

Solihull Registration Service

Homer Road, Solihull, West Midlands, B91
3RG

Telephone: 0121 704 8002

Email: registeroffice@solihull.gov.uk

Website: www.solihull.gov.uk



Service Delivery Plan April 2023 – March 2024

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1.0 The Solihull Registration Service

1.1 Service Description

Solihull Registration Service is committed to providing customers with high quality services, increased flexibility, and greater choice. This will be achieved by consistently meeting the standards set out in the General Register Office's (GRO) 'Good Practice Guide and Performance Management' in the delivery of all statutory services and some non-statutory services.

The statutory services are:

- registration of all births, deaths and still-births occurring within the Solihull Borough
- attesting of notices of marriage and civil partnerships
- conducting and registering civil marriages, civil partnerships, converting civil partnerships to marriages and converting marriages to civil partnerships
- registering Church of England and nonconformist marriages conducted within the Solihull Borough
- conducting British citizenship ceremonies
- maintaining all deposited registers of births, deaths, and marriages
- issuing certified copies of the entry
- all associated administration
- approval of premises as venues for civil marriages and civil partnerships

The non-statutory services currently offered are:

- naming ceremonies
- renewal of vows
- commitment ceremonies
- access to the 'Tell Us Once' service

1.2 Service Description

The Solihull Registration District is coterminous with the Metropolitan Borough of Solihull and the majority of its customer service is delivered through "Solihull Connect", which is Solihull Council's customer service brand. Customers contact Solihull Connect by email, telephone, at a walk-in centre or through a range of digital access channels to make appointments with the Registration Service. Appointments to register births and deaths or attest notice of marriage or civil partnership are provided at one of our walk-in centres or the Register Office

1.3 Internal Control Arrangements

The Local Authority has an established system of internal audit to ensure compliance with corporate policies and procedures. The Council has robust financial controls which are delivered through the Council's Financial Regulations, which underpin the financial governance and control of all activities within the Council. Secure registration

stock and historical records are stored in accordance with the GRO's Public Protection and Counter-fraud Assurance Framework.

The Council is required to publish an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) to provide an open and honest self-assessment of Solihull Council's governance arrangements across all its activities, with a clear statement of the actions taken or required to address any identified areas of concern. The Statement details the Council's significant corporate systems, processes, and controls, in particular those designed to ensure:

- compliance with laws and regulations
- policies implemented in practice
- processes adhered to
- high quality services delivered efficiently and effectively
- the Council's values and ethical standards are met
- performance and financial statements are accurately published
- human, financial, and other resources are managed efficiently and effectively

All Registration Service employees receive the training required to enable them to fulfil their role. Training is delivered in house and through external providers where relevant. All Council employees are required to complete corporate mandatory training in key topics including Safeguarding, Information Security and Health and Safety. Training is recorded and refreshed in accordance with organisational requirements.

All employees participate in the Council's Personal Development Review Framework (PDRF). Our PDRF scheme sits at the heart; ensuring that everyone is clear about our shared purpose and why we do what we do. The ethos of the scheme ensures that all employees understand how their behaviours and performance impact on others. By building on strengths and taking personal responsibility for training and development, the scheme shapes futures and contributes to the long-term success of the organisation. Managers and employees agree objectives for the forthcoming year, these are based on the employee's role and link to the Council's overall purpose, vision, and organisational priorities. Planned, regular one to one meetings between the manager and employee are conducted during the year to discuss progress, achievements and feedback to keep things on track.

The Registration Services Team is committed to continuous improvement. When changes to procedures are required to support improvements or are required due to, for example, changes in legislation, employees are consulted and assist with the facilitation and implementation of improvements and changes.

Performance of the service is monitored by the Registration Service team through the Registration Services Strategic Lead and the Superintendent Registrar and reported to the Customer and Cultural Services Leadership Team. Any risks identified are managed in accordance with the corporate risk policy and procedure.

