



Haringey Registration and Citizenship Service - Service Delivery Plan 2021/22 V1.1

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Introduction



The Haringey Registration and Citizenship Service which incorporates Haringey Register Office registers all births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships in Haringey. The service also provides virtual and face to face Citizenship Ceremonies. Haringey Register Office holds records dating back to 1837 and also provides support to places of worship.

Since April 2020 the service has been deputies for the London boroughs of Barnet and Enfield. Becoming deputies was established because of the expectation that mutual aid would need to be delivered. The need to date has not materialised. Customers have reacted positively to the services offered at George Meehan House with close to 100% of appointment and ceremony slots being booked within three weeks of a given date, customers are drawn from large areas of England and Wales. The increase in demand creates its own challenges including with the delivery of timely appointment availability. High demand is a reflection of pent up demand and changes to the legal framework around ceremonies in the past, present and future. Supply of services has been doubled and at times tripled but meeting high demand remains a challenge.

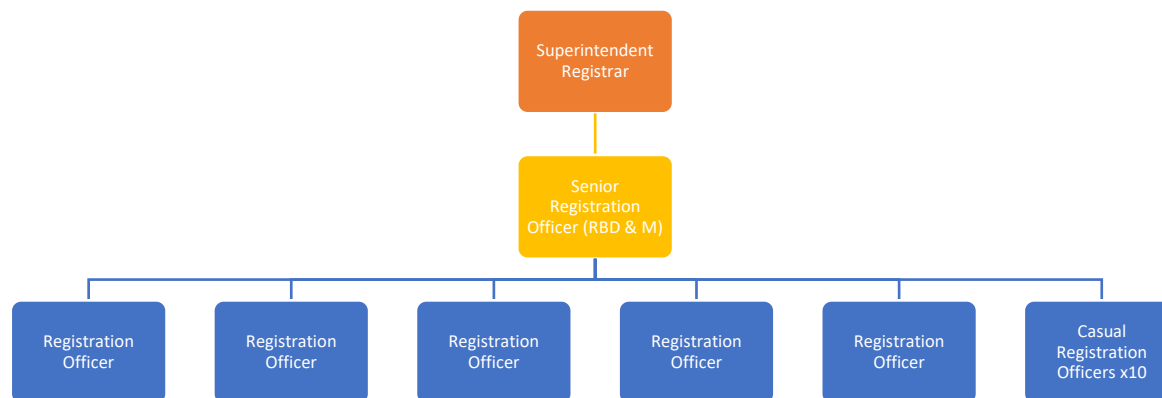
Services are currently being delivered in accordance with government guidance and some elements of the service offer has been scaled back accordingly. Overall levels of customer satisfaction as measured by the low number of complaints remain high. The service has had some negative feedback in relation to its website which is in part due to the nuanced and ever changing nature of delivering services during a pandemic. The issue has been addressed by a comprehensive review and update of web content.

Haringey and its boundaries

Haringey is located in North London and its neighbours are the boroughs of Enfield to the North, Waltham Forest to the East, Hackney, Islington and Camden to the South and Barnet to the West. Haringey does not have any major hospitals or maternity units as all neighbouring boroughs have these facilities. Haringey has one Sub District (Haringey 1A) and rates of births and deaths are historically low. The pandemic has naturally seen rates of death in Haringey increase.

Organisational structure

The service has two principal officer posts which are the Superintendent Registrar (SR) and the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages (RBD & M) The RBD role is incorporated into the position of Senior Registration Officer. The services structure is shown below:



All Registration Officers act as deputies to the Superintendent Registrar and the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages with all staff working under sub district Haringey 1A. For business continuity reasons the service has made all members of the Electoral Services Team Deputy Registrars and has trained them in the registration of deaths.

Register Office and service delivery point locations

Haringey Register Office is located at George Meehan House, 294 High Road, Wood Green, London N22 8JZ. The decommissioned ceremony accommodation is known as The Earlham Suite. The Earlham Suite has a main ceremony room called The Earlham Room which is for the services exclusive use. There are two large ceremony rooms called Westbury and Woodside that are used for larger ceremonies including for citizenship. Westbury and Woodside are shared with other council departments and are used for staff training and other events. Westbury is currently being used as an interview space and is arranged with three social distanced COVID-19 secure interview stations.

All appointments take place at George Meehan House. The majority of telephone calls are answered by Customer Services from their base in Wood Green. Pandemic easements mean that death registrations continue to be done by telephone with calls being made largely from the office. Customers continue to be able to communicate with the service including out of normal office hours.

