

There are certain things that must happen in a church wedding to ensure the marriage complies with both UK civil and church law.

A vicar preparing the legal paperwork in the vestry

In marriage you take on a whole new legal status. The vicar knows how to advise and prepare you for your wedding day and everything must comply with all relevant UK and Church of England laws. These are the main legal points to consider before you begin planning:

## You must be old enough

If you are under 18 years old you will need your parents' consent to marry and by law you can not be married in the UK until you are 16.

## Same-sex marriage legislation

It is not legally possible for same-sex couples to marry in the Church of England.

## Marrying away from where you live

It is possible to get married in a church that is away from where you live if you have a certain kind of connection with it. You may be legally connected to a number of churches in different ways. [Read more about marrying away from where you live.](#)

## Time of wedding

The wedding must take place between 8am and 6pm on any day.

## Guidelines for divorcees

There are special guidelines on marriage in the church if you are divorced. There may well be a way forward, but you will need to talk your Vicar about your situation to explore the possibilities for you. [Read more about marriage after divorce.](#)

## Reading of Banns

Most Church of England marriages will require banns to be published before the wedding can take place. You won't need to arrange banns until about four months before your wedding date. [Read more about what is special and important about banns](#)

If there is not enough notice given for the banns to be read before the marriage is due to take place, or in the case of the marriage of people who are not nationals of a country within the European Economic Area, or if one or both of you does not live in England or Wales, it is recommended that the Licence procedure be used rather than banns.

## Licences

There are some circumstances in which you may need a Special Licence, Common Licence or a Marriage Schedule from the register office to marry in church. Your vicar will let you know if these apply to you.

## Documents you'll need

- All couples will need to show the vicar their passport as proof of nationality. If you don't have a passport, there are other documents which would be acceptable, so ask your vicar about this.
- If either or both of you are divorced, you will need to bring your decree absolute for the vicar to see.
- You may also be asked to provide evidence of your connection to the church, such as utility bills which show you live or have lived in the parish, or your parents' marriage certificate if they were married there, for example. Your vicar will guide you on acceptable documents for your particular connection.

## Also in this section

A church with a square tower surrounded by blossom trees

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## [Finding a church](#)



## Why marry in church?

A bride and groom smiling at the front of church

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## Can I marry in church?

Some confetti lying in the grass

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## Mixed faith marriages

Wedding rings in presentation boxes

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## Your wedding and covid-19

Bride and groom signing the register with their son on his dad's knee

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## Your children are welcome

Wedding flowers with guests, the couple and the bridesmaids out of focus in the background

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## When can I marry in church?



## Information for same sex couples

The interior of a church with the couple making their wedding vows

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## More than a wedding venue

simple flowers in jam jars on the ends of pews

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## Booking a church

A vicar laughing with a wedding couple

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## Meeting the vicar

A bride and groom being blessed by a vicar

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## **Seven steps to a heavenly wedding**

Inside a church. A church window with a lit candelabra in front of it

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## **Marriage after divorce**

A white wedding car stopped by a lychgate

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## If you live abroad

A wedding invitation with pink heart confetti on it

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## Information for foreign nationals

A bride holding her bouquet

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## Special licences



A wedding ring resting on an open Bible

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## **Common licences**

Looking up into a church roof

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## **Do we need a marriage licence?**

Some church flowers in focus in wider shot of church

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## Superintendent Registrars Marriage Schedule

A close-up of a couple holding hands

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## The cost of church weddings

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