

Ceremony at an Approved Premises.

What will happen on the day?

It's perfectly normal to be nervous on the day of your ceremony, but remember we are here to guide and reassure you and to make sure everything runs smoothly. With this in mind we have prepared this guide to what will happen on the day. Having read it if you still have any questions please don't hesitate to contact the ceremonies section who will be happy to help you.

Before the ceremony:

- Half an hour before your ceremony is scheduled to begin the celebrant (the person conducting the ceremony) and registrar (the person responsible for the paperwork) will arrive at the venue and make their way to the room in which the ceremony is to be conducted.
- During this first 30 minutes the celebrant and registrar will need to meet with both of you to check a few details and to ensure you are both clear on the running order of the ceremony. This is generally organised by the member of staff from the venue who is organising things on the day.
- Don't worry, you won't need to provide any documentation. This is simply an informal chat, to make sure the details that we have are correct and that you are both happy with the arrangements that have been made. If you do not wish to see your partner before the ceremony we will meet you separately either in the ceremony room or elsewhere within the venue – whatever suits you best.
- It is also useful if, before the ceremony begins, the celebrant is able to speak to any guests who will be doing readings to make sure they are clear on what is required of them.
- If either or both of you are making a formal entrance into the room at the start of the ceremony the arrangements for this will be made beforehand by the celebrant and in conjunction with the staff at the venue.

During the ceremony:

- Ordinarily the two of you will stand for the duration of the ceremony but if this will be difficult for you please mention this to the celebrant beforehand.
- Remember that you do not need to learn the words of the vows you have chosen to exchange. The celebrant will break each sentence up into small manageable chunks and you will need to simply repeat the words they say when you are instructed to do so. We know that many people can find this part of the ceremony nerve-wracking so the celebrant will say the words slowly and clearly.

- If you have chosen 'Optional Vows' the celebrant will prompt the two of you to say these words to each other at the appropriate point during the ceremony. In the event that you do not have a copy of the words to read from the celebrant will be happy to provide you with them. You will say these words to each other without the celebrant saying them first. If nerves get the better of you on the day and you decide you no longer wish to exchange these optional vows don't worry, just mention it to the celebrant before the ceremony.
- Any guests who are doing readings during the ceremony will be called up to the front of the room by the celebrant at the appropriate point.

After the ceremony:

- Once the ceremony is over the two of you will be asked to check and sign the register or schedule. This will normally take place in the same room in which the ceremony has been conducted.
- In most circumstances the celebrant will ask that the couple and their witnesses all sign the register or schedule before photographs are taken. These will usually be 'mocked-up' allowing your photographer to compose the scene they wish to shoot without interference.
- An opportunity will be given for guests to also take photos in the room if you so wish.
- Once all photography has been completed the celebrant will say a few words of congratulations and conclude the ceremony. If the two of you intend to make a formal exit from the room this will be announced as requested.
- In the case of a marriage ceremony the certificate will be issued to you at the end of the ceremony. In the case of a civil partnership ceremony the certificate must be printed out and so will be posted to you within a few days.

Remember that we are here to help make sure your day is as special as you would want it to be. We hope that this guide has answered some of the questions that you may have had about your ceremony. However if you still have any queries that you would like to ask us please don't hesitate to get in touch with our ceremonies team either by email (registeroffice@manchester.gov.uk) or telephone (0161 234 5005).