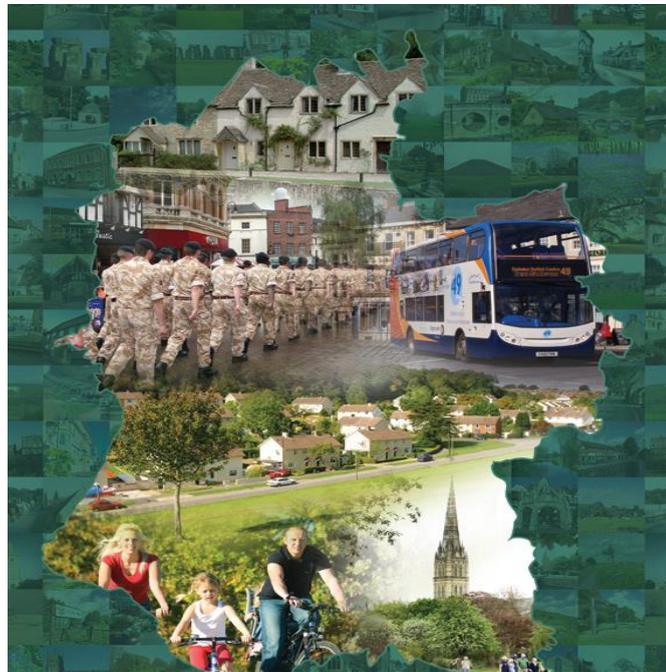


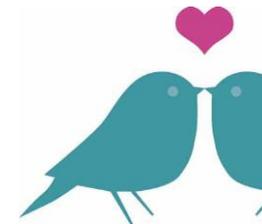
## Wiltshire Registration Service

# Annual Report and Service Delivery Plan



April 2019

Wiltshire Council  
Where everybody matters



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# WELCOME

Welcome to the Wiltshire Registration Service, Annual Report and Service Delivery Plan – April 2019.

## Wiltshire Registration Service

This has been quite an eventful year for the Council as a whole and for the Registration Service following the serious Novichok incident on 4 March 2018 and the impact it had on service delivery in the south of the county. In April 2018, following the poisoning incident a large part of the Bourne Hill building which housed the police station and other council services had to be closed for decontamination meaning that many of the staff who normally work in the affected part of the building had to be squeezed into space normally solely occupied by the Registration Service.

One of the two ceremony rooms had to be relinquished to be used as office space, the reception area was also seconded as the main reception for every department housed in the building and the waiting area utilized for all types of appointments not just registration customers. This was a difficult time for every department of the council based in the building and it is a credit to all staff that they made the best of this difficult situation ensuring customer service remained the top priority at all times.

Unfortunately, the loss of a ceremony room impacted on the ability of the service to offer choice to couples who wished to marry in Bourne Hill, Salisbury. A number of ceremony bookings were lost and it is impossible to say how many potential ceremony bookings were not made because of the disruption within the building. Our statistics show that our ceremony bookings were down by approximately 90 ceremonies over the previous year.

The ceremony room was finally returned to our department at the beginning of September 2018 however the following week we faced another major blow when the second, larger, ceremony room was closed for four months due to a major leak which caused the ceiling to partially collapse.

The Salisbury team coped admirably during this very stressful and trying eight month period, led by their supportive Area Manager, Mrs Fiona Davey. We thank them for their quiet determination to get on with the job and meet our customers' expectations throughout this period of upheaval.

With this incident now in the past, bookings have started to pick up again up for the 2019/20 season and with the licensing of a third small ceremony room we are hoping that the summer of 2019 will be as busy as in previous years in our Salisbury area.

In all three main hubs we have welcomed several new ceremonies officers and said a sad farewell to others who have moved on to pastures new or retired completely. We also welcomed several new members of the Registration Customer Officers (our admin team) based in Trowbridge and Salisbury due to retirements and a job move. All three new team members have settled in well and are now fully established within their roles.

We are delighted to report a rise in registration performance rates during 2018/19 (measured monthly by the General Register Office for England and Wales). We are now registering 99% of births and birth declarations within 5 days of the request for an

appointment being made, 100% of still births within 2 days 100% of notice of marriage and civil partnerships within 5 days (the national standard is 100% within 10 days) and 88% of all deaths within five days. Improved performance has been a key delivery objective for 2018/19 and it is reassuring to see this improvement. This result is down to the hard work of the management team and staff, including our customer service partners, working together to ensure that there are sufficient appointments available to those who need them. In our customer survey this year 98% of respondents replied that they were seen at a time and location convenient to them. This is an exceptional achievement.

Three more registration officers enrolled on the NAP Level 5 Registration Qualification in April 2018. This is a two year modular course covering all aspects of Registration and general local authority (LA) practices and governance. Two other registrars completed the qualification in the summer of 2017 so this is our second cohort. The main aim of encouraging this self development is to raise the level of expertise within the service to provide a highly competent qualified and knowledgeable workforce and ensure that staff have the expertise and qualifications to be considered as future managers of the service. We have a further candidate starting the course in May 2019.

