

# say i do

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## Your marriage ceremony guide

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Thank you for choosing to have your marriage ceremony in Islington and City of London

This guide tells you all you need to know about your special day



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## Say I Do in Islington and the City of London

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ere at Islington and the City of London we aim to make your day special and create a ceremony which is personal to you. Whether you would like a grand and elaborate affair, or a quiet and simple ceremony, we do all we can to accommodate your wishes.

The following pages provide all the information you need to plan your wedding ceremony. Accompanying this guide are five ceremonies for you to choose from. The words shown in bold must be spoken, however small changes can be made to the

rest of the ceremony wording, at the discretion of the Superintendent Registrar. Please complete the Pre-ceremony Organiser to let us know your choice of ceremony, music, vows, and reading(s), along with some information required to ensure the accuracy of the register entry and the smooth-running of the ceremony . We ask that you return this to us no later than three weeks before the ceremony (including copies of any readings).

The suggested order of service is as follows:

Entrance
Welcome and Introduction
Reading (optional)
Declaratory Words (mandatory)
Reading (optional)
Additional Vow (optional)
Contracting Words (mandatory)
Exchange of Rings and Promises (optional)
Reading (optional)
Conclusion
Signing of the Register
Presentation of the Marriage Certificate
Close of Ceremony

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## Before your marriage

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Before getting married you must each give 'notice of marriage' at your [local register office](#), or a [designated register office](#) if one or both of you are foreign nationals subject to immigration control.

Your marriage ceremony cannot take place if you have not given your notice. Notice can be given up to 12 months before the date of the ceremony, but no less than 16 days before. If you are giving notice in a different district to the one in which you will be married, you will need to factor in time for the legal paperwork to be delivered from one office to another.

Please be aware that from 2 March 2015 the waiting period between giving notice and being able to get married or form a civil

partnership will be 28 days for all couples. This period may be extended to 70 days where couples are referred to the Home Office under the Immigration Act 2014. Please ensure you give notice in time for your planned ceremony.

Please read the guidance on our [website](#) if you are giving notice at Islington Register Office, or consult your [local register office](#) for advice.

It is not necessary to have booked a time and date for your ceremony before giving notice, but you do need to have decided where the ceremony will take place. Each notice is only valid for one venue and should you change your mind, a new notice will need to be given and the fee paid again.

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## On the day of your ceremony

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### **Perfect timing**

It is important that you arrive in good time for your ceremony. The registrars will have other ceremonies to attend throughout the day, and cannot allow the lateness of one ceremony to impact upon another.

If you are delayed due to unforeseen circumstances we will make every effort to return at a later time to conduct your ceremony, however this will not always be possible and you may have to re-book for another day. Please ensure that you have read our ceremony [terms and conditions](#).

If you would prefer not to see one another until you enter the ceremony room, one of you should arrive 20 minutes before the

ceremony start time, along with your guests. The second person should arrive no later than 10 minutes before the ceremony.

When planning your transport to the venue, please allow time for potential traffic delays and check the [TFL website](#) for any disruptions that may affect your journey.

If you are having your ceremony at the Town Hall it is important to check the fixtures for Arsenal (Emirates Stadium) as Upper Street can get very congested on match days. [Parking at the Town Hall](#) is strictly limited and by prior arrangement only. Please visit our website for information on [where to park in Islington](#).

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## **Your pre-ceremony interview**

Before your ceremony can begin we need to confirm that the information you gave when giving notice is still current and correct on the day. This is done in a room away from the hustle and bustle of your guests and takes just a few minutes. This can be done together, or separately, if you would prefer not to see one another until the last minute. You do not need to bring any identification on the day providing your details have not changed.

## **The legal declarations and vows of marriage**

During the ceremony you will make two legal declarations before your witnesses, guests and the registrars. You will declare your freedom to marry one another, and then accept one another as husband or wife. These words do not need to be memorised as you will repeat them, a few at a time, after the registrar.

## **Music and readings**

You are welcome to personalise your ceremony with music and readings if you wish. Up to three readings can be included in the ceremony. Any music or readings you choose must not have any religious connotation.

Music can be either live or recorded. Please check the facilities at your chosen venue. If you are getting married in Islington Town Hall you can bring recorded music, on an iPod / MP3 player or CD. We can also accommodate live musicians, preferably playing acoustically.

