

# **Proposed changes to Shropshire Council's Registration Service**

## **Introduction**

Registration Services register all births, deaths, marriages, civil partnerships, and still births occurring in the County of Shropshire. Our services are currently provided from 9 different locations across the County in 9 towns: Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Bridgnorth, Whitchurch, Market Drayton, Ludlow, Wem, Bishops Castle, and Church Stretton.

Members of the public must make an appointment to attend to register a life event at one of these locations. Appointments are made either by telephone 0345 678 9016 or on-line at [www.shropshire.gov.uk](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk).

Alongside the statutory services which have to be provided, the service also provides a range of complimentary services including: Civil Naming Ceremonies, Civil Renewal of Vows Ceremonies and Civil Funerals.

## **Statutory responsibilities (The duties we have to do by law)**

- Register all births,
- Register all deaths,
- Register all still births
- Register all Civil and Religious marriages,
- Register all civil partnerships
- Issue certificates for present day and historic births, deaths and marriages
- Complete civil and religious marriage/civil partnership preliminaries
- To administer conversions from civil partnership to marriage for opposite sex couples
- To administer and deliver British Citizenship Ceremonies to newly naturalised people
- To report marriages or civil partnerships which they suspect are being entered into for the purpose of evading UK Immigration Law.
- Responsibility for the administration of the certification and registration of places for worship and religious marriages.
- To administer the Local Authority's approval process for licensing venues for civil marriage and civil partnerships.
- The service is required to meet or exceed national standards which are laid down by the Government, and a report has to be made to the General Register Office on an annual basis reporting on performance against these standards.
- The storage and issue of books of medical cause of death certificates to medical practitioners across the county in hospitals and medical practices.
- To provide advice to religious ministers if required across the county
- To provide advice and information to a range of other organisations.
- Provision of statistical information to the Government in order that it can plan its social and economic policies based on quantified evidence.

## **Service Change**

There have been a number of changes over the last few years, influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic and a need to respond differently to people's needs.

Shropshire council's registration service continually monitors demand and will make additional resource available if need be in fixed offices, for example:

- Oswestry – Wednesdays had been closed and has now been opened up to provide a full-time service instead of a part time service
- Bridgnorth – Now open full time with doubled capacity on Tuesdays and Thursdays
- Certificate production for historical certificates has been relocated to the Register Office at Shirehall, made possible by digital improvements.

However, when the service is looking to withdraw or cease service provisions will always consult with the public and other stakeholders.

### **The consultation**

We would like your views on proposals to cease offering access to registrar's services at our 3 peripatetic sites, at Wem Library, Church Stretton Library and Bishops Castle Enterprise House.

We would also like your views on changing the opening hours of our services in Whitchurch and Market Drayton.

### **The reasons behind the proposals: Bishops Castle, Church Stretton, Wem**

The closure of public buildings by direction of the government during the pandemic period had a considerable impact both on staff and on customers. The only Registration Office to be able to remain open throughout the pandemic was the register office in Shrewsbury, where all notices of marriage or civil partnership appointments and birth appointments had to be held.

There is a legal requirement to register deaths face to face within 5 days and the service has tried over the years to continue to have a presence in as many localities as possible. However, what has been shown is that people who may usually have opted to attend at one of the peripatetic offices, have been able to attend at fixed offices with ease and from this, that the peripatetic offices are no longer required.

The peripatetic services in Bishops Castle, Church Stretton and Wem have remained closed since March 2020 with no issues highlighted to Shropshire Council nor complaints received. We now seek to make these closures permanent.

We understand that this may give cause for concern, however where there is genuine need the registration service will attend at the homes of informants to carry out a domiciliary registration. These are extremely rare occurrences the domiciliary service is there for when it is needed.

### **Supporting materials**

Please visit Shropshire Council's website for supporting documents. Click 'Get Involved'

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Documents:

- An evidence document setting out why the proposals have been made; and
- Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessments (ESIHAs), demonstrating how we have considered the impact of these proposals.

### **Your feedback**

To inform decision making on the proposals, we would like your views. A survey is provided as a way of collecting feedback. If you would like the survey in an alternative format, please use the email below to request a copy or telephone Shropshire Council's Customer Services on 0345 678 9000 and explain any support you need to allow you to respond.

You can also respond to this consultation in writing:

**Email:** [TellUs@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:TellUs@shropshire.gov.uk)

**Post:** Feedback and Insight Team, Shropshire Council, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shropshire SY2 6ND.

## The Consultation Process

### 1. How did you find out about the consultation?

News article	
Shropshire Council's website	
Council emails or e-newsletter	
Shropshire Council's social media sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter)	
From communication direct from Registration Services	
Social media outside the council (e.g. Facebook, Twitter)	
From a local councillor	
From a town or parish council	
Word of mouth (e.g. friends, neighbours, relations)	
Did not find out any information	

Other, please describe.....

### 2. Please consider the Registration Service proposed changes. Please select the response that best reflects your opinion.

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know or no opinion
a	The statutory responsibilities of Registration Services are clearly explained.						
b	The proposed changes are clearly explained.						
c	The reasons and rationale for the changes are evidenced and explained within the supporting materials.						
d	The Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impacts Assessments provide clear evidence of equalities screening.						

## Bishop's Castle

### 3. What is your view regarding the following proposal.....?

To replace the current irregular service in Bishop's Castle with an undertaking for registration services to be provided at the home of anyone with genuine and compelling reasons why they are not able to attend a registration office to conduct their business?

