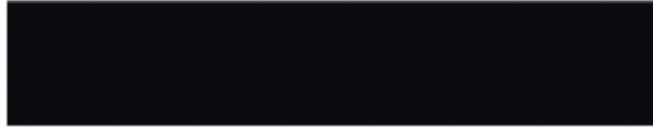


Your reference



Our reference

Date 17 July 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: The Introduction of Same-Sex Religious Marriages in Northern Ireland

As you will be aware legislation was introduced on 13 January 2020, allowing for civil same sex marriage ceremonies to be performed in Northern Ireland.

Further legislative changes are being introduced to allow for religious same sex marriages to be performed as well. The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2020 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2020/742/contents/made>) were laid yesterday and will be enacted on the 1st September 2020.

The new Regulations state that religious bodies must register its officiants to carry out marriages in Northern Ireland. This registration must come from either 'the Churches Governing Body' or the 'person recognized by members of the body as competent for the purpose of giving consent, in respect of the body'.

Therefore, although your church has officiants currently registered with the General Register Office to carry out opposite sex marriages, I am writing to you so that we may update the officiant database with your church's preferences for performing all types of marriages.

Please find enclosed a form for you to complete and return with any relevant names and addresses to this office by 17th August 2020. Please use the enclosed stamped addressed envelope.

If we do not receive any response by this date, it will be assumed that you and other members of the church no longer wish to be registered as officiants for any type of marriage. We will cancel the registrations on the officiant database accordingly, and you will not be able to carry out any marriage ceremonies in Northern Ireland.

You should email this office at gro_nisra@finance-ni.gov.uk if you have any questions in relation to this matter.

Yours faithfully

Darren Newberry

Darren Newberry
Casework & Registration Section