Specific rules apply to music played in the [Richmond Room](#), and you will need to adhere to these rules if having your ceremony there.

## **Personal vows**

You may wish to incorporate your own

personal and heartfelt words into your ceremony. This is your opportunity to write a few sentences that encompass your feelings for each other. You can choose to memorise them or have them written down. Your sentiments must not have any religious connotation, or be taken from any religious ceremony.

## **Signing the register**

The registrar will ask you to check the details carefully before signing the register at the end of the ceremony. You will be asked to sign in your usual, current signature even if you are planning to change your name after marriage.

We appreciate that there will be a lot going on and you may be excited, but it is very important to take a moment to check your marriage entry carefully. Please alert the registrar if you notice a mistake. It is very easy to correct a mistake at the time, but it is a difficult and lengthy process after the event. Your signature is your confirmation that the information is correct.

## **Your witnesses**

You must bring two witnesses to your ceremony. Your witnesses can be anyone you choose, but it is a legal requirement that they are able to speak and understand English. It is also preferable that they are over 18 years old. It is your responsibility to provide witnesses for your wedding, as we are unable to provide them for you. They do not need to bring identification. If either you or your partner requires an interpreter, that person must also act as one of your witnesses.

## **Photography and recordings**

No ceremony would be complete without photographs and recordings of your special day. During the ceremony you may wish

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to restrict photography to your professional photographer only, as lots of flash and movement can be very distracting for you. There will be an opportunity, at the end of the ceremony, for everyone to take pictures. Please indicate your preference on the 'Your Marriage Ceremony' form and the registrar will make an appropriate announcement before the ceremony.

If your ceremony is in the Town Hall, we ask that your photographer be aware that there are other ceremonies taking place and be mindful of their need to move around as well. It is usually possible to take one or two photos on the main staircase inside the Town Hall after your ceremony, but ushers will move your photographer on if they are blocking the main entrance.

## **After the ceremony**

At the end of the ceremony you will be

presented with your handwritten marriage certificate. Your guests will be invited to stand and congratulate you both as you walk out of the room together.

Please check with your venue if confetti is permitted. If you are getting married in the Town Hall you can throw confetti outside on the front steps. Only biodegradable confetti is allowed at the Town Hall. Rice is not permitted as it poses health and safety risks with the stairs, inclement weather and pigeons.

## **Please note:**

- All readings, wording and music must be pre-approved by the Superintendent Registrar.
- If we do not receive your ceremony choices we will assume you wish to have the simple legal ceremony.

Please send your completed Pre-ceremony Organiser  
no later than three weeks before your ceremony to:

**registrars@islington.gov.uk**

or

**Islington Register Office, Town Hall, Upper Street, London, N1 2UD**

**Can we meet the registrar who will be conducting our ceremony before the day?**

Yes of course. We will make every effort to arrange for you to meet your registrar. One of our team of friendly and experienced registrars will be assigned to conduct your ceremony a month before the big day. There are however occasions when, due to unforeseen circumstances, substitutions have to be made. We will try to give you as much notice as possible if this is the case.

If you would like to discuss your ceremony with your registrar, or another available member of the ceremonies team, please [contact us](#) to book an appointment or a telephone consultation.

**What happens if the information we gave at notice has changed by the time we marry?**

It is quite possible that your age, occupation or address may have changed in between giving notice and getting married. This can be easily updated on the day. However, if your name, marital status or gender is different on the day, this is more serious, and you will need to bring in documentary evidence to support the facts.

**Can we have more than two witnesses?**

Yes you can. It is a legal requirement to have two witnesses but you can choose to have more if you wish. Up to four witnesses' signatures can comfortably fit onto the register page, but any more is a bit of a squeeze. Please tell the registrar how many witnesses you would like to have sign before the ceremony.

**What happens if more guests attend than anticipated?**

For safety reasons every room has a maximum number of people that can be accommodated. If your number of guests exceeds this, unfortunately some of them will have to remain outside.

If your guest list increases we can change your booking to a larger room, if one is available, providing sufficient notice is given. Any difference in cost will be payable at the time of making the change.

If your ceremony is in the [Council Chamber](#) you may wish to book the balcony, which accommodates an extra sixty guests. There is an [additional fee](#) for balcony bookings. We hire extra security staff and ushers for balcony bookings, as access is via stairs on the outside of the Town Hall. You don't have to decide right away if you would like to book this additional space, but please try to give us as much advance notice as possible.

