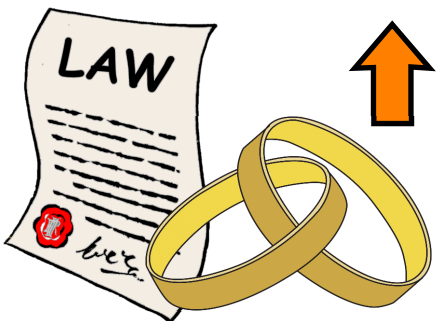
6. Groups that are allowed to lead weddings and couples could choose what their wedding is like and what happens during their wedding.



7. Couples could get married on cruise ships that have their home harbour in England or Wales.



8. The right way to get married will be clearer and easier to follow.



This means that more weddings will be legal.

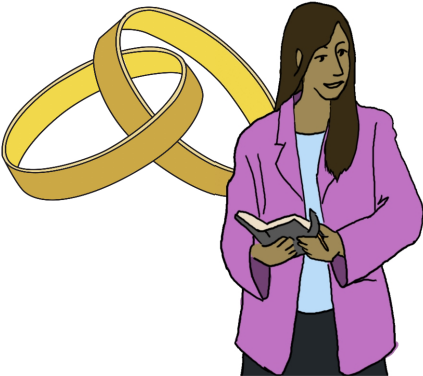
6. More information on these changes



The Law Commission thinks we should change things so that:

Instead of the wedding building being the thing that is **regulated**, it is the person who marries the couple or checks everything is ok.

They are called the **officiant**.



All weddings would need an **officiant** to be there. This person may run the wedding or they may just check that the legal parts of the wedding happen.

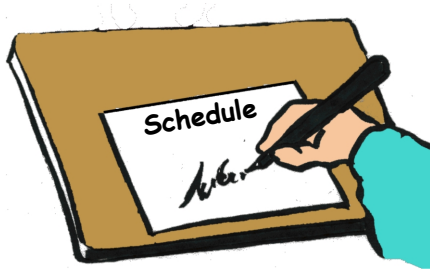


Their job would be to:

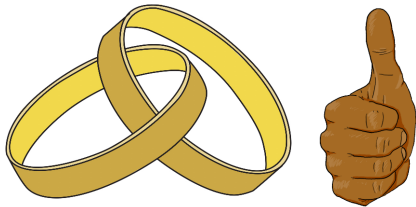
- check that each person really wants to marry each other.



- all important and legal parts of the ceremony happen (like having 2 witnesses)



- the marriage document called a **schedule** is signed.



The **officiant** would also need to make sure that the wedding was polite and done in the right way.



There would be 4 or 5 types of **officiant** for a wedding.



These would be:

1. Registration officers

These are **officiants** who work in a register office.



2. **Anglican** priests

An **Anglican officiant** would be the official person at **Anglican** weddings.



3. Chosen **officiants**

Other religious organisations would be able to choose their own **officiants** for weddings following their traditions and beliefs.



Groups that have beliefs but are not religious may be able to choose **officiants** too (if the Government decides to let them run wedding ceremonies).

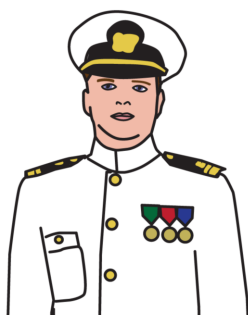


An **officiant** chosen by an organisation would need to be trained.



4. Independent **officiant**

This could be a **celebrant** (if the Government decides to let **celebrants** run wedding ceremonies). They would need to ask The General Register Office for permission to do this.

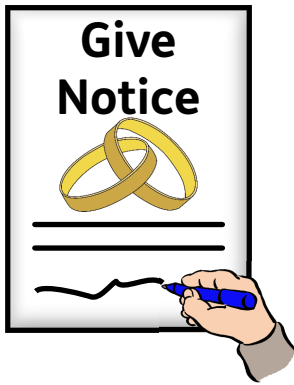


5. An **officiant** who works at sea

Officiants who work at sea would be able to run weddings on board some passenger ships.



They would have to be trained to do this.



Giving notice for a wedding to happen

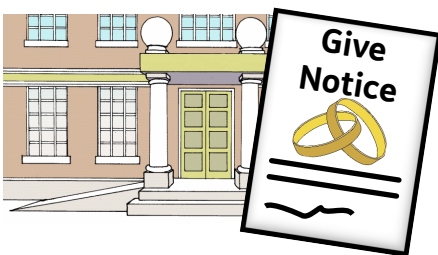
Wedding couples would still have to **give notice** of their plans to get married.