We are also very lucky in Wiltshire to have the expertise of our training officer who is our internal assessor for the course and our County Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages who had recently been appointed by the Local Registration Service Association (LRSA) as our internal verifier. Both officers in addition to working with our candidates for the duration of the course, will also be available to help and support candidates from other districts in the South West who plan to complete this qualification.

In April 2018 the service took part in a Directorate wide event. This was organized by a working team of representatives from each service within the directorate with the purpose of demonstrating how we can work together. A 'Dragon's Den' scenario enabled teams (with members from each service) to produce and present their new 'invention' to the 'Dragons' made up of the Director and Heads of Service. This was a really successful team building event, enjoyed by all and demonstrated that cross service working can make a difference.

During the summer months we were of course extremely busy conducting many ceremonies. The Combination ceremony packages have become ever more popular too due to the flexibility and choice they afford couples who want something just a little different. We have more information about this type of ceremony our ceremonies page on the website <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/registrations-combination-ceremonies>

In October 2018 our Certificate Team took part in the second Swindon and Wiltshire History Centre open day. This event proved very successful and our staff talked about their role, to members of the public, providing information on certificate production and the history of registration. They also produced a short quiz paper which proved very popular and provided some interesting facts to guests attending the event.

In November 2018 the Head of Service and the Superintendent Registrar attended the two day annual LRSA conference in Birmingham. The conference covered future developments in registration, good practice and possibilities of change coming in. There was a presentation on the proposed private bill (which has now become law) outlining changes in Marriage Law to include mother's details on marriage

registrations, to move to a schedule system of registration (electronic with the removal of marriage registers and hand written certificates) the introduction of hetero-sexual civil partnerships and a review of the process for still birth registrations. These changes in law have all obtained Royal Assent and some of the changes will be implemented before the end of 2019.

In November 2018 the Council ran an Employee Satisfaction Survey. Results were generally very positive across the council and we were pleased to note that within the service an extremely high proportion of staff stated that they felt fulfilled in their role, supported by their managers, felt that they provided an excellent service to our customers and stated they worked well with other departments within the council.

In December 2018 the service took part in a charity event 'A Christmas Cake-Off' organised within the Legal and Democratic Directorate. We had 21 entries to the competition with proceeds from the event amounting to £305 going to Julia's House, the local Children's Hospital based in Devizes.

During January, February and March 2019 we conducted our annual Customer Satisfaction Survey for birth, death, still birth, notice of marriage/civil partnership appointments, ceremonies and certificates. We had over 550 responses. The results have been collated independently by the Council's Knowledge Management and Census Liaison Manager and will be described in more detail later in this report.

On the 16 February 2019 the General Register office introduced new fees for certificates, simplifying the charges made. All certificates now cost £11 each with a £35 charge for a priority service. At the end of February Council also approved the recommended fees set for 2019/20. Whilst there has been a small necessary increase in fees, Wiltshire Registration Service remains exceptionally good value for money.

At the end of February 2019 we celebrated the successful completion of the NAP Level 3 qualification in Customer Service by our Apprentice. We congratulate Matthew on this great achievement and were delighted to be able to appoint him to a permanent position within the department as a Registration Customer Officer.

In the year April 2018 to March 2019 we have received 108 written compliments/thank you cards and letters with only 9 official complaints received throughout the whole year. Four complaints were upheld. We are extremely proud of our record and endeavor to do all that we can to ensure the service we provide is the best we can make it. Where we do fail to meet customer expectations we provide training and make changes to ensure the same problem is not encountered by anyone else.

In 2019/20 we will continue to provide a first class, cost effective service to the people of Wiltshire whilst continuing to look at ways we can provide more self-service 24/7 access to all our customers. Our plans for future development of the service are detailed later in this report.



**Ian Gibbons**  
**Proper Officer/  
Director Legal, Electoral and Registration Services**



**Alison Manning**  
**Head of Service, Registration**

## Introduction and Background

1. The Registration Service in Wiltshire is delivered by Wiltshire Council in partnership with the General Register Office. The council is legally obliged to provide for the registration of births and deaths, the attesting of the legal notices of marriage and civil partnership, the registering of marriages and civil partnerships, the custody of historic registers for births, deaths and marriages, the issue of copy certificates from these registers and citizenship ceremonies. The registration service also provides discretionary services including Tell Us Once, Welcoming and Celebration of Marriage ceremonies and plans to introduce a Change of Name Service later in 2019.

Tell Us Once' (TUO) provides an easily accessible service for those undertaking death registrations by informing the Department of Works and Pensions and various departments within the council about the death of a Wiltshire resident. Whilst it is a requirement that all registrations are recorded in part one of Tell Us Once, the enrichment stage (part 2) has been accessed by 89% of informants registering a death in Wiltshire. This is over 20% higher than the national average figure. Tell Us Once not only saves time and effort for our customers but also potentially saves the council thousands of pounds per annum in administration costs.