Agree	
Neutral/ no opinion	
Disagree	

### 4. What is your view the proposal for the ceasing of peripatetic registration services in Bishop's Castle?

Agree	
Neutral/ no opinion	
Disagree	

5. Please use the space below for any comments relating to the proposed changes to Registration Services in Bishop's Castle:

## Church Stretton

6. What is your view regarding the following proposal....?

To replace the current irregular service in Church Stretton with an undertaking for registration services to be provided at the home of anyone with genuine and compelling reasons why they are not able to attend a registration office to conduct their business?

Agree	
Neutral/ no opinion	
Disagree	

7. What is your view on the proposal for the ceasing of peripatetic registration services in Church Stretton?

Agree	
Neutral/ no opinion	
Disagree	

8. Please use the space below for any comments relating to the proposed changes to Registration Services in Church Stretton:

## Wem

9. What is your view regarding the following proposal....?

To replace the current irregular service in Wem with an undertaking for registration services to be provided at the home of anyone with genuine and compelling reasons why they are not able to attend a registration office to conduct their business?

Agree	
Neutral/ no opinion	
Disagree	

10. What is your view on the proposal for the ceasing of peripatetic registration services in Wem?

Agree	
Neutral/ no opinion	
Disagree	

- 11. Please use the space below for any comments relating to the proposed changes to Registration Services in Wem:**

## **Market Drayton**

- 12. What is your view on our proposal to condense the number of days on which the Market Drayton registration office is open from 3 to 2 with opening hours extended to 6 hours per day instead of the current arrangement of 4 hours per day?**

Agree	
Neutral/ no opinion	
Disagree	

- 13. Please use the space below for any comments relating to the proposed changes to Registration Services in market Drayton**

## **Whitchurch**

- 14. What is your view on our proposal to condense the number of days on which the Whitchurch registration office is open from 3 to 2 with opening hours extended to 6 hours per day instead of the current arrangement of 4 hours per day?**

Agree	
Neutral/ no opinion	
Disagree	

- 15. Please use the space below for any comments relating to the proposed changes to Registration Services in Whitchurch:**

## Service Change Proposals

**16. Overall, how do you feel about the changes suggested?**

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Neither agree nor disagree	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

**If you selected disagree or strongly disagree, please use the space below to explain any concerns you may have.**

Shropshire Council has carried out Equalities, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessments for the proposed changes. These are to ensure that people of different protected characteristic groups are not adversely impacted by any changes delivered as a result of implementation. Issues of diversity and equality and health are important, and an increasing area of focus with costs of living increases.

**17. Please use the space below if you have any other comments to make about the proposed changes and their impact.**

**18. Please use the space below for any suggestions or anything else you would like to add.**

## About you

The next questions are more personal and are about you. You do not have to complete this section if you don't want to (all questions are optional). We do not use this information to identify individuals but to make sure people of all different characteristics have been engaged in the survey and that the feedback we have is representative. We collect equality and social inclusion information to help us in our work to ensure we do not discriminate and are delivering services to all sections of our community. We have asked additional questions in this survey because consideration of marriage and partnerships, religion and belief are important for Registration Services.

### 19. Have you used any of the services offered by Shropshire Council's Registration Services?

Yes, within the last 12 months

Yes, not in the last 12 months but within the last 2 years

Yes, not in the last 2 years but previously

No, never


### 20. How are you responding to this survey?

As an individual/ member of the public

As an organisation or business with an interest in Registration Services

As a town or parish council or other elected representative (e.g. Shropshire Councillor)


Other, please describe.....

### 21. Are you?

Female

Male

Other (e.g. prefer to self-describe)

Prefer not to say


### 22. Which age group are you within?

15 or under

16-24

25-34

35-44

45- 54

65-74

75-84

85+

Prefer not to say


### 23. Do you have any long-standing illness or disability that limits your daily activity and may impact on your use of Registration Services?

Yes

No

Prefer not to say


If you have any comments on the accessibility of Registration Services, or issues you would like us to consider to improve access please use the space below:

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**24. Do you belong to any particular religion or hold particular beliefs?**

Christian	
MuslimBuddhist	
Hindu	
Sikh	
Judaism	
No Religion	
Prefer not to say	

Other Religion (Please state) .....

**25. Which of the following best describes your marital status?**

Single, never married or in a civil partnership	
Legally separated	
Married, 1st and only marriage	
Remarried, 2nd or later marriage	
Divorced	
Widowed	
A Civil Partner	
A former Civil Partner	
A surviving Civil Partner	
Not applicable	
Prefer not to say	

**26. Which Shropshire town is the nearest to where you live?**

Bishops Castle	
Bridgnorth	
Broseley	
Church Stretton	
Cleobury Mortimer	
Clun	
Craven Arms	
Ellesmere	
Ludlow	
Market Drayton	
Much Wenlock	
Oswestry	
Shifnal	
Shrewsbury	
Wem	
Whitchurch	
Other (including out of county)	
Prefer not to say	



## **How we will use your information**

This survey is anonymous, and we should not be able to identify you from your responses.

The information you have provided will be used by Shropshire Council's Registration Services and used to inform Shropshire Council's service provision. Your information may be shared within Shropshire Council but your data will not be shared with any third parties. We will only publish anonymised responses, parts of responses, or a summarized version of responses and will ensure individual survey respondents cannot be identified. Your response will be stored and kept in line with Shropshire Council's Retention Schedule.

Your information will be held securely. We comply with data protection laws concerning the protection of personal information, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). For more information on how information is held by Shropshire Council and your rights to gain access to the information we hold on you please see our corporate privacy policy at

[www.shropshire.gov.uk/privacy](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/privacy)

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.**