

## What are the next steps?

Your point of contact should be the register office where you gave notice as they will be kept up to date on the status of your case by GRO.

When a decision has been made, GRO will email the register office to advise them whether or not your divorce is capable of recognition to allow your marriage to proceed.

In cases where your divorce is not capable of recognition GRO will write directly to you explaining why it does not meet the required criteria and set out your options.

If you have a query regarding your case which cannot be answered by the registration officer please contact GRO. Please ensure that you quote your case reference number.

Contacting the General Register Office

Phone: 0300 123 1837

Email: [GROcasework@gro.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:GROcasework@gro.gsi.gov.uk)

The information contained in this leaflet is based on the Marriage Act 1949 but is not a full statement of the law

For the purpose of detecting and preventing crime, information relating to an application may be shared and verified with other government departments or law enforcement agencies.



HM Passport  
Office

## General Register Office

Information leaflet on the  
referral of documents to the  
General Register Office

## **Why have my documents been sent to the General Register Office?**

When you gave your notice you answered “yes” to the question “Have you been through any form of marriage or civil partnership before in this or any other country?” You have provided documents and information as to the ending of your previous marriage or civil partnership.

As the ending of your previous marriage or civil partnership was not through a court in the British Isles the registration officer has referred your case to our team of experts at the General Register Office (GRO).

Depending on the country and type of your previous marriage or civil partnership the registration officer may also have asked you to complete a statement sheet which they will submit with your documentation. This sheet is designed to capture the information GRO needs to assess your documentation.

If you have booked a date for your marriage or civil partnership you should have been warned by the registration officer that this date is purely provisional and may need to be changed.

## **Is a fee payable for this service?**

A fee of £75 is payable for this service. This is a consideration fee, as such, is non-refundable. The fee must be paid at the point of application.

## **What happens to my documentation?**

GRO will review your documentation and statement sheet against the reference material they hold to consider whether the ending of your previous marriage or civil partnership appears capable of recognition in the UK under the Family Law Act 1986 or the Civil Partnership Act 2004.

Occasionally a caseworker may need to ask for further information or documentation. This will usually be done through the registration officer who submitted your paperwork to GRO, however in some urgent situations a GRO caseworker may contact you

directly. Please can you respond to these requests as quickly as possible as you will not be able to proceed with your proposed marriage or civil partnership until your response has been received and reviewed.

Whilst you need to submit an original document to the registration officer, this will not be sent to GRO. The registration officer will copy your document and submit the copy. GRO reserves the right to ask you to submit the original document if required.

## **How long does the referral process take?**

GRO will review your case within 10 working days of receiving it. They will then advise the register office of their initial decision. If they require further information or documentation this will be reviewed within 20 working days of receiving it.

However, you should be aware that in exceptional circumstances, it may not always be possible to meet these targets.