2. The Registration Service embraces the Performance targets, Public Protection and Counter Fraud guidance and Customer Engagement Strategy required by the General Register Office for England and Wales. Placing the customer at the centre of the service by measuring achievement against performance promotes an excellent understanding of what needs to be improved and how these improvements can be achieved. Performance improvement nationally has been a key issue for the General Register Office, for the last two years and will remain a key objective in 2019/20. In Wiltshire performance tables are completed monthly to provide evidence that we are addressing any issues which arise. Performance results for 2018/19 can be found on our website at: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/registrations-performance>.
3. Under the arrangements for local governance of the Registration Service, the Council has made a commitment to deliver the service to reflect local requirements, in line with the national standards set out in the Code of Practice and the Good Practice Guide issued by the General Register Office for England and Wales.
4. The Director of Legal, Electoral and Registration Services holds the statutory post of Proper Officer for the Registration District of Wiltshire. The Proper Officer is appointed by the council (under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972) to manage the registration service and has overall responsibility for the delivery of the service.
5. The Proper Officer, the Head of Service and senior managers' work in partnership with the General Register Office Compliance Department to ensure the highest standard of registration practice and service are achieved or where not met, have processes in place to work towards full compliance and achievement. We continually review our practices, and take into account comments from customers and the results of the annual customer satisfaction survey.
6. The Registration Service is committed to adhering to the corporate visions and values of Wiltshire council which are:
  - Protect those who are most vulnerable
  - Boost the local economy

- Bring communities together to enable and support them to do more for themselves.

Wiltshire Council endeavours to:

- place its residents first
- strengthen its communities
- adopt a 'can-do' approach in everything it does.

The registration service will contribute to the corporate ten year business plan by:

- Delivering registration services which achieve the highest levels of customer satisfaction and legal compliance whilst ensuring the service remains value for money, is cost effective and lean.
- Promoting and implementing digital changes to enable customers to help improve access to the service 24/7 by enabling them to book appointments online, pay for services and create their individual ceremony through the online ceremony arrangement planner.
- Develop commercial opportunities to expand income opportunities and help boost the local economy.

## Service Delivery

Wiltshire is a rural county, with many large and small market towns steeped in history and tradition. It is a popular place to live; it currently has the third oldest population in the country, with 100,000 of the 475,000 residents aged over 65, and this is set to increase. The County of Wiltshire is renowned throughout the world with its mysterious stone circles at Stonehenge and Avebury forming a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is home to nine white chalk horses, and of course Salisbury Cathedral which is home to one of only four surviving copies of the Magna Carta. The Magna Carta is over 800 years old and remains a cornerstone of the British Constitution to this day.

Wiltshire has one of the largest military populations in the country with over 30,000 personnel and their dependents living here. The military footprint has increased significantly and will continue to do so with the return of all armed forces personnel from Germany by 2020. With this influx of personnel and families we do foresee an increase in birth rates and possibly ceremonies within the county.

The service works very hard to implement, develop and refine systems and procedures to ensure we provide a consistently high standard and professional service to our clients. Part of this includes looking after and developing our staff. Staff regularly participate in training sessions both mandatory (governed by council policy) and elective, registration based sessions. Annual appraisals have been conducted during the year for all staff. During 2018/19 a cycle of technical assessments were conducted for all registration officers. The roll out of these technical assessments will continue to registration ceremony officers during the 2019 main ceremony season.

## Current Service Provision

The Register Office and main administrative centre for the Service is located in County Hall, **Bythesea** Road, Trowbridge. There are two further main Registration hubs, located in Salisbury and Chippenham and we also run 12 Outstations in locations around the county. An appointment system is in operation at all offices.

### Wiltshire Council Registration District of Wiltshire

**Proper Officer: Mr I Gibbons**

### MARRIAGES and CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS

To arrange to give notice of marriage or civil partnership please telephone **0300 003 4570**

<b>DISTRICT</b>	<b>HEAD OF SERVICE</b>	<b>SUPERINTENDENT REGISTRAR</b>	<b>MAIN OFFICES</b>	<b>ATTENDANCES</b>
Wiltshire	Mrs Alison Manning	Mrs Linda Foulkes	Wiltshire Register Office, County Hall, Trowbridge, BA14 8JN	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 09:00 to 16:30 hrs Thursdays 10:00 to 16:30 hrs Saturdays open for ceremonies and notices of marriage or civil partnership by appointment only.
			The Registration Office, Bourne Hill, Salisbury, SP1 3UZ	Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 09:00 to 16:00 hrs Tuesdays 10:00 to 16:00 hrs Saturdays open for ceremonies and notices of marriage or civil partnership by appointment only.
			The Registration Office, 4 Timber Street, Chippenham, SN15 3BZ	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 09:00 – 16:00 Wednesdays 10:00 to 16:00 hrs Saturdays open for ceremonies.

## REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS

To book an appointment to register a birth or death please telephone: **0300 003 4569**

DISTRICT	HEAD OF SERVICE	COUNTY REGISTRAR	MAIN OFFICES	ATTENDANCES
Wiltshire	Mrs Alison Manning	Mrs Fiona Davey	Wiltshire Register Office, County Hall, Trowbridge, BA14 8JN	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 09:00 to 16:30 hrs Thursdays 10:00 to 16:30 hrs
			The Registration Office, Bourne Hill, Salisbury, SP1 3UZ	Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 09:00 to 16:00 hrs Tuesdays 10:00 to 16:00 hrs
			The Registration Office, 4 Timber Street, Chippenham, SN15 3BZ	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 09:00 – 16:00 Wednesdays 10:00 to 16:00 hrs Saturdays open for ceremonies.

