

# KENSINGTON and CHELSEA Registration District



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA

## Registration Service Delivery Plan

April 2019

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**Our Values:**

**Putting Our Communities First** **Respect** **Integrity** **Working Together**

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## **1. Introduction to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea**

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea is an inner London Borough and is one of the most densely populated local authorities in the United Kingdom.

Following the Grenfell Tower Fire tragedy, in which 71 local residents lost their lives in June 2017, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea has significantly refocused its priorities. As such, the council is currently going through a period of great change in order to become an organisation that better meets the true needs of its residents. Its focus is to ensure that residents and communities are put at the very heart of robust decision making processes, and that the implementation of actions and duties are done by highly collaborative and efficient council officers. The organisation is under new senior management, and also new democratic leadership.

Following extensive engagement with local communities, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea will imminently launch its *Council Plan* which sets clear its vision and ambitions and how these will be achieved. This new mission is the result of blending what Kensington and Chelsea residents have told the Council, with the political commitment of the majority group on the Council, and evidence of what communities need. Three cross-cutting themes and five priority areas have been identified:

Cross-cutting themes:

- Community involvement;
- Narrowing the gap;
- Prevention and early intervention.

New priorities:

- Grenfell recovery;
- A great place to live, work and learn;
- Supporting and safeguarding vulnerable residents;
- Healthy, clean and safe;
- A place of culture to visit and explore.

The Registration Service currently sits alongside Libraries within the new Executive Directorate of Environment and Communities at the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea's Registration Service will contribute primarily to the following priorities and themes of the plan:

- A great place to live, work and learn;
- A place of culture to visit and explore;
- Community involvement;
- Narrowing the gap.

In order to be successful in delivering these, the executive directorate of Environment and Communities will invest in training and developing its staff – particularly its senior managers – to ensure that the new cultures and fully embedded across the organisation, including in the Registration Service. Registration staff – as with all officers of the council – are expected to display the key values of putting communities first, respect, integrity and working together and performance against these values are assessed in one to ones and mid- and end-of-year

appraisals. Full details on how the Registration Service will contribute to these key aims are detailed in *Section 6 – Service Delivery Objectives* below.

## **2. The Kensington and Chelsea Registration Service**

The Kensington and Chelsea Registration Service provides all statutory, and some non-statutory, registration services.

The statutory services result from various Registration Acts, in particular, the Registration of Births and Deaths Act 1953, the Marriage Act 1949 (as amended), the Civil Partnership Act 2004 and Immigration and Asylum Act 2002. These include the registration of all births, deaths and still-births occurring within the boundaries of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea; the attestation of notices of marriage and civil partnerships; the conducting (where appropriate) and registering of marriages, civil partnerships and marriage to civil partnership conversions occurring within the registration district; the conducting of citizenship ceremonies; the maintaining of all deposited registers of births, deaths and marriages and issuing certified copies of the entry when possible; assisting Clergy and Authorised Person with the registration of marriages; and all associated administration.

The non-statutory services result from the relaxations in the Local Government Act 2003 regarding previous restrictions on what services a local authority can and cannot provide. The non-statutory services currently offered are naming ceremonies; renewal of vows; commitment ceremonies; and EU Settlement Scheme technical assistance.

The registration district of Kensington and Chelsea has as its boundaries the same as that of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. The borough is bordered by the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham to the west; Wandsworth across the River Thames to the south; Brent to the north and the City of Westminster to the east. There is just one registration district, which is comprised of one sub-district which has the same boundaries covering the whole of the borough.

The Registration Service is operated by the Local Authority working with the Registration Officers and the HM Passport Office (General Register Office).

The council's Bi-borough Director of Libraries, Mike Clarke, is appointed as Proper Officer for all registration matters. Registration and Ceremonies Officers are personally responsible for the performance of their duties under the direction of the Registrar General and the Proper Officer.

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea currently employs 28 members of staff in the Registration Service. These are one Head of Registration Service, two Registration Team Managers, 17 Registration and Ceremonies, 7 Registration and Ceremonies Officers (Sessional) and 1 Ceremonies Usher. There are currently three principal officer posts: one superintendent registrar, one registrar of births and deaths, and one additional registrar. These posts are held by the three managers in the Registration Service.

Registration services are provided from the Kensington and Chelsea Register Office, Chelsea Old Town Hall, King's Road, London, SW3 5EE. Public citizenship ceremonies are delivered from the Kensington Town Hall, Hornton Street, London W8 7NX.

The Kensington and Chelsea Registration Service's opening hours are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 08:00 to 17:00, Thursday 08:00 to 19:00, Saturday 10:00 to 18:00. We offer an on call service for same day burials and cremations on Sundays from 09:00 to 10:00.

