Changes to Legislation concerning Marriage Preliminaries in March 2015

Government legislation concerning the legal preliminaries to marriages is set to change as from the beginning of March 2015. This will affect every person wishing to be married from March 2015 onwards unless they have already given their ‘notice of marriage’ (legal preliminaries for marriage).

You may give your notice of marriage up to one year before your marriage date (ie you must be married before the anniversary of the day you gave your notice of marriage).

Once you have given your notice of marriage, there is no need for you to remain at the address you were living when you gave your notice – this will not affect the waiting period during which your notices will be displayed on a public notice board within a register office or the certificates for marriage (the marriage authorities) which are issued when the notice comes down from the board.

I’m getting married after March 2015 but can’t give my notice of marriage before that date. What will this mean for me?

- The waiting period during which your notice is displayed on the notice board is set to increase. At the moment, the waiting period is 15 clear days but this will rise to a minimum of 28 days for all persons giving notice of marriage. If you are a non-EEA citizen, the 28 days waiting period could be extended to 70 days.
- You will be required to bring specific documents to your notice of marriage. The list of required documents will be tightened further after March 2015 and in some cases you will be required not only to bring photographic evidence and immigration status but also additional photograph(s) to be held on record. If you do not bring all the required documents, it will not be possible to take your notice of marriage which may mean that your marriage will have to be postponed.
- If you are marrying in a Church of England or Church of Wales and you are a non EEA citizen, you will be required to give notice of marriage in a Designated Register Office. You will not be able to get married under existing rules.

Will the register office remind me nearer the time if I have booked my wedding with them?

You yourself are responsible for meeting all the legal requirements for your marriage to take place. This includes making sure you give notice of marriage with sufficient time for the waiting period to finish before your marriage takes place and to make sure you provide all the required paperwork at the time of giving notice of marriage. The register office will try to help you by giving advice for your particular set of circumstances and, in some cases, contacting you to remind you, but you must make sure you do everything you need to do at the right time to get married on the day you have booked.