Statutory Services (birth and death registrations, notices of marriage and civil partnership) are also offered at our 12 outstation offices:

Calne	Thursday p.m.
Corsham	Tuesday p.m.
Devizes	Monday, Wednesday and Friday (a.m. only on Fridays)
Marlborough	Thursday
Malmesbury	Tuesday a.m.
Melksham	Tuesday p.m.
Mere	Thursday a.m.
Royal Wootton Bassett	Thursday a.m.
Salisbury District Hospital	Monday to Friday
Tidworth	Wednesday
Warminster	Tuesday and Thursday
Westbury	Tuesday p.m.

If a customer is unable to attend the Register Office in the district in which the birth or death occurred particulars of a **BIRTH** or **DEATH** may be given to **ANY** Registrar at **ANY** office location

throughout England and Wales who will pass this information on to the Registrar for the sub-district in which the birth or death occurred. It is the responsibility of the district where the birth or death occurred to issue the certificate.

All areas served by Wiltshire Registration Service are listed below:

1. Aldbourne and Ramsbury
2. Alderbury and Whiteparish
3. Amesbury East
4. Amesbury West
5. Bourne and Woodford Valley
6. Box and Colerne
7. Bradford on Avon North
8. Bradford on Avon South
9. Brinkworth
10. Bromham Rowde and Potterne
11. Bulford Allington and Figheldean
12. Burbage and The Bedwyns
13. By Brook
14. Calne Central
15. Calne Chilvester and Abberd
16. Calne North
17. Calne Rural
18. Calne South and Cherhill
19. Chippenham Cepen Park and Derriads
20. Chippenham Cepen Park and Redlands
21. Chippenham Hardenhuish
22. Chippenham Hardens and England
23. Chippenham Lowden and Rowden
24. Chippenham Monkton
25. Chippenham Pewsham
26. Chippenham Queens and Sheldon
27. Corsham Pickwick
28. Corsham Town
29. Corsham Without and Box Hill
30. Cricklade and Latton
31. Devizes and Roundway South
32. Devizes East
33. Devizes North
34. Downton and Ebble Valley
35. Durrington and Larkhill
36. Ethandune
37. Fovant and Chalke Valley
38. Hilperton
39. Holt and Staverton
40. Kington
41. Laverstock Ford and Old Sarum
42. Ludgershall and Perham Down
43. Lyneham
44. Malmesbury
45. Marlborough East
46. Marlborough West
47. Melksham Central
48. Melksham North
49. Melksham South
50. Melksham Without North
51. Melksham Without South

52. Mere
53. Minety
54. Nadder and East Knoyle
55. Pewsey
56. Pewsey Vale
57. Purton
58. Redlynch and Landford
59. Roundway
60. Royal Wootton Bassett East
61. Royal Wootton Bassett North
62. Royal Wootton Bassett South
63. Salisbury Bemerton
64. Salisbury Fisherton and Bemerton Village
65. Salisbury Harnham
66. Salisbury St Edmund and Milford
67. Salisbury St Francis and Stratford
68. Salisbury St Mark's and Bishopdown
69. Salisbury St Martin's and Cathedral
70. Salisbury St Paul's
71. Sherston
72. Southwick
73. Summerham and Seend
74. The Collingbournes and Netheravon
75. The Lavingtons and Erlestoke
76. Tidworth
77. Till and Wylde Valley
78. Tisbury
79. Trowbridge Adcroft
80. Trowbridge Central
81. Trowbridge Drynham
82. Trowbridge Grove
83. Trowbridge Lambrook
84. Trowbridge Park
85. Trowbridge Paxcroft
86. Urchfont and The Cannings
87. Warminster Broadway
88. Warminster Copheap and Wylde
89. Warminster East
90. Warminster West
91. Warminster Without
92. West Selkley
93. Westbury East
94. Westbury North
95. Westbury West
96. Wilton and Lower Wylde Valley
97. Winsley and Westwood
98. Winterslow

## CERTIFICATES OF BIRTH, DEATH AND MARRIAGE

To obtain a certificate of a birth, death or marriage which occurred in Wiltshire please telephone **0300 003 4571**

The centralised repository is located at the Swindon and Wiltshire History Centre in Chippenham. A dedicated team produces copy certificates and carries out related historical searches and maintenance tasks on the closed registers.

To obtain a certificate of a birth, death, marriage or civil partnership which occurred outside of Wiltshire but within England or Wales, please contact the General Register Office for England and Wales on **0300 123 1837** or the Superintendent Registrar for the district in which the event occurred.

## CEREMONIES

County Hall, Trowbridge has two ceremony rooms and operates as an approved venue. Full details of our ceremony rooms can be found at <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/registrations-ceremonies>

The statutory Register Office ceremony room is also located in County Hall, Trowbridge. It can be booked for a short legal civil marriage or civil partnership ceremony on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings only. These ceremonies are restricted to the couple and TWO witnesses.

The Chippenham and Salisbury registration offices also offer beautiful ceremony rooms which can also be viewed at the above website address. The Salisbury office has from 1 April 2019 opened a small ceremony room named The Study which will accommodate the bride and groom and up to 12 guests. It can be booked on a Monday morning or a Thursday afternoon.