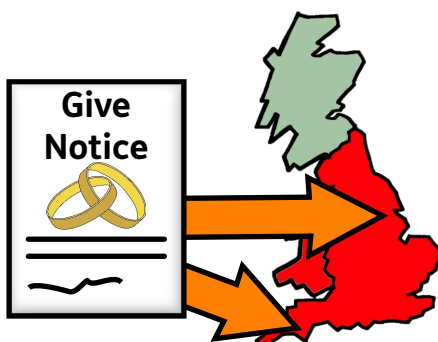
We want to know whether you think that:

- some people should still be allowed to **give notice** to the **Anglican** church

or

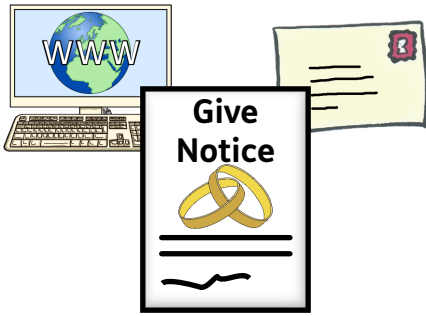


- there should be the same way of **giving notice** for everyone (to the **register office**).



People could **give notice** anywhere. They would not need to live in the area of the **register office**.

Giving notice would be in 2 parts:



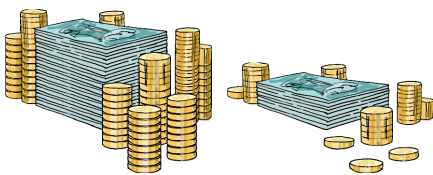
1. **Giving notice** on the internet or by post. Once **notice** has been given, this would go onto the internet so anyone can see it.



2. Meeting a registration official to check that each person in the **wedding couple** wants the wedding to take place.

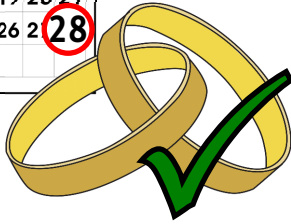


Each person would need to fill in a form and pay for this service.



There would be different charges for different people. For example, if someone is so ill that they will die soon, they may pay less.

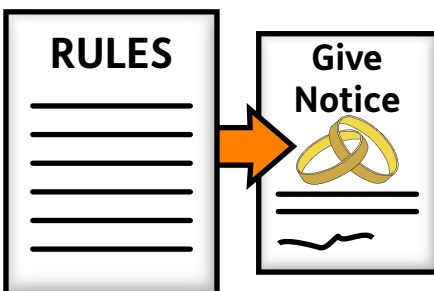
Days						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				



At the end of the **giving notice** time, which is 28 days, the **wedding couple** would be given permission for their wedding to happen.



The **officiant** who will carry out the wedding will be named.

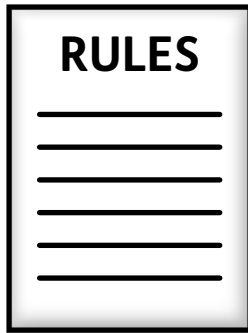


Giving notice as an Anglican (Church of England or the Church in Wales)

The Law Commission want to know if there should be just one set of rules for giving notice for a wedding.

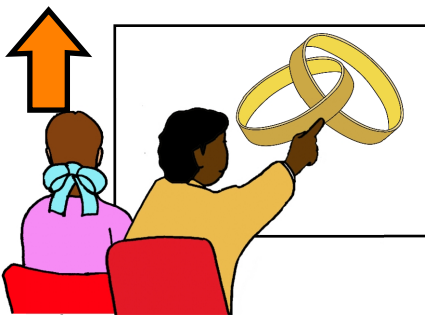


If people want to keep the **Anglican** rules, we think they should be made simpler.



All weddings would have the same rules.

This makes it more equal for all religions and people who do not believe.



The wedding ceremony

All these changes to the law would give **wedding couples** more choice and freedom in their wedding ceremony.



