

THE BISHOP OF ELY'S REGISTRY

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ADVANCE WARNING TO ALL CLERGY AND OTHERS INVOLVED WITH THE LEGAL ASPECTS OF MARRIAGE IN CHURCH (INCLUDING ANY LAY PERSONS WHO PUBLISH BANNS)

From 2nd March 2015, it will no longer be lawful for the marriage of a non-EEA (i.e. non-European) national to be solemnized in the Church of England after the publication of banns or by a common marriage licence. All such weddings will now have to be authorised by a superintendent registrar's certificate ('SRC').

Where an application for banns or for a common licence is made by any couple wishing to marry in church, after 2nd March 2015 both parties will be required by law to provide evidence of their nationality. If they do not produce evidence that they are EEA (i.e. British or European) nationals, they will need to apply for an SRC.

Clergy are reminded that the current situation will continue until 2nd March, namely that **banns ought not to be read for the marriage in church of any non-British national; all such weddings should be by common licence.** For those involving a non-EEA national, a first-stage application is required to be submitted to the Diocesan Registry for approval. The government has announced that there will be transitional arrangements which will apply to a common licence which has been granted or applied for before 2nd March 2015.

The details of the changes to the law, including the transitional arrangements, are not expected to be finalised by the government until the early part of 2015. At that point, Church House will circulate a detailed guidance note via the diocesan communications offices, which will be followed up by additional guidance from the Faculty Office of the Archbishop of Canterbury regarding Special Marriage Licences and to supplement the booklet 'Anglican Marriage in England and Wales: a Guide to the Law for the Clergy'.

Clergy are always welcome to ring the Registry team during office hours or email for advice on general or specific enquiries on marriage law.

HOWARD DELLAR
Diocesan Registrar

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