Wiltshire currently has 76 Approved Venues licensed for marriages and civil partnerships. <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/registrations-approved-venues> provides a full list of our licensed venues with hyperlinks to their individual websites. We also advertise forthcoming wedding fayres hosted by our venues on this page.

Citizenship ceremonies are held in the main offices at Trowbridge, Chippenham and Salisbury. Private citizenship ceremonies can be booked on request for an additional fee.

## APPOINTMENTS

An appointment system is operated for all registrations. Customers can make appointments to visit the office of their choice at their convenience during opening times, to register events and give notice of marriage/civil partnership.

## OUT OF HOURS

An out-of-hours emergency service is available for burial within 24 hours or to facilitate a Registrar General's Licence marriage to take place. In these situations, customers are advised to contact their funeral director, hospital, nursing/care home or hospice, all of whom have access to registration managers' contact details. This advice is also displayed at the entrance to each of the three main offices and on the council's website.

## GENERAL

The website also provides further information for the public on emergency registration requirements in addition to general information regarding the services provided during normal working hours.

The Registration Service is managed by the Management Team, led by the Head of the Registration Service (Proper Officer's Representative) who reports directly to the Proper Officer.

The Head of Service is tasked with:

- Delivering cost effective, accessible registration services whilst maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction and remaining legally compliant.
- Expanding income opportunities and boosting the local economy through innovation and partnership working.
- contribute to savings proposals for 19/20 council budget.
- Digital programme – Explore opportunities for greater use of digitization to generate efficiencies and improvements for customers accessing our services.

## The Service Teams

1. **The Head of Service, Registration** reports directly to the Proper Officer and is responsible for strategic planning including identifying and developing initiatives and strategies which keep the service fit for purpose, adaptable to change and cost effective. She has control and responsibility for the service budget. She works in collaboration with other key stakeholders and departments across the council, and wider community. She is tasked to provide joined up, efficient customer focused services whilst ensuring the highest quality of registration practice is maintained at all times. She measures Key Performance Target's against the Good Practice Guide standards produced by the General Register Office; identifies risks to the service and develops opportunities to generate income. She is responsible for ensuring Business Continuity at all times, she produces the Departmental Annual Report and Development Plan, submits annual returns to the General Register Office for England and Wales and heads up publicity and marketing for the department. She also provides strategic support for the Coronial Service and Lord Lieutenant's Office is responsible for their budget expenditure digital and service development.
- 2.
3. **Superintendent Registrar/Area Manager Central** undertakes the statutory responsibilities of the post and provides leadership, guidance and direction to operational staff to achieve the highest standards of technical registration practice and customer service. She is responsible for the repository which houses all of Wiltshire's deposited (archived) registers, and secure stock. Additionally, she is the registered Data Controller for the service. She is Area Manager for the central team based in Wiltshire Register Office, Trowbridge and surrounding outstations. She ensures the full range of statutory and discretionary registration Services are delivered within the statutory timeframes, that staffing levels are adequate to meet demand and is also responsible for the daily cash recording.
4. **County Registrar for Births, Deaths and Marriages/Area Manager South** undertakes the statutory responsibilities of the post and provides leadership,

guidance and direction to achieve the highest standards of registration practice and customer service across the county. She completes assessments of officers who register births, deaths and marriages. She holds the statutory responsibility for all current registers and secure stock. She is also Area Manager for the Southern team based in Bourne Hill, Salisbury and surrounding outstations. She ensures the full range of statutory and discretionary registration Services are delivered within the statutory timeframes, that staffing levels are adequate to meet demand and is also responsible for the daily cash recording. She is also the district's internal verifier for the Registration NAP Level 5 qualification.

5. **Area Manager North** manages the Northern Team based in Timber Street, Chippenham and surrounding outstations. She ensures the full range of statutory and discretionary registration Services are delivered within the statutory timeframes, that staffing levels are adequate to meet demand and is also responsible for the daily cash recording.
6. **Ceremonies and Licensing Officer** is responsible for licensing and re-licensing of civil Approved Venues throughout the county. This officer manages the ceremony rota for staff. She is also responsible for organising the monthly British citizenship ceremonies at Chippenham, Salisbury and Trowbridge, liaising with the Lord Lieutenancy Office and the local mayors to ensure a dignitary is always available to attend these important events. She is line manager to the Registration Customer Officer team, based in our offices at Chippenham, Salisbury and Trowbridge.
7. **The Training Officer** identifies, develops, coordinates and delivers appropriate training for all members of the team. She works with other Local Authorities and National Registration training bodies to improve registration standards. She is also an Internal Assessor for City and Guilds registered NAP level 5 in Registration. In addition to her training and assessor role she undertakes registration duties two days per week.
8. **Registration Officers:** Multi-skilled practitioners who carry out the daily registration appointments at each location in addition to the weekday ceremonies and are fully trained in all areas of service delivery including registrations of births, still births and deaths, attesting notices of marriage and civil partnership, conducting statutory and discretionary ceremonies, issuing certificates, undertaking corrections and all other related statutory tasks. They deliver the Tell Us Once service and also conduct our British Citizenship ceremonies at our main offices in Chippenham, Salisbury and Trowbridge.
9. **Registration Customer Officers** are the initial point of contact for customers. They book appointments, take ceremony bookings, undertaking all associated matrimonial clerical tasks, process payments, answer registration queries and carry out all other related registration administrative tasks.
10. **The Certificate Team**, based at the Swindon and Wiltshire History Centre, report directly to the Superintendent Registrar. They are responsible for checking and recording certificate applications, taking payments, issuing copy certificates from deposited registers, maintenance of registers and administration duties. They are also responsible for identifying and reporting any potential fraudulent certificate applications.
11. **Registration Officers (Ceremonies)** deliver and register marriage and civil partnership ceremonies throughout the county. They also deliver our discretionary ceremonies which include combination ceremonies, welcoming ceremonies and celebration of marriage/civil partnership ceremonies.