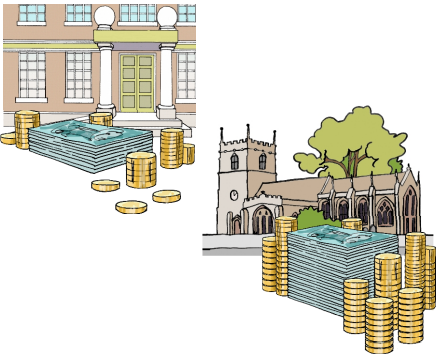
The most important part of a wedding would be that both people freely choose to get married. And no-one is forced to get married.



There would be a document called a **schedule** that would explain that both people want to get married.



Each ceremony would be witnessed by two people. This means that two people would watch what was happening to prove that the wedding happened in the right way.



There would be one cost for a registration officer to be at a wedding at a **register office**. If the wedding is somewhere else, it would cost more.

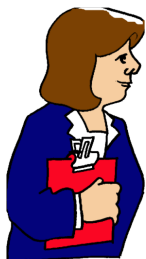


Other **officiants** could charge what they wanted.

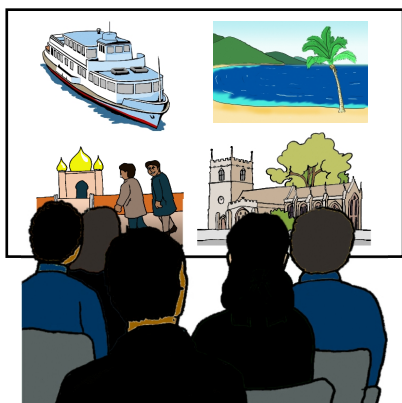


Where the wedding takes place

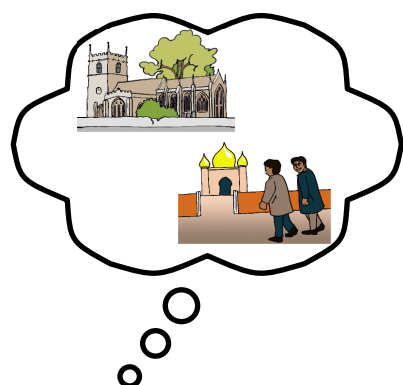
We think that weddings could happen in many different places.



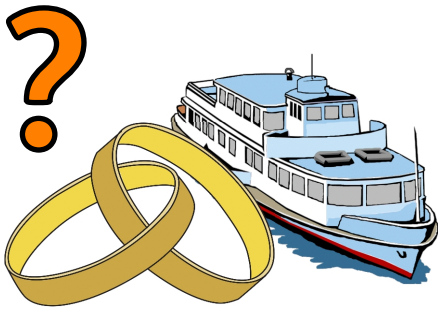
The **official** would just need to check that the place is safe and okay for a wedding.



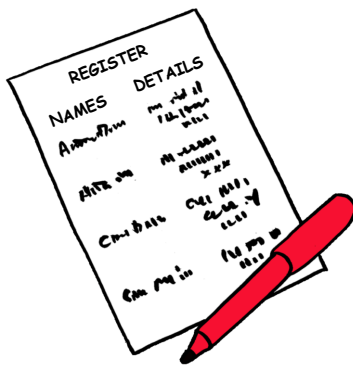
Groups that are allowed to lead weddings might want to decide where those weddings can happen.



We are also thinking about whether weddings that are not religious could happen in religious places.



We are also asking people if religious and not religious belief weddings could take place at sea on passenger ships.

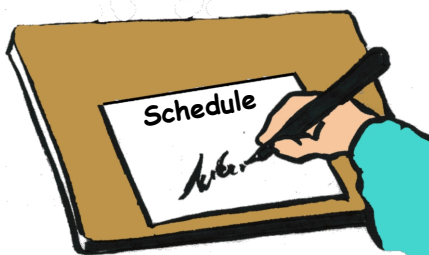


Registering the marriage

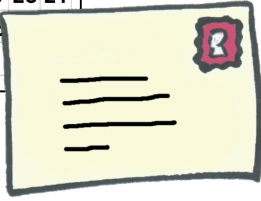
The Law Commission is suggesting that each wedding is still **registered**, which means being recorded on an official list.



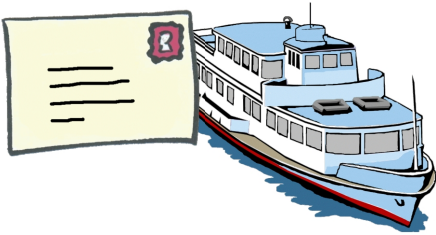
Registering the wedding is a way of proving that a proper wedding has happened.



