

MONMOUTHSHIRE REGISTRATION SERVICE

PERFORMANCE REPORT 2024/25

PERFORMANCE & OVERVIEW COMMITTEE 10th June 2025

1.1 Purpose

Scrutiny of the Registration Service and its' performance during the 2024/25 year.

2. Recommendations

2.1 To