The council consists of 51 councillors who are elected by the local community. Councillors determine matters of policy on behalf of the local community and make key decisions,

such as the annual budget and Council Tax. The Leader of the Council is elected by all members of the council and chairs all meetings of the council's cabinet, leads on policy development and implementation, and represents Solihull on a range of regional bodies. The cabinet is an executive group responsible for the overall business of the council and the decisions of the cabinet are subject to overview and scrutiny by a different group of councilors, who meet in panels to check and monitor what the cabinet does. The Registration Service reports to the Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities.

1.4 External controls - General Register Office (GRO)

Solihull Registration Service makes an annual report to the Registrar General of performance and improvements to customer service standards.

The service regularly participates in the West Midlands Regional Registration Group meetings, benchmarking exercises and joint training opportunities.

The most recent audit by the GRO Compliance & Performance Unit team concluded that overall, the Solihull Registration District maintains high level of assurance in relation to the security arrangements around the receipt, storage and use of the secure certificate stock held as assessed against the criteria.

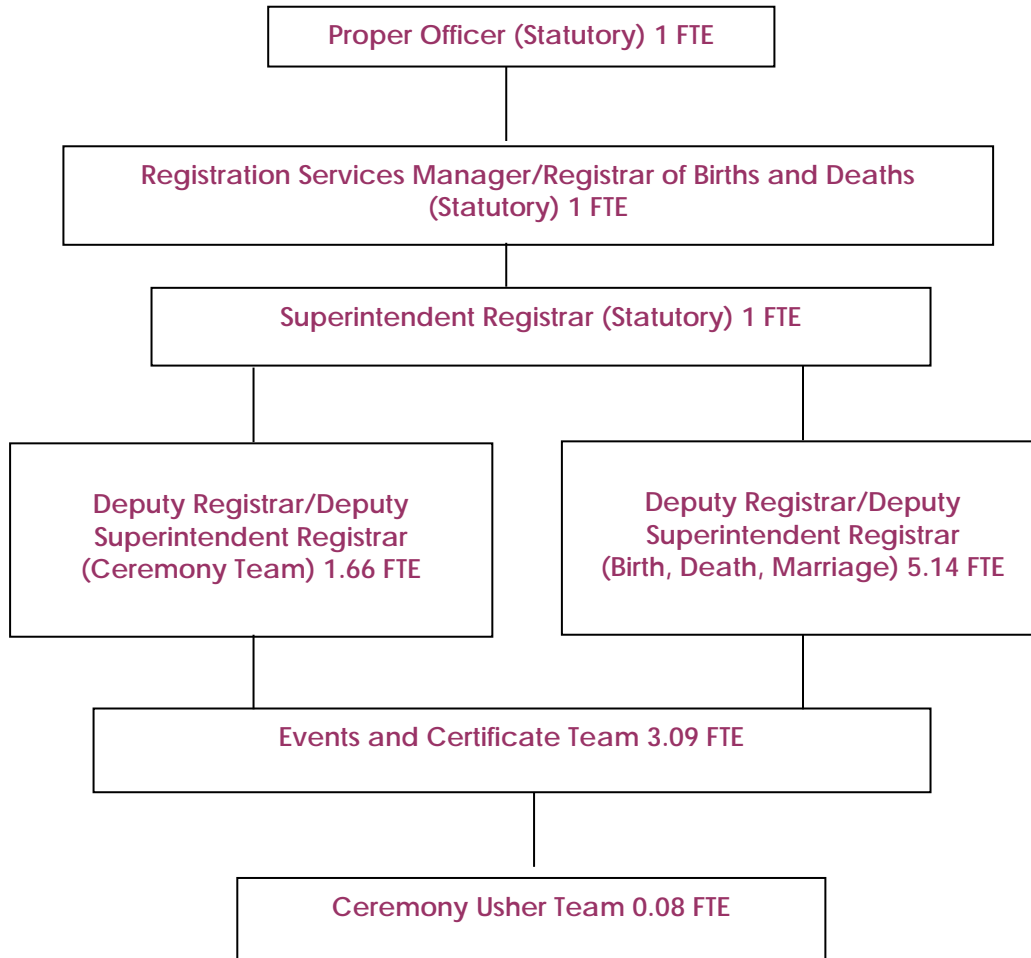
2.0 The Registration Service Team, Location and Service Access

