

Getting married in Darlington during Covid-19 restrictions

Version 1 as at 25th September, 2020.

How many people can attend the wedding ?

A maximum of 15 people can attend the wedding plus anyone “working” at the wedding. This applies to all weddings in any setting ie. hotel or register office.

The rule of 15 means the couple being married and a maximum of 13 guests. The 13 guests:

- Does include children over the aged of 1 years.
- Does not include the two registrars attending the wedding.
- Does not include any hotel staff present during the ceremony.
- Does not include any paid photographers, paid videographers or paid musicians present during the ceremony.

If a guest is acting as a photographer, videographer or musician, they are not deemed to be “working” unless paid to do so and therefore still classed as one of the maximum of 13 guests.

Who has to wear a face covering ?

Everyone present (including bridesmaids, best men, photographers, videographers and hotel staff) in the ceremony should be wearing a face covering except:

- The couple being married.
- The two registrars.
- Children under 11 years old.
- Anyone with an appropriate medical exemption.

What are the restrictions on photographs and video ?

The Registrar will meet any photographers and videographers before the ceremony starts. We understand the importance of photographers and video/recording the ceremony and want to help as much as we can whilst maintain a safe environment for all.

Official photographers and videographers will be able to be at the front of the marriage room but will be asked to maintain 2m social distancing from everyone including the registrars.

Guests will be asked to take photographs from their seats only rather than coming to the front of the wedding room.

There will be an opportunity for a photograph of the couple being married and a photograph of them with their witnesses at the end of the ceremony with the pretend marriage register. All other photographs will need to be taken outside of the

What are the restrictions on music ?

Music can be live or recorded but if live then there must be no singing by guests or musicians.

What are the restrictions on the content of the ceremony ?

Government advice is that the length of time of ceremonies should be kept to a minimum so as to minimise the time of a gathering. However, we recognise that it is your wedding day and of the importance of the ceremony. As a compromise of both needs:

- The content of the ceremony has been standardised.
- There is still a choice of vows including a choice of extra vows.
- The number of witnesses who can sign the register with the couple is restricted to two rather than four.
- If you want one reading by a guest (which they must provide) that is fine provided the person doing the reading is of 2 metres distance from everyone else. If you want to include a reading as part of the ceremony include this on your wedding questionnaire and inform the registrar on the day of the wedding.

Do I have to provide Test and Trace Information ?

It is a legal requirement that you provide, and that the venue collects, contact details of all those present during the ceremony for the governments test and trace information project.

If you are getting married at a hotel:

- The hotel will collect these details not ourselves.
- The hotel will have a QR code on display as an additional option for you to record your attendance by scanning your phone using the Covid-19 NHS App.

If you are getting married at the Register Office:

- You must complete and return the test and trace questionnaire provided of who is attending the ceremony returning it either before the wedding day or you can bring them with you on the day.
- We have a QR code on display in our marriage rooms as an additional option for you to record your attendance by scanning your phone using the Covid-19 NHS App.
- Test and trace information that you provide us with is kept securely, for 21 days only and then destroyed securely. It is not shared with anyone.

As it is a legal requirement, anyone unwilling to provide us with their contact details for the Test and Trace project will not be allowed into the marriage room.

If you have any further questions or queries please do not hesitate to contact us at registeroffice@darlington.gov.uk or on 01325 406 400.