The contact details for the Register Office are:

**The Kensington and Chelsea Register Office**  
**Chelsea Old Town Hall**  
**King's Road**  
**London**  
**SW3 5EE**

**Telephone: 020 7361 4100**

Email: [registrars@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:registrars@rbkc.gov.uk)

Website: [www.rbkc.gov.uk/registrars](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/registrars)

An out of hours service is provided from 09.00 to 10.00 on Sundays and most Public Holidays where a member of staff is on call to deal with emergencies, usually deaths requiring a same-day burial or cremation in line with religious custom. The Royal Borough's Local Authority Liaison Officer via the Out of Hours service provides the necessary contact details. Members of the public requiring this service should call 0207 361 3000.

Marriage Ceremonies and Civil Partnership Registrations may take place by appointment in Approved Premises seven days a week.

### **3. Service Standards**

Under the current governance arrangements, the Registration Service Act 1953 confers upon the Local Authority obligations and powers in regard to the registration of births, deaths and marriages. The current local Scheme as amended came into operation on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2005 and is known as "The Kensington and Chelsea Registration (Amendment) Scheme 2005".

Under this Scheme, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea commits to achieving the national service delivery standards contained in both the *Code of Practice* for Local Registration Authorities in England and Wales and in its accompanying *Good Practice Guide*, jointly developed by the GRO and The National Panel for Registration.

We will report on our performance against these targets within two months of the end of the financial year and publicise this performance on our website and in the Register Office. We will also report at the same time in our annual performance report to the Registrar General against the key performance indicators noted below:

#### **Events accurately registered within statutory timeframe:**

- i). National Standard: 98% of births and still-births registered within 42 days;
- ii). National Standard: 90% of deaths (excl. post mortem and inquest cases) registered within 5 days;

- iii). 80% Percentage of deaths after post mortem (excluding inquest cases) registered within 7 days of occurrence;
- iii). National Standard: 95% of deaths registered within 24 hrs of receipt of coroner's certificate after inquest.

Average waiting times:

- i). National Standard: 95% of customers able to obtain an appointment to register a birth or complete a birth declaration within 5 working days;
- ii). National Standard: 95% of customers able to obtain an appointment for to register a death or still-birth, or complete a declaration for these events, within 2 working days;
- iii). National Standard: 95% of customers able to obtain an appointment to give notice within 10 working days;
- iv). National Standard: 95% of customers with an appointment to be seen within 10 minutes of their appointment time.

Issue of certificates from deposited registers:

National Standard: 95% of certificate applications from deposited registers to be dealt with within 7 days of receipt

Actioning Re-registration and Correction Authorities:

90% of applicants offered an appointment within 10 days of receiving General Register Office approval (where it is required).

Citizenship Certificates:

National Standard: 100% of certificates to be dated correctly and notifications for Citizenship certificates sent to the Home Office within 14 days of the ceremony.

Accurately record Birth, Still-birth and Death information on forms of declaration:

National Standard: 95% of incoming declarations registered within 24 working hours of receipt.

Customer satisfaction:

National Standard: 95% of customers satisfied with our service.

Our achievement against the targets of all our standards continues to be publicly available on our [website](#).

## **4. Procedures for Complaints, Suggestions and Consultation**

### **Complaints and Suggestions**

The Council of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea aims to provide excellent services to all our customers but recognises occasionally things may go wrong. Complaints are welcomed because they can provide us with an opportunity to put things right if we have made an error, and also allow us to monitor trends that we can react to, to make sure the

same mistake does not happen again. Corporate leaflets are freely available in reception and all the interview rooms.

Customers are encouraged to contact us directly via telephone, e-mail, or by letter should they have a compliment, comment or complaint.

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea also has a [Corporate Comments, Complaints and Compliments online form](#) which customers of the Registration Service are encouraged to use. This page also provides contact details for Council directors should a customer wish to address a complaint, comment or compliment directly to them.

The Registration Service complies with this policy. Details of complaints are monitored by the Superintendent Registrar and, if necessary, details are forwarded to the Proper Officer. In the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 there were 13 formal complaints from around 80,000 customer interactions.

The complaints procedure in more detail:

### **Informal stage**

If you are already dealing with a Council officer or you know which officer to contact, you may wish to raise an issue face-to-face, by telephone, email or in writing. Often, matters can be resolved at this stage. If you are unsure about which part of the Council is responsible, please telephone Enquiryline on 020 7361 3000.

### **Stage 1**

If you are unhappy about the response to your initial complaint, you should tell the officer with whom you have been dealing that you wish to take your complaint further. Or you might wish to complete our Comments, complaints and compliments and send it to the relevant department.

If you are complaining about the way in which a particular officer has dealt with you, your complaint will be looked into by a third party. Your complaint will be acknowledged. You should receive a full reply within 15 working days.