2.1 Team Structure

The role of Proper Officer is met by the Head of Customer and Cultural Services. The Proper Officer reports to the Assistant Director for Communities & Partnerships within the Economy and Infrastructure Directorate. The role of Registration Service Manager is met by the Registration Services Strategic Lead who reports to the Head of Customer and Cultural Services. Policies and performance are monitored through organisational performance processes including monthly reporting to the Customer and Cultural Services Leadership Team. The Registration Service Team is structured to meet current customer demand.

Solihull Registration Service employees receive their pay and conditions under the Local Authority contract. The current structure, shown in Figure 1, was designed through consultation with all employees who fully understand how working under New Governance allows us to develop the Registration Service.

Figure 1 Solihull Registration Services Structure



2.2 Location description

All service centres are easily accessible, available at reasonable times and meet the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 requirements.

The operational times for each office are shown in **Appendix 1**

Services are delivered between 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday (10.00am start on Wednesday). Outside of normal operating hours we have a process where customers can contact the Council through the out of hour's provision provided by Centro.

2.3 Offices to register birth, death and notice of marriage/civil partnership

There are offices for registration located within Solihull Connect walk in centres and the Register Office:

The Core, Homer Road, Theatre Square, Touchwood, Solihull B91 3RT
The Bluebell Centre, Chelmsley Wood B37 5TN
Solihull Register Office, Homer Road, Solihull B91 3QZ

2.4 Ceremony Rooms

In addition to the statutory Register Office ceremony room there are two decommissioned ceremony rooms located at:

Solihull Register Office, Homer Road, Solihull B91 3QZ

3.0 Business Continuity

Solihull Council has prepared business continuity plans for all council services. These plans provide 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.

Solihull Registration Service has an up-to-date business continuity plan which ensures that in the event that all or part of the service is unavailable the critical services continue to operate. It contains details of how to deal with any incident or significant variations in service delivery such as a pandemic, plans and arrangements for dealing with severe weather conditions and IT failure; and ensures that policies and procedures are in place to deal with such events.

The plan is reviewed and updated annually.

4.0 Listening to and Learning from Stakeholders

4.1 Engagement Strategy

It is essential that the services we provide are the services that our customers want to receive. We want to deliver the right services, in the right manner and at the right time.

Solihull Registration Services ensures that all stakeholders are appropriately engaged in line with their Customer Engagement Strategy. The purpose of the strategy is to understand the needs of our customers as well as their views on the services and products that we provide.

Solihull Registration Service put customers at the heart of everything we do. We want our services to be accessible to all and responsive to the needs of our customers and other stakeholders.

4.2 Consultation & Feedback

The service captures customer comments and offers service questionnaires throughout the year which helps influence and develop the way services are delivered. For example, customers told us they would like to receive correspondence by email rather than by post. In response we now use email whenever customers provide an email address unless they ask us to communicate in a different way.

Customers are also asked about at least one key area of the service annually to help inform future service design. Consultation takes place where we need to seek views to help make a decision or service improvement, such as a survey or focus group. Planned consultation during 2023/24 is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Planned Consultation in 2023/202

Consultation/feedback to be undertaken	Who is being consulted?	How will the results be used?
Citizenship Ceremony	Customers	Improve service delivery, quality of information provided and feedback on the times & days of the week ceremonies are held
Ceremonies	Customers	Gather customer comments regarding the quality of service and quality of information provided before the ceremony
Registration Services Appointments	Customers	Gather customer comments regarding service and quality of information provided before and during the appointment

4.3 Customer Satisfaction

The service regularly asks customers to complete satisfaction surveys so that we can understand what is working well and meeting expectation and what isn't working well and could be improved upon.