Hospitals

There are no hospitals in Haringey, the two main maternity hospitals serving Haringey are the North Middlesex in Edmonton Enfield and the Whittington in Archway Islington. A full birth and death declaration service is provided for people that cannot or do not wish to travel to the district where a birth or death occurred.

Access and service availability times

Appointment and ceremony times

Appointment and ceremony times continue to be reviewed with the two main variables being the need to social distance and the need to meet demand. The spacing between each appointment is being reduced to help maximise appointment supply whilst remaining COVID-19 secure.

Standard service delivery is to offer service by appointment only over a Monday to Saturday time period, short notice appointments are provided for urgent needs. Some ceremonies take place on Sundays and bank holidays. When staff work a Saturday they get a day back in the week. The main customer groups using the service want weekday appointments. Weekend appointment supply has been scaled back to free up staff resource and offer more appointments during the week. Saturday appointments continue to be available when needed.

Telephone calls are answered a minimum from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday and an out of hours emergency service is provided when the office is closed.

Website, email and web forms

Online booking of notice appointments at www.haringey.gov.uk/registeroffice has resumed although births and deaths still need to be booked over the phone. The online booking system cannot easily be updated to reflect COVID-19 easements which is why deaths cannot currently be booked online. Births are allocated to specific slots which is easier to do offline. The service has plans to work with its diary supplier to upgrade the booking system. Upgrading the system will have the potential to allow customers to book marriage and civil partnership ceremonies online. It will also allow customers to book telephone death registration appointments online.

The department has the email address registrars@haringey.gov.uk which is complimented by a number of web forms that the public can use to make an enquiry. Mailboxes are monitored at an increased frequency with web content under continuous review so that timely and accurate information is delivered.

Telephone access

The telephone number 020 8489 2605 is answered by Customer Services between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday. A direct back office number is provided to those with the most urgent needs such as other register offices, faith leaders and those needing Registrar General Licenses. The service is also part of the pan London Working Together Whatsapp Group and attends their bi monthly meetings.

Out of hours

Customers can access the service out of hours by calling 020 8489 0000. Calls are initially triaged by a third party out of hours' partner. An out of hours' faith burial service is provided at weekends and bank holidays to meet the needs of the local Jewish and Muslim communities. During the pandemic the service has been expanded to support any person needing a funeral before the next working day. The faith phone is answered from 9am to 11am on Sundays and Bank Holidays only. The service is also able to respond to requests for a Registrar General License and other emergencies outside of normal hours via the Out of Hours Service.

Counter service

Counter service is currently suspended with no plans for this to resume. Customers requiring face to face contact are triaged by phone or email and arrangements made for them to visit the office when needed.

Protection of service standards

Under the new governance arrangements 'the Haringey Registration Scheme 2015', Haringey is committed to the service delivery standards contained in the Code of Practice for Local Registration Authorities in England and Wales developed by the General Register Office (GRO). The Code of Practice is supplemented by good practice guidance within the Proper Officer's Guide to Registration Service Delivery. The service is also required to publish an Annual Performance Report to the General Register Office by the 30th April each year. This report requires the service to report Key Performance Targets set by the General Register Office in, 'The Proper Officer's Guide to Registration Service Delivery Appendix A, A1: Good Practice Guide: Statutory Standards' dated December 2016. Key standards can be found at (Appendix A). This scheme came into force on 3 February 2016.

Significant achievements and developments in 2020/21

First stages of recovery

The service responded in a timely and customer focussed way to maintain services for customers with exceptional needs during the deepest depths of the pandemic. At no point did all services stop with a very good supply of death registration appointments maintained throughout. As England exited each period of additional restrictions the service was fast to adapt and began opening up more appointments. This allowed the service to escape much of the pressure and excessive waiting times experienced by other register offices. The service had and continues to have excellent foresight and modelling of likely future pandemic dynamics.

Attracting customers

The service continues to have success at attracting customers to have their ceremonies at George Meehan House. Whilst immigration customers still form the largest group of customers the service is starting to see more diversity in its customer base with an increasing number of professional couples using George Meehan House as their ceremony venue.