Send us your feedback complete the [Comments, complaints and compliments](#) online form.

### **Stage 2**

If you are dissatisfied with the response to Stage 1, let us know. The head of the relevant section will investigate further and should respond fully within 15 working days

### **Stage 3**

If you are still unhappy, the relevant Director or Executive Director will review your complaint and respond within 15 working days.

If, having received a response from the Director or Executive Director, you wish to take the matter further you can take up your complaint with the Local Government Ombudsman.

### **The Local Government Ombudsman**

The Local Government Ombudsman is an independent service that investigates complaints about councils. You can seek advice from the ombudsman at any time but they will refer a complaint back to us if you have not been through our complaints procedure.

### **Contact**

[Local Government Ombudsman](#)

PO Box 4771

Coventry CV4 0EH

Telephone: 0300 061 0614

Website: [www.lgo.org.uk/making-a-complaint](http://www.lgo.org.uk/making-a-complaint)

Fax: 024 7682 0001

Text: 'call back' to 0762 480 3014".

## **Consultation Procedure**

There are various ways in which our customers can have a say on how we run our services, which are detailed [here](#).

The Kensington and Chelsea Registration Service aims to put citizens at the heart of decisions taken to improve the service. We therefore abide by our Customer Engagement Strategy.

Where staff are consulted for changes, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea follows its policy which is detailed below:

### **STAFF CONSULTATION**

Staff consultation means the exchange of views and establishment of dialogue between the employer and the employees or employee representatives

#### **OBJECTIVE**

To consult with staff and elected employee representatives over proposed changes which affect staff in order:

- to gain commitment to new methods of working
- to ensure that staff are aware of what is happening
- to identify problems and to examine solutions
- to promote good employee relations and to resolve conflict or differences
- to consider Human Resources policies where joint agreement is needed.

#### **SCOPE**

The need to consult applies specifically to proposals which will have a direct impact on staff as employees, e.g. revised organisational structures, changes which may affect post grading, redundancies, new working patterns, displacement, new Human Resources policies which change conditions of employment.

The objectives of good communication and gaining staff commitment also apply to changes in service provision and policies generally.

#### **PROCEDURE**

##### **Who is to initiate consultation?**

The responsibility for initiating consultation rests with the manager of the service concerned. Staff justifiably look to their manager for information.

Where a change concerns two or more departments, directors should agree how consultation is to be handled.

Human Resources staff are available to advise throughout the consultation process where required.

Discussion on Human Resources procedures or policies should be initiated by the Human Resources function.

##### **Who to consult**

Formal union consultation is with elected employee representatives. Normally, this would be with departmental level representatives, but, if it is a major issue or if there is no suitable departmental representative, a branch official should be involved

The staff affected must also be briefed as to what is being considered. Good consultation at this level will, of course, ease the way for formal consultation

##### **When to consult**

If an organisational review is being proposed the staff concerned and the employee representatives should be briefed as early as possible - ideally at the start. They should be told about the purposes and the scope of the exercise, and invited to offer suggestions. Both staff and employee representatives should be given a timescale for response, normally two weeks. A longer time may be requested by the trade unions if deemed necessary. It is important to note that the law requires employers to begin to consult where they are "contemplating" redundancies i.e. when an employer is first envisaging the possibility that an employee may be made redundant.

In the course of an organisational review, dialogue should be maintained with the employee representatives, and with staff who are not represented with meetings to explain progress and plans which are evolving.

When the proposals have been firmed up, a copy of the key decision or management decision report should be passed to the trade unions; where applicable this should be at the same time that it is being circulated to Management Board. The trade unions should normally be given two weeks to comment. It is the relevant director who is responsible for forwarding this copy.

Occasionally, of course, decisions need to be finalised urgently and the whole procedure accelerated. All the same, genuine consultation should still take place as soon as possible, the objective being to minimise rumour and misapprehension.

### **REPORTING CONSULTATION**

Key decision reports should record that there has been consultation and what the outcome was. If it is straightforward and there are no objections, the wording is simple. If there are objections, these should be described, perhaps with a comment as to what efforts were made to meet the concerns. The date when consultation took place should be recorded. Examples:

#### Staff Consultation

The trade union has been consulted about this proposal on..... and has no objection.

**or**

The trade union has been consulted on this proposal and makes the following representations:  
" ..... (quote trade union's submission or attach/refer to separate paper)".

The formal mechanism for trade unions to make representation to elected members is at the Joint Staffing Panel.

## **5. Business Continuity Plan**

Kensington and Chelsea has a Corporate Business Continuity Plan which provides a framework for the restoration of Council services should their delivery be interrupted by an unexpected event or series of events outside the Council's control. Registration Services is included within this plan.