Customers are dealt with courteously, with sensitivity and in a personalised manner. To evaluate how well we do this and other aspects of service delivery, customers are asked questions covering:

- Courteousness

- Accessibility (e.g., initial contact and location)
- Appointment availability
- Office accommodation
- Future service provision/planning needs (optional)

4.4 Compliments and Complaints

The Registration Service complies with the Council’s corporate compliments and complaints policy which can be found on the Council’s web site at <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Tell-us/Comment-complain-or-compliment-our-services>

5.0 Service Development Objectives and Priorities

5.1 Achievements

Table 2 Registration Services Achievements 2022/2023

	Objectives	How	Progress
2	Develop on-line services for booking appointments	Part of the Digital Connect Oracle Service Cloud implementation project	Ongoing - Work is continuing to develop this option for our customers including consideration of alternatives to Oracle Service Cloud
3	Plan strategy to prepare for changes arising from Coroner Reforms	Legislation and GRO guidance	Ongoing - Local hospitals are operating under the new Medical Examiner scheme. Further legislative changes to include GPs are expected this year.
5	Improve performance for Birth and Death registration	Continue to work with GRO, GPs, Hospital and informants	Ongoing - Local hospitals are operating under the new Medical Examiner scheme. Further legislative changes to include GPs are expected this year

5.2 Service Objectives and Priorities

The Solihull Council Plan 2020-2025 sets out our headline analysis of our strengths, challenges and opportunities, both as a Council and as a borough. It outlines the strategic context that we work in, and how we are developing to meet the needs of residents, business and visitors. Each Directorate aligns its activity to the Council Plan. The planned objectives and priorities for the Registration Service during 2023/24 are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Registration Services Objectives and Priorities 2023/2024

	Objectives	How	Progress
1	Develop on-line services for booking appointments	Part of the Digital Connect Oracle Service Cloud implementation project	Work is continuing to develop this option for our customers including consideration of alternatives to Oracle Service Cloud
2	Plan strategy to prepare for changes arising from Coroner Reforms	Legislation and GRO guidance	Local hospitals are operating under the new Medical Examiner scheme. Further legislative changes to include GPs are expected this year
3	To improve the registration experience for the bereaved by developing better communications with local medical practitioners	Stakeholder analysis and communication plans. More targeted communication and engagement where it is needed. A joined-up communication approach with Solihull's Local Medical Committee	Local hospitals are operating under the new Medical Examiner scheme. Further legislative changes to include GPs are expected this year
4	Deliver the right services in the right manner and at the right time	Undertake Customer Feedback Surveys and use information we receive to deliver service improvements	Ongoing
5	Digitise all birth, death, marriage and civil partnership records	Work with Microform to scan all records dating between 1837 and 2008 and to provide all certified copies of a register entry digitally	Work to start April 2023

	Objectives	How	Progress
6	Improve the offering to all communities within Solihull	Engage with Faith leaders on their potential wants and needs for the service	Ongoing

6.0 Key Policies and Strategies

Key Policies and Strategies for the Division include

- Customer Strategy
- Digital Strategy
- Customer Complaint, Compliment and Comment Policy
- Data Protection and Information Security Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

7.0 Risk Management

The Division manages risks in accordance with the Council's Risk Management Policy. The risk register is regularly reviewed and updated.

Date risks register last updated:

April 2022

Appendix 1

Location	Services	Opening Hours					
		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Solihull Register Office, Homer Road, Solihull, B91 3QZ	<i>Attestation of notice, statutory and secular marriage and civil partnership ceremonies, British citizenship ceremonies, non-statutory ceremonies and certified copies of a register entry</i>	9:00 To 17:00	9:00 To 17:00	10:00 To 17:00	9:00 To 17:00	9:00 To 17:00	Ceremonies Only
Solihull Connect, The Core , Theatre Square, Solihull	<i>Birth and death registration. Info & advice by appointment</i>	9:00 To 16:30	9:00 To 16:30	10:00 To 16:30	9:00 To 16:30	9:00 To 16:30	Closed
Solihull Connect The Bluebell Centre, Chelmsley Wood	<i>Birth and death registration. as required. Info & advice by appointment</i>	9:00 - 16:30	9:00 - 16:30	10:00 - 16:30	9:00 - 16:30	9:00 - 16:30	Closed