Appointment availability

The agility of the services workforce has been used to maximise appointment supply and to help keep customer waiting times as short as possible. A particular success has been the ability of the service to maintain good appointment supply despite three of seven staff having to shield. Opportunities to capitalise on COVID-19 easements has been maximised. New and ever changing appointment patterns are in place to ensure that as many appointments as can reasonably and safely be delivered are delivered. The service does weekly monitoring of waiting times in other areas to ensure that customer waiting times are as good and in most cases better than in other nearby areas. The service has been able to extend its catchment area with customers excluded by their own register office travelling large distances to come to Haringey to give Notice of Marriage.

Website Improvements

Decision trees were introduced to make navigating the website easier but these had to be withdrawn as they did not reflect COVID-19 easements. Throughout the pandemic the web pages grew organically and became very complicated and hard to understand in places. The service has been able to work with the Web Communications Team to streamline the ceremony pages and make it easier for customers to get the information that they need quickly.

Increased partnership working

The pandemic continues to bring the service closer to other districts with the service working more closely than ever before with other boroughs. A combination of London Strategic Registration Board meetings being done virtually and the London Working Together Whatsapp group has enabled real time sharing of information, best practice and joint problem solving to take place. The service acted as a representative on the London group for giving feedback on the Law Commission review.

Proposed developments for 2021/22

Adapting to the government roadmap and new comprehensive service offer

England is currently at an uncertain junction and is at Step 3 of 4 of the government roadmap out of the pandemic. There is the potential for all COVID-19 restrictions to be removed from 21/06/2021 but uncertainty over new variants may put this in doubt. The service will look to further review room layouts, maximum capacity and ceremony logistics in accordance with local, national and international guidance, laws and best practice. Service offer will be reviewed as events develop with a plan for a new and comprehensive service offer to be in place by Summer 2022.

Performance recovery

The service in common with other register offices has seen levels of performance for the registration of births and deaths decrease in 2020/21, this has been down to the pandemic. The service will take action to more closely match supply with demand and improve performance against General Register Office key performance indicators over 2021/22. The service will work collectively with other register offices to lobby GRO for KPI's to be meaningful and set at realistic levels.

Digital focus

The service will work to further develop digital channels including:

- Re introducing online booking of birth and death appointments
- Improve the way customers book citizenship ceremonies
- Look to introduce online marriage and civil partnership ceremony booking
- Review systems and processes
- Comprehensive website and social media review

Maximising the asset that is George Meehan House

The service will take steps to:

- To work collectively with the greater Haringey Council to better promote manage and utilise George Meehan House
- Assist with commercialising George Meehan House
- Work with Parks and hopefully Friends of Woodside Park to make the George Meehan House garden and grounds a better, more aesthetically pleasing and valued asset for customers and the community

Further diversify and grow the customer base

The service will work within and with partners to explore ways that the customer base can be further diversified and help secure the medium to long term demand for its services.

Staffing and service review

The service will explore if there are better ways for the service to be organised

Medical examiners

The service will work with other boroughs to manage the introduction of medical examiners into districts without a hospital

Return of place of worship registers

The service will engage with its 86 authorised person churches to manage the efficient return of marriage registers now that marriages are registered using Marriage Schedules

Haringey Borough Plan 2019 to 2023 and post pandemic Haringey

The Borough Plan and the service will be working with other council areas and stakeholders to ensure that the priorities of the wider council reflect the workings of the Haringey Registration and Citizenship Service.

The Borough Plan can be found at:

<http://intranet/about-council/borough-plan-2019-23>

The service will also respond to new priorities brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic

Staff development

Haringey provides a range of tutored and non-tutored e-learning for all staff and compliments the training provided by the General Register Office. The service will continue to place an emphasis on all staff engaging in training and development.