A copy of the Council's Business Continuity Plan for Registration Service is available on request. It contains details of how to deal with: unavailability of registration certificates, forms or current registers; lack of access to buildings and deposited registers; how and when stakeholders are notified of changes or restrictions to accessing the service during a contingency incident; IT systems failure; significant variations in service delivery including a flu pandemic; plans and arrangements for dealing with severe weather conditions and non-attendance at ceremonies; and ensuring policies and procedures are in place to deal with such events

The plan is updated annually.

## **6. Service Development Objectives for 2019 - 2020**

The Registration Service at the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea is dedicated to service improvement delivery for customers.

The Registration Service expects to make significant achievements in 2019-20 which are focused around the key themes of:

- (a) Continuing to drive customer service improvement by providing better, easier access to our services;
- (b) Streamlining processes, making the best use of technology to modernise how our services are delivered;
- (c) Investing in our staff by building on their training and development;
- (d) Increasing income through new services, improved services and new marketing channels;
- (e) Improving our working environment for customers and staff alike;
- (f) Further improving our performance in adhering to statutory standards and being ready to implement changing legislation affecting civil registration.

These will include achieving the following specific aims:

- (a) An improved corporate website with relevant, clear and succinct information in plain English signposting service users correctly.

A new image-focussed ceremonies website, to better show our ceremony rooms and ceremony venues, complemented by a marketing strategy including social media presence as a new way to engage with customers and service users. This will contribute to the corporate aim of making Kensington and Chelsea a *great place to visit and explore*.

Introduction of new online forms where they don't currently exist: applying to become an approved premises for marriages and civil partnerships, and submitting ceremony choices forms.

Registrars will encourage *community involvement* by adhering to its own Customer Engagement Strategy to ensure that the citizen is put at the heart of decisions taken to how we deliver and change our service. This will include completion of full customer journey audits for all our services – including service-user consultation – to find out how they can be streamlined and improved.

- (b) Exploration of how working together with partners at the Westminster Registration Service will allow us to improve services. This will involve looking at how our mutual registration district boundary may be *removed* from a customer's point of view; working more closely with the Coroner's Office to improve the customer journey and service standards around the registration of deaths; completing customer insight exercises which will allow us to better understand our ceremony services and how these might be mutually enhanced; considering options for shared, more up-to-date online booking and payments system; and scoping what other services our residents and service users might expect us to deliver.

- (c) Building upon a wide-ranging upskilling of staff by continuing to deliver a training programme covering all registration services in line with genericised job descriptions – with the target of all staff being trained all areas of civil registration.

Registration and Ceremonies Officers' training will also continue to strengthen in the following areas: Public Protection Counter Fraud; Managing Data; Health and Safety; Corporate Values, Aims and Priorities.

Each staff member will also continue to work on a personal project to drive improvement in an area of our service.

New staff members will be welcomed into the service: a Marketing and Communications Manager; a Business Development Manager; a Ceremonies Usher and a new team of sessional Registration and Ceremonies Officers all of whom will undergo rigorous training and development to be able to deliver services to the highest standards.

We will *narrow the gap* by taking on a supported intern who otherwise may have found it difficult to find employment.

- (d) Marketing and promotion of our venues and services to increase demand and therefore generate additional income to invest back in our public services, in the form of a much-improved website; a separate website specific to ceremonies; and use of new marketing platforms such as various social media, search engine optimisation, and online ads as well as more traditional print. This will be led by a Marketing and Communications Manager in line with the Council's Marketing and Communications department.

Working closely with partners in the Westminster Registration Service, we will undertake customer insight activities to better understand our ceremonies service with a view to growing this; we will look to grow recently adopted celebrant services in line with legal parameters; and we will scope out potential new services that our registration services may deliver.

We will continue to transparently review of our fees and charges to ensure that they genuinely cover the costs associated with running a registration service.

- (e) We will build on the recent refurbishment of the Chelsea Old Town Hall by seeking out feedback from service users and staff alike to ensure it is a building that meets everyone's needs as a happy and safe environment for accessing services and for working.

We will continue to drive actions from the Our Voice Action Plan to make our department an even happier place to work.

These points allow us to further contribute to Kensington and Chelsea being a *great place to live, work and learn*.

- (f) Working in partnership with the General Register Office, we will ensure that we achieve and where possible exceed all statutory and operational KPI targets, whilst

adopting a new focus on public protection and counter fraud priorities in how we deliver services and how we approach our work.

We will work with the local NHS trust to ensure that the Registration Service plays a key role in the rollout the introduction of the Medical Examiner.

We will ensure that the registration service is adequately prepared for legislative changes which may see the introduction of civil partnerships for opposite sex couples; marriage registrations being done electronically; and amendments to the requirements for still-birth registrations.