## Customer Service

1. The Service places the customer at the heart of everything we do. We have developed a customer engagement strategy
2. <R:\Management\Ops Man\Annual Report & Service Dev Plan\April 2019\ToGRO\CustomerEngagementStrategyversion3.0Mar19.docx> which we adhere to and also a customer charter which can be found at: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/registrations-performance>
3. Calls to book birth and death appointments are managed by specially trained customer service officers within the Council's Customer Services Department.
4. Ceremonies, Citizenship calls and queries are controlled and managed by our Registration Customer Officers at each main Registration Office.
5. Calls for certificate services go directly to the Certificate Officers who process applications and payments face to face or via the telephone.
6. We have easy to use e-forms for couples to submit their ceremony arrangements plan online. This system works with our Stopford Agenda booking system. Couples simply log in (using their booking reference) and they can have access to their booking, ceremony choices, and full ceremony script 24/7. This allows for greater flexibility for the customer as they can edit and make changes to their choices up to three weeks before their ceremony.
7. Appointment times have been set to provide the best service to customers within the current financial constraints. Death registration appointments including TUO parts 1 and 2 last 50 minutes to ensure an accurate registration can be achieved and customers are not rushed at this important time. Birth registration appointments remain at 30 minutes.
8. Notices of Marriage are allocated 20 minutes per notice.
9. The service has a very good working relationship with the Coroner and his officers. Relationships with other key stakeholders including Salisbury District Hospital bereavement unit, hospices, care homes, GP surgeries, undertakers and approved venues are all positive and well maintained through regular contact and information bulletins produced and sent out by the County RBD.
10. The service can provide teams to conduct ceremonies outside of normal working hours if required. Information on fees for ceremonies is published on the council website. <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/registrations-service-fees>

## Customer Satisfaction Survey

The annual customer satisfaction surveys were conducted on SNAP, which is the host site the council use. The service overall customer satisfaction rate as per the survey conducted in from Jan – March 2019 was exceptionally good.

The surveys were conducted for all registration appointments Birth Death, Notice of Marriage/Civil Partnership and ceremonies in all our offices including outstations, from January to March 2019 we had 552 electronic responses.

The advantages of this approach were:

- The Survey was sent immediately at the end of the appointment.
- Reassurance could be given to customers during the face to face interview that the council would not use their email details for any other purpose.
- The results were available as percentages and able to be put straight in to the GRO annual report.
- An electronic spreadsheet was also available for more in-depth analysis to assist the service.
- No-one had to collate the replies.
- There was a high response rate.
- In all appointments 100% of customers indicated that the Registration procedure was explained to them and in 99% of cases, the customers felt that their questions had been answered fully.
- 99% of customers were either satisfied or very satisfied with the general politeness, friendliness, helpfulness and knowledge displayed by the Registration Officer. Resulting in a 100% score of the service being rated Satisfactory to Excellent (Excellent = 92%)

## Suggestions and Complaints Procedures and Plaudits

Wiltshire Council has a corporate complaints policy which can be found on the Council website.

1. When a complaint is received into the service it will be acknowledged within 48 hours of receipt and will initially be investigated and responded to by the Head of Service, Registration. If the complainant is unhappy with the outcome the Proper Officer will review and respond. If the complainant is still dissatisfied this can be taken to Stage 3 of the formal complaints procedure and finally an appeal can be made to the Local Government Ombudsman. During 2018/19 nine formal written complaints were received by the Registration Service, three of which were upheld. We value this feedback, implementing, where appropriate, new measures to ensure the service meets needs of our customers.
2. Suggestions are always welcomed and customer comment cards are available within all Offices for anyone wishing to comment on any aspect of the service they have received. All comments are reviewed by the Service Management team and acted upon where appropriate.
3. Letters and cards of thanks are kept in a plaudits file within the office. Many are also displayed on our notice board in the waiting areas of our main offices. In 2018/19

we received 109 thank you cards and letters.

