

Member Briefing

Number: 1494

Title: Birth registrations to begin again from Monday

Summary: Information regarding the procedures in place to begin registering births again from Monday, 15 June.

Background

Restrictions introduced at the start of the COVID-19 lockdown meant the Council's Registration team had to suspend birth registrations. These restrictions were recently relaxed and the team will now be able to offer appointments for birth registrations from Monday, 15 June.

Legislation and procedures

In addition, new legislation - The Registration of Births and Deaths (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 - came into force 9 June 2020.

The regulations allow local authority registration teams in England to deploy a two-stage approach to registering a birth by introducing an additional step of gathering information by telephone in advance of a face-to-face appointment. There is still a requirement for one or both parents to attend an appointment with a registrar where all of the details required for the birth are checked with the parent(s) before they sign a declaration that the information they have supplied is accurate.

The legislative change provides benefits to local authorities who are currently unable to offer (or who have limited availability of) Covid-secure environments for a face-to-face appointment. It does, however, require parents to be available both for a telephone interview and then subsequently for a face-to-face interview. The same registrar is required throughout, that is, the registrar who carries out the face-to-face interview must be the same registrar who carried out the telephone interview. As the registration is not complete until the face-to-face interview has been carried out this requirement – to have the same registrar - introduces the potential for delays in the registration of a birth.

Our arrangements

The Council's Registration team is able to provide Covid-secure environments so will begin booking appointments for face-to-face registrations to take place from Monday 15 June.

A media release will be issued to let new parents know about the new arrangements. Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms, or with a member of their household with symptoms, is being asked not to attend the offices and to wait to register the birth until it is safe to do so. If anyone in your household is self-isolating and/or currently shielding, please wait to register the birth when it is safe to do so.

The legislation governing death registrations is different from that for birth registrations as there is currently no requirement for a face-to-face interview for death registrations. Death registrations have been permitted to take place throughout the pandemic and have been carried out by telephone.

For further information, contact: Sarah Armstrong

Email: sarah.armstrong@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Responsible Committee, Cabinet Member: Councillor Karen Shore **Date:** 11 June 2020