



# Same-sex Marriage and Civil Partnership

Same-sex marriage is legal in the UK, with the exception of Northern Ireland

## How old do you have to be?

- You can marry from the age of 16 in the UK.
- If you are aged 16 or 17, you will need your parents' approval in England and Wales and Northern Ireland.

## Giving notice at your local register office

### England and Wales

- If you are having a same-sex marriage or civil partnership ceremony then you must give at least 28 days' notice to your local Register Office. You can find your local Register Office [here](#).
- You can only give notice at a register office if you have lived in the registration district for at least the past 7 days.
- You must get married within one year.
- You may also need a licence if you are not a British citizen or you live outside of the UK.

### Scotland

- In Scotland, you are required to give 29 days' notice with the local registrar.
- You must get married within 3 months of giving notice.

## Documents to take to the register office

- When giving notice you will need to take proof of name, address, age and nationality.
- If you have changed your name, you must take proof – e.g. a copy of a deed poll.
- If you have been married or in a civil partnership before, you need to take either a decree absolute or death certificate of your former partner.

## What happens during the ceremony

- Marriages are formed by saying a predetermined set of words, whereas for civil partnerships there is no legal obligation on the wording used.
- A civil partnership is formed by signing a civil partnership document.
- For both, couples will need a registrar and two witnesses.
- It is not currently possible for same-sex marriages to be conducted by or in the premises of the Church of England, or the Church in Wales. However, the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 does make it possible for any other religious organisation who wishes to conduct same sex marriages to do so.



- It is not possible to include any religious content in a civil marriage or civil partnership ceremony. Either can take place in a register office or any licensed premises in England or Wales.

## Name changes

- The couple will be issued with a certificate of marriage or a certificate for a civil partnership. These are all that are needed to show a name change if one party changes their surname to their partner's.
- Couples can decide to keep their own name.
- Couples who choose to double-barrel or merge their surnames, or to change it to something new altogether, will need to apply through Deed Poll to do this.

Further information can be found at [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)