## Performance Monitoring and Service Standards

1. The Council actively seeks to provide a customer focused and cost-effective service which meets statutory requirements and the standards within the Good Practice Guide (GPG). A copy of the performance target results for the period April 2018 to March 2019 can be found at: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/registrations-performance>
2. The registration service is required to submit Section 24 reports in relation to any suspicious marriages. Staff are also required to complete the mandatory e-learning training on Sham marriages on an annual basis. A record is kept of the number of Section 24 reports submitted and included in the monthly statistics and appear on the Performance Targets Table at the end of this report. Since the implementation of Part II of the Immigration Act 2014, the number of sham marriage reports have decreased significantly in this district. There were no sham marriage reports submitted during 2018/19. Most suspected sham marriages are identified and dealt with by the Home Office and designated districts before they attend a marriage ceremony in our district. This does not mean to say that staff have become complacent, all staff are advised if they have any concerns about a marriage they are conducting to complete and submit a report immediately.
3. The Certificate team exercise competence and confidence in the use of the GRO Guide to Reporting Suspicious Applications for Birth Certificates. A system is in place to record electronically details of all requests so patterns and multiple applications from one address are easily identified. A similar reporting system is in place for lost in post certificates. Where the death of a child has occurred in the district, and the birth was also recorded in Wiltshire, we now automatically annotate the birth record with the details of the death registration (register number and entry number and RON reference). This highlights the need for caution if a birth registration entry is then later requested. Any suspicious applications are recorded and GRO notified. There have been two suspicious applications recorded and reported during 2018/19.
4. The Wiltshire Registration Service ensures all members of the registration service team meet all legal responsibilities and obligations in respect of the security and sharing of data, including the integrity and security of the RON system. The Superintendent Registrar is our data controller and is licensed with the OIC.
5. A robust system is in place, overseen by the Ceremonies and Licensing Officer to manage the licensing of approved venues for marriage and civil partnership. Controls are in place governing the expiry dates and renewal process for re-licencing. The venue license fee will increase in 2019/2020 by £100 this follows no uplift over the previous four years.
6. An efficient, well documented system is in place for reminders to register outstanding births after 28 days with a second reminder plus appointment date and time sent at 35 days before a requisition is issued after 42 days.
7. A county wide system for managing re-registrations is in place and monitored on a weekly basis by the County Registrar.

## The Registration Service will:

- Continually strive to improve services as a result of self-assessment, and measured performance adhering to the national criteria outlined by the General Register Office for England and Wales.
- Provide a value for money, cost effect, professional and efficient service.
- Listen to, value and use customer feedback, both positive and negative, to identify good service and practice, monitor performance, make improvements to service standards and increase customer satisfaction.
- Continue to signpost services for the people of Wiltshire.
- Ensure that we as a council service can communicate with all people wishing to use the service by providing information in languages other than English where requested.
- The management team will continue to ensure that the Service responds promptly to legislative and technical changes, providing guidance and relevant training where required. The team also regularly review and update policies and procedures to ensure delivery remains at the high standard we have set ourselves as a district.
- The Registration Service has formally adopted the National Technical Standards as the standards against which assessments will be made. Technical assessments are conducted for all registration officers and registration officers (Ceremonies). The process was completed for Registration Officers in October 2018. It will be run for registration officer (ceremonies) during the summer of 2019.
- Registration standards of professional practice are achieved through quarterly copy checking, monitoring corrections, annual appraisals and technical assessments.
- The Head of Service, Registration monitors the key performance targets (KPTs) on a monthly basis. In addition to the Performance Target results a monthly scorecard is completed on the key main statutory requirements and the details are presented by the Proper Officer to a group of Cabinet and Portfolio holders on a quarterly basis. The risk register is also completed and reviewed quarterly (or more frequently if a specific event or problem has arisen) as required by the council to be submitted to the corporate risk register on all identified risks which could affect delivery.
- Any areas of weakness will be addressed by the management team and actions agreed and implemented where it is within the remit of the service to do so.
- The annual report and service delivery plan, customer survey summary and performance target results can all be viewed on the council website. The business continuity plan, staff survey and risk register are not published due to the 'restricted' content of the documents. Copies of all are held corporately and are accessible on the Registration drive of the council's computer system.

## Staff Development & Training

1. Staff development and training continues to be treated as a high priority, despite budget constraints. Delivery of in-house training is conducted by our Training Officer.
2. All registration staff receive an annual appraisal as required by the Council which take into account the Council's Behaviours Framework. Appraisal objectives are linked to the service delivery plan and the personal and technical development of the individual. Training needs are identified and forwarded to the Training and Development Officer.
3. The Registration Service Training and Development Officer's first priority is to provide high quality training and support for newly appointed officers, to act as assessor for students undertaking the NAP Level 5 qualification in Registration and to assist the County RBD in technical assessments of all registration officers.
4. Training and development is provided to meet the needs of established personnel and respond to changes in legislation and new initiatives.
5. General Register Office training tools are used for training delivery and assessment of Registration officers. Staff are encouraged to use the e-learning modules as part of their continued professional development and as a means of consolidating learning.

## Current Threats and Challenges to Service Delivery

Finance and budget control: Currently the council is still faced with major budget restrictions and is required to implement efficiency savings. The registration service continues to function within its annual budget projections making the necessary savings required by the Corporate Leadership Team.

Whilst the current constraints may mean a re-evaluation of what we can realistically offer, we see this as an opportunity to explore new ways of working whilst aiming to grow the business side of the service. All statutory duties continue to be undertaken as required by the General Register Office for England and Wales.