**How long does the ceremony last?**

The average civil wedding ceremony takes between 20-30 minutes, depending on how many readings and other enhancements are included.

**Who will manage the music?**

If your ceremony is at the Town Hall we kindly request that you nominate a guest to be in charge of music. They will be shown where the connections are, and given appropriate cues for when to play the music. If your ceremony is elsewhere please ask the staff at the venue.

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## **Can we order more than one certificate?**

You will receive one certificate on the day of the ceremony. If you require extra certificates, these can be ordered any time before or after your ceremony. It may be useful to have extras if you are travelling, changing names, or notifying a foreign Embassy or Consulate of your marriage.

## **Do I have to change my name after marriage?**

Changing your name after marriage is an entirely personal choice. If you do wish to change your name, just present your marriage certificate to any organisations holding your personal details. It's that simple.

If you would like to honeymoon in your new name, your passport can be changed up to three months before the ceremony. Just complete the [PD2](#) form and take it to the register office for it to be signed by the Superintendent Registrar, before submitting it to the Passport Office. Please note that your new passport will only be valid from the date

of the wedding, so think carefully about doing this if you'll be travelling abroad beforehand.

## **Can we decorate the ceremony room?**

If your ceremony is at one of our approved venues (not including the Town Hall) you can usually decorate the room in advance. Unfortunately there is limited scope to do this if your ceremony is at the Town Hall, as there will be other ceremonies before and after yours. All rooms have silk flower arrangements. If you wish to bring additional decorations these can only be installed during your booked time, and must be taken away with you at the end of your ceremony.

## **Can we have a rehearsal?**

We don't offer rehearsals but we're happy to meet with you to go over your ceremony. We also hold an open day once a year and hope that you'll attend. It's a great opportunity to speak to the registrars and venue staff; browse the stalls of local wedding suppliers, pick up ideas for your special day, and view the Town Hall ceremony rooms.

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## For ceremonies at Islington Town Hall

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### **Will we bump into other wedding parties when we get married in the Town Hall?**

The Town Hall is a very popular venue for weddings and there may be several taking place on any given day. We have a team of dedicated ushers who aim to keep wedding parties separate, but it is possible that you'll see other parties arriving and departing from the Town Hall.

### **I'm having my ceremony in the Richmond Room, what can I expect?**

The Richmond Room faces onto a quiet residential street so some considerations must be taken into account when holding ceremonies in this room. Out of respect for our neighbours live music is not permitted, windows must stay closed and the volume of recorded music is capped.

## **What time should we instruct our onward transport to pick us up?**

Your transport should arrive to collect you approximately 30 - 40 minutes after the ceremony start time. Ideally your transport should be waiting for you as you all emerge from the Town Hall, ready to whisk you away to your celebrations.

## **Can our onward transport wait directly outside the Town Hall?**

The vintage Routemaster buses are a common sight outside the Town Hall, picking up wedding parties. Whilst there is no parking on Upper Street, your booked transport will be allowed to stop for long enough to pick up you and your guests.

## **A member of our party requires special access. What facilities are there at the Town Hall?**

There is a ramp into the Town Hall, and lifts to all levels. Our ushers and reception staff will provide any assistance needed. We have a small number of special access parking spaces available on the Town Hall forecourt, which can be reserved in advance. Please call the [Town Hall](#) if you would like to book a space.

## **Can our photographer take a group photo from the balcony in the council chamber?**

Yes, providing you have booked the balcony. If not, this area will not be accessible.

## **Can the Town Hall accept deliveries of flowers or champagne on our behalf?**

Unfortunately we do not have the facility to safely store any goods delivered in conjunction with your wedding.

## **Is there somewhere in the Town Hall where we can celebrate after the ceremony?**

Although there is no facility for holding any kind of reception in the Town Hall, the Islington Assembly Hall next door to the Town Hall can be hired for ceremonies and receptions. For availability and costs please contact them directly at [assemblyhall@islington.gov.uk](mailto:assemblyhall@islington.gov.uk).

Alternatively, fashionable and vibrant Upper Street offers a wealth of options for your on-going celebrations.

We hope you have all of the information you need to plan your ceremony and make it a special and truly memorable occasion. If you have any questions that haven't been answered here please do not hesitate to contact us.