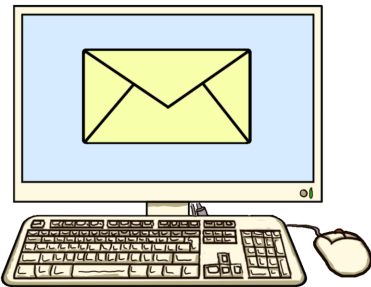
The **wedding couple**, their witnesses and the **officiant** would need to sign a document called the **schedule** at the end of the ceremony.



The **wedding couple** would need to send this document to the **register office** in 7 days.



If the **wedding couple** were married at sea, they would have longer to send it back.



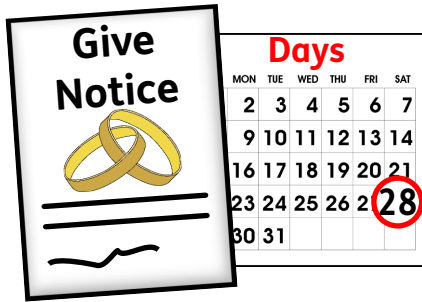
In the future it might be possible to send it over the internet.



Religious weddings

Some religious weddings are not legal.

A marriage would be legal if:



- the **wedding couple give notice** which means saying they plan to get married. It must be done at least 28 days before they do



- if both people freely agree to get married with an **officiant** there.

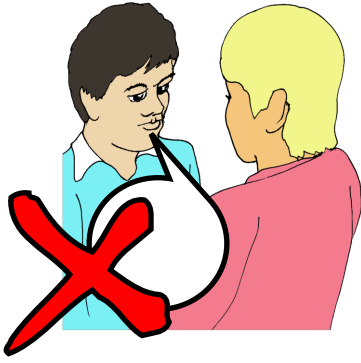
We want to make it easier for religious groups to hold legal weddings. We think that:



1. A religious wedding does not have to be held in a religious place.



This means that **wedding couples** can have their wedding in another place that means a lot to them – one that they choose.



2. There will be no set words to read out and repeat at weddings.



All this means that people can have legal weddings that include their religious beliefs.

7. How to tell us what you think



Please tell us what you think about our ideas.

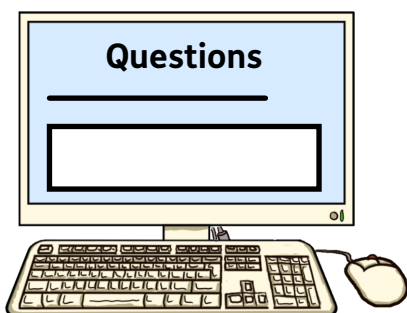


Look at questions online if you can do that bearing in mind that they are not EasyRead.

<https://consult.justice.gov.uk/law-commission/weddings>



You do not have to answer all the questions if you do not want to. You can choose which questions you want to answer.



Tell us what you think online if you can.



Tell us what you think about what we have said in this EasyRead booklet.

December 2020						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

You must tell us what you think by
Thursday 3 December 2020.



Do call us, if you have any questions
020 3334 0200



Thank you very much.

8. What the words mean

Anglican – The Church of England and the Church in Wales.

Celebrant – a person who leads a ceremony like a marriage.

Give notice – this is when a wedding couple sign a document to say that they want to get married. This document is then open to everyone to see for 28 days before the couple's wedding. It gives people a chance to say if there is a reason the couple should not get married.

Officiant – this is someone who attends the wedding to check it is run in the right way for the law.

Registered – when a building or person is registered they are recorded on an official list.

Register office – this is a place where births, deaths, and marriages are recorded. You can get married in a register office without a religious ceremony.

Regulated – is when something or someone is controlled by laws.

Schedule – a schedule is a document which says that the wedding has happened legally. The wedding couple, witnesses and the officiant have to sign it.

Wedding couple – the two people getting married.



Credits

This paper has been designed and produced by the EasyRead service at Inspired Services Publishing Ltd. Ref ISL143 20. August 2020.

www.inspiredservices.org.uk



It meets the European EasyRead Standard.



Artwork includes material from the Inspired EasyRead Collection and cannot be used anywhere else without written permission from Inspired Services.

www.inspired.pics