

Guidance for the proforma letter to Superintendent Registrars from clergy for applications involving non-European Economic Area nationals

Attached is a proforma letter which can be used by clergy when writing a letter of support for couples involving a non-European Economic Area national to take with them when they serve notice for a Superintendent Registrar's Certificate (SRC).

The letter can be dropped into the headed notepaper of clergy or the church and completed as follows:-

Heading

To assist the Civil Registrars in knowing your letter does relate to the couple serving notice, it would be helpful to put their full names and address(es) in the heading of the letter, as well as the name and parish of your church, the address of your church and the date of the couple's wedding.

First paragraph

After receiving feedback, we have inserted a sentence required by the Civil Registrars to enable an application to proceed. You should insert the parish name in the space provided. We also refer to all the relevant legislation, for the avoidance of doubt.

Qualifying Connection(s)

Although the Civil Registrars do not need to know which specific qualifying connection the couple has with your church or parish, they do need to know the couple have at least one to enable them to marry in the relevant church. We thought a tick box system would be helpful so that the relevant qualifying connection(s) can be indicated easily and the Civil Registrars will know you have seen the appropriate paperwork or established there is a qualifying connection.

Validity Period

SRCs are automatically printed with a three month validity period when issued for Church of England marriages. This was done to fall in line with the other Church of England preliminaries to marriage. However, now that there is a possibility some cases may be referred to the Home Office, extending the notice period to 70 days, the three month validity period may not be sufficient.

We have been advised that the only way to circumvent the three month period is to expressly state in your letter of support that you are content to accept SRCs granted for 12 months which is why we have included it within the proforma letter.

Divorce

The Civil Registrars are aware that clergy can conscientiously object to a marriage proceeding in their church because of divorce. We have therefore included an additional sentence so that you can indicate your agreement to marry the couple if a previous marriage has ended in divorce. You will continue to need to use the Marriage in Church after Divorce questionnaire, but it does not need to be supplied to the Civil Registrars.

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