

Who can conduct my marriage or civil partnership ceremony in Scotland?

There are two categories of celebrant who can solemnise a marriage or civil partnership ceremony in Scotland. You can use a:

- civil celebrant
- religious or belief celebrant

A civil marriage or civil partnership can be solemnised by a registrar or assistant registrar in the district where the ceremony is due to take place.

Religious or belief ceremonies can be solemnised by an approved celebrant who has been authorised under the terms of the [Marriage \(Scotland\) Act 1977](#) and the [Civil Partnership Act 2004](#).

Religious bodies include, but are not limited to, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Hindu communities and organisations.

Belief bodies include, but are not limited to, humanist, pagan, spiritualist and interfaith communities and organisations.

If you are unsure if your celebrant is authorised to conduct a legal ceremony, contact the registration office in the district where your ceremony is to take place before engaging with the celebrant.

Private and Independent Celebrants

A private or independent celebrant has not been authorised under the terms of the [Marriage \(Scotland\) Act 1977](#) and the [Civil Partnership Act 2004](#) and may be referred to as an 'unauthorised' celebrant. Unauthorised celebrants may only provide non-legal ceremonies in Scotland such as funerals, baby naming, vow renewals or blessings (including wedding/civil partnership blessings).

A marriage or civil partnership 'blessing' is a ceremony that is not legally binding in Scotland and will not be registered in the national register. Your marital status will not be recognised as 'married' or 'in a civil partnership'.

You may be advised by an unauthorised celebrant that they can conduct a blessing and that a registrar can complete the 'legal duties' of the ceremony to make their marriage or civil partnership legal. Couples should be aware that a registrar cannot conduct parts of a marriage or civil partnership for any other body or unauthorised celebrant. If a couple choose to use the services of a registrar, it is the registrar that will legally conduct the ceremony and marry or civilly partner the couple. The marriage or civil partnership certificate will reflect the date and location where the ceremony was conducted by the registrar and that the celebrant was the registrar. A 'blessing ceremony' may occur before or after the ceremony conducted by the registrar, but it is not legally recognised and is not connected to the ceremony led by the registrar.

If you have any questions regarding an unauthorised celebrant or a legally recognised ceremony in Scotland, please contact the [registration office](#) in the district where you wish your ceremony to take place.