



Certificate of Appointment of Authorised Person by Trustee or Governing Body of a Registered Building - Guidance Notes for Applicant

(Please read these guidance notes before completing the form)

What is an Authorised Person?

The Marriage Act 1949 makes provision for marriages between a man and a woman to be solemnized in a building which has been registered for that purpose without the need for a registrar to be present. Instead, the trustees or governing body of a registered building may authorise a person to register any marriages solemnized in that building by certifying their name and address to the Registrar General and the superintendent registrar of the registration district in which the building is situated. The building must have been registered for at least 12 months before an Authorised Person may be appointed. The Marriage Act 1949 also makes provision for the marriage of same sex couples to be solemnized in a building registered for that purpose without the presence of a registrar. Authorised Persons may now be appointed by the trustees or governing body to register marriages between a man and a woman only, marriages of same sex couples only, or both.

What are the responsibilities of an Authorised Person?

An Authorised Person's responsibilities include:

- taking care of the building's marriage registers and other registration stock (certificates, etc.)
- ensuring that the legal preliminaries of any marriages to be solemnized in the building have been completed
- ensuring that all marriages are solemnized in accordance with legislation and that the details are recorded accurately in the marriage registers
- providing quarterly copies of the marriage records to the superintendent registrar.

You should be made aware that failure to comply with these legal requirements could lead to doubts about the validity of the marriage and cause great distress to those concerned. Full details of the responsibilities and duties of an Authorised Person are contained in the booklet "Guide for Authorised Persons" which is available to download from the www.gov.uk web-site.

Alternatively, you can request a copy by e-mailing GRO at: GROCasework@gro.gsi.gov.uk. A copy of the guide should already be held with the marriage registers if an Authorised Person has previously been appointed to the building. The Authorised Person must acquaint themselves with the guide in order that all the provisions of marriage legislation are carried out completely and accurately.

How do I become an Authorised Person?

An Authorised Person may only be appointed by the trustees or governing body of a building which has been registered for the solemnization of marriages in accordance with the provisions of the Marriage Act 1949. They must complete a certificate of appointment (Form AP1), which is available from GRO or which can be downloaded from the www.gov.uk web-site.

Completing the Certificate of Appointment

The certificate of appointment should be completed by the trustees or members of the governing body of the building. The Marriage Act 1949 requires all appointments of Authorised Persons to be recorded by the Registrar General. No person should therefore act as an Authorised Person until his or her appointment has been certified to the Registrar General and they have been informed by the General Register Office (GRO) that the details of the appointment have been recorded.

Please note that Authorised Persons who are currently appointed to register marriages between a man and a woman must not register any marriage of a same sex couple until the building has been registered for that purpose and they have also been appointed by the trustees to do so.

The completed certificate should be sent to GRO by e-mail: GROCasework@gro.gsi.gov.uk or by post to: General Register Office, PO Box 476, Southport, Merseyside PR8 2WJ.

Please allow 20 working days from receipt of the application at GRO for the process of recording the appointment to take place. Once the appointment has been recorded, the Authorised Person will be advised in writing and the certificate of appointment will be sent to the superintendent registrar of the registration district in which the building is situated. N.B. - Where applicable, the person being replaced will no longer be able to perform the duties of an Authorised Person.

Section 1 - Registered Building Details

1.1 Marriage number - This can be obtained from the Certificate of Registration.

1.2 Building name - Please provide the name of the building as it appears on the Certificate of Registration. If the information given in your application is different to the records held here at GRO, we may have to investigate the change before we can proceed with recording your appointment.

1.3 Registration district - Once we have recorded the appointment, the certificate will be sent to the Superintendent Registrar of the registration district in which the building is situated.

Section 2 - Trustees/Members of Governing Body

Please indicate whether you wish to appoint the Authorised Person for marriages between a man and a woman only, marriages of same sex couples only, or both. You must tick one box (a, b or c) ONLY.

2.1 The Authorised Person is responsible for the safe keeping of marriage registers and the stock of blank marriage certificate forms. A strong fire-resisting safe, ideally with internal dimensions no less than 12"x18" (310 mm x 465 mm) in which all registration documents are to be kept, must be provided. Where two or more Authorised Persons are appointed, it is the Responsible Authorised Person's duty to ensure registration stock is kept securely.

2.2 Date of appointment - An Authorised Person must not act until he/she has been duly certified as having been authorised for the purpose by the trustees or governing body of the building and should await notification from GRO before undertaking the duties of an Authorised Person.

2.3 Date of any forthcoming marriage - Please let us know the date of any marriage to be

solemnized at the building for which you require the presence of the named Authorised Person. They should under no circumstances register any marriage until they have received confirmation from GRO that their appointment has been recorded.

Trustee details and signatures - The Marriage Act 1949 requires two trustees or members of the building's governing body to sign the certificate of appointment. If the appointment is to a Roman Catholic building, then one signatory must be the Bishop or Vicar General of the Diocese in which the building is situated.

Section 3 - Authorised Persons Details

3.1 There can only be one Responsible Authorised Person at the registered building at any time. However, there may be more than one Additional Authorised Person. The "Responsible Authorised Person" will be the first point of contact for GRO.

If an Authorised Person leaves office, it is a legal requirement for the trustees to inform GRO. If this is the Responsible Authorised Person, the trustees must appoint a successor by completing a new certificate of appointment. The successor may be an existing Additional Authorised Person or it may be a new appointment. The Responsible Authorised Person does not need to be the minister or priest and may be anyone connected with the registered building.

Please include at least one telephone number for the Authorised Person in case we need to contact them.

3.2 E-mail Address - Please include a valid e-mail address (if applicable). We will only use this for purposes related to the duties of Authorised Person and it will not be shared with any other organisation. If the Authorised Person changes their e-mail address or any other contact details, please inform GRO by completing the Change of Contact Details form (Form AP2) which is available to download from the www.gov.uk web-site.

Section 4 - to be completed by the Authorised Person

The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 does not permit a person to be compelled to be authorised to be present at marriages of same sex couples if they do not wish to do so. The Authorised Person should therefore indicate whether they agree to perform the duties of Authorised Person for marriages between a man and a woman only, marriages of same sex couples only, or both. They must tick one box (a, b or c) ONLY and then sign and date the certificate.

Section 5 - Authorised Person Declaration

The Authorised Person should read these guidance notes before signing and dating the certificate to confirm they are content to be contacted by GRO for purposes relating to their appointment.