Competition: Like many other districts we have found that independent celebrants continuing to offer non legal ceremonies within the district can be challenging as occasionally their literature can prove confusing to some customers. We are however an adaptable organisation and have already reviewed, updated and enhanced our ceremonies to offer more choice to couples planning their ceremony in Wiltshire, with the added selling point that they will be legally married to one another when using our services.

## Service Development Targets for 2019/2020

- Introduce online payments for the majority of services.
- Contribute to savings proposals for 19/20 council budget.
- Digital programme – Explore opportunities for greater use of digitization to generate efficiencies and improvements for customers including the introduction of online payments for the majority of services we offer.
- Commercial – develop further income generating opportunities through advertising.
- Increase the use of social media and the website to promote the services we offer.
- Introduce a new ceremonies brochure and pdf for the website and look at enhancing and exploring additional marketing opportunities.
- Explore working with Wiltshire Tourism to promote the services we offer at venues throughout the county.
- Continue to monitor performance and improvement to ensure we are offering the best service possible to our clients and providing appointments in a timely manner to ensure we meet the statutory timeframes.
- Continue to attend wedding fayres at Approved Venues, promoting new venues to help them establish a good clientele base.

The Registration Service is committed to providing the highest standards of technical registration and customer service responding to the changing needs of the customer within the tight financial constraints faced by the Council.

The key targets for the year are:

1. Continue to work on improving performance results around death registrations within the specified statutory targets. In 2018/19 we raised our performance rates by 8% to 88% we would like to achieve 90% during 2019/20.
2. Continue to develop the skills, competence and confidence of all staff employed within the registration service to plan for promotional opportunities and future proofing of the service.
3. Introduce online payment facilities for certificates, ceremony fees and private citizenship ceremonies.
4. Remain flexible, with a can do attitude – work with our couples to provide a more individual service.
5. Ensure all staff training is up to date including technical assessments for registration officers.
6. Comply with standards set by the General Register Office with regards to performance targets, data protection, fraud and sham marriages and customer engagement strategy. Ensure policies and procedures are updated and evidence recorded and available for scrutiny by GRO Account manager.
7. Review current customer satisfaction survey results. Use the information collated from customer satisfaction surveys, customer demand, market research, complaints and comments to improve, develop and market the registration service. Publish customer satisfaction survey results and key performance target information.
8. Explore income opportunities through enabling associated stakeholders to advertise on our webpages.
9. Continue to make the best use of ICT and the Stopford booking system, to improve efficiency and help to streamline processes and procedures.
10. Regularly review our fee structure through benchmarking to ensure that we remain competitive and value for money to our customers.
11. Encourage and help more establishments to join us as Approved Venues.
12. Monitor the income and expenditure closely in order to manage the Service within a reduced budget and increased income targets during the

coming year; continue to be proactive in seeking income generating opportunities.

## Accounting and Stock Control

Wiltshire Registration Service has its main repository situated within the Swindon and Wiltshire History Centre where all archived registers and secure certificate stock are held. The register office and each registration office hub has two fire proof safes'. The first has restricted access for Senior Registration Officers and Registration Officers only and holds birth, still birth and death registers and associated stock. The other safe is for Registration Customer Officers and this holds current marriage registers and certificates. There are several lockable cabinets in each office for all non-secure stock. The Chippenham office also has a small repository.

These cabinets and safes are kept locked at all times and there is restricted access to the Registrars individual offices. Access can only be achieved by a swipe entry system or key punch system depending on the office concerned.

Registration officers transfer completed register pages into the current register at the conclusion of each registration appointment.

Disposal certificates are clearly annotated as to the address the Part C should be returned to and each registration officer holds and checks their own counterfoils. The county Registrar is accountable for all current secure stock and has set up an excel spreadsheet system which each Registration Officer completes to keep records of all stock up to date – this is checked weekly by the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages. Spot checks are carried out by senior managers on all stock to ensure all certificates are accounted for. This too is recorded on the system.

When new stock is received, it is the county registrar and senior registration officers' responsibility to check the serial numbers of each pack of certificates and then respond to the General Register Office that the correct stock has been received. The new stock serial numbers are then added to the electronic stock checking system. As each book of certificates is taken into circulation, individual certificate checks are conducted and the officer taking the pack into circulation enters the date onto the electronic system. Regular spot checks on numbers of packs will be introduced as per the suggestion made during the most recent audit of the service in March 2017 by the General Register Office for England and Wales we are expecting another audit to be held during the current financial year.

An annual return is made to GRO to monitor the secure stock issued and retained. Stock ordering of secure and non-secure stock is submitted in March each year.

All other financial arrangements, cash handling, banking and monitoring procedures are audited by the Council's Audit team.

## Risk Assessments

All risks are re-assessed quarterly and updated or added to the Council's corporate Risk Register by the Head of Service. This Register is constantly monitored by the council's Performance, Risk and Scrutiny team who can review measures taken by the service at any time. The Risk Register can be viewed by the GRO Compliance Manager on request.

## Business/Service Continuity Plans

The Service has an overarching business continuity plan which links into the Council's main business continuity plan. It was last reviewed and updated in February 2019. The Head of Service, Registration is also a member of the Corporate Resilience Group which consists of all Priority One services for whom continuity of service is essential. This group meets formally every quarter when it reviews the corporate BCP and discusses any issues which individual departments may have encountered.