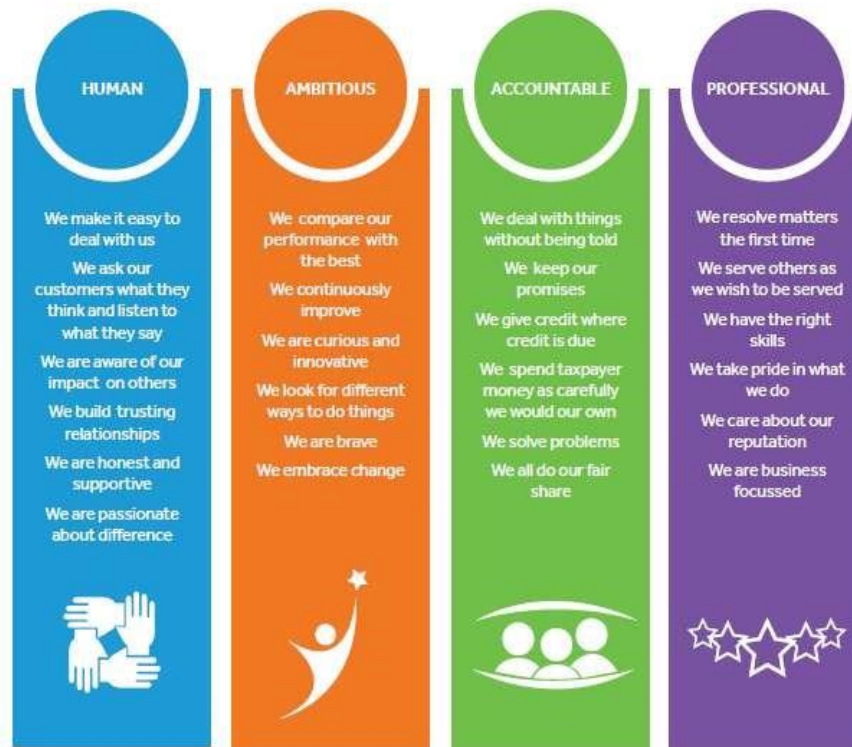
All staff receive regular My Conversations (121 and performance appraisal cross) and individual development plans are in place. Support and development is central to everything that the service does and a team meeting and training is provided at least once per month.

Our Values

The Haringey Registration and Citizenship follows the wider values of Haringey Council which cover being human, ambitious, accountable and professional. The principles of the four values can be seen below:

BUILDING A STRONGER **HARINGEY** TOGETHER

OUR VALUES



Haringey Registration and Citizenship Service's Vision, Aims and Key Priorities

Service Vision

To deliver timely, adaptable, accessible and innovative services that meet the diverse needs and communities that we serve.

Our Mission:

To provide a service that meets the needs of our customers. We believe that it is important to listen to those that use and are affected by our service.

We will deliver our mission:

1. By providing a service to clients based around their current and future needs.
2. By delivering excellent value for money services, using modern technology and sound business practices.
3. By promoting the highest standards of corporate governance.
4. By maintenance of robust financial management of the business to deliver high levels of services at a value for money cost
5. By developing all staff to achieve their professional and personal potential.

We will also:

1. Support Best Value whilst considering reasonableness, proportionality and recognising the Haringey Council protocols for customer engagement
2. Engage with customers on relevant issues which directly affect them
3. Use customer feedback to drive forward service improvement. Routinely collecting and analysing feedback on customer experiences and using this to identify areas for improvement and change
4. Engage with customers in a range of ways that meets their needs
5. Where relevant ask customers about proposed service developments to gain an understanding of the appetite for change to services e.g. opening times, new discretionary fees, etc.
6. Measure customer experience levels and publish these with an indication of volumes, dates and indicative return rates

Complaints and compliments

The department follows the Councils wider Complaints and compliments scheme. Details of the scheme are on display in all council public buildings and on the website at www.haringey.gov.uk/council-feedback with staff getting a letter from their Assistant Director when a customer credit them for good service. Formal complaint levels are very low with the service aiming to resolve issues at the earliest possible opportunity. All formal complaints are fully investigated and action taken as necessary to prevent the reoccurrence of problems.

APPENDIX A – Key Performance Targets

Good Practice Guide Statutory Standards

- 98% of births registered within 42 days of birth
- 98% of still births registered within 42 days of birth
- 90% of deaths (MCCD only) registered within 5 calendar days

- Coroner Part A registered within 5 days
- Coroner Part B (Post Mortem) registered within 7 days
- 95% of deaths involving an Inquest registered within 24 hours of receipt of coroner's certificate after inquest

Good Practice Guide: Operational Service Delivery and Performance Standards

Appointment availability

- 95% of Birth or Birth Declaration customers to get an appointment within 5 working days of request
- 95% of Death or Death Declaration customers to get an appointment within 2 working days of request
- 95% of Still Birth or Still Birth Declaration customers to get an appointment within 2 working days of request
- 95% of Marriage / Civil Partnership Notice customers to get an appointment within 10 working days of request and therefore to allow the marriage/CP to proceed at a time and venue of the customer's choice where reasonable and practical

Waiting times

- 90% of customers that arrive on time seen within 10 minutes of appointment time or 30 minutes when they do not have an appointment
- The service is committed to meeting all standards set in the Good Practice Guide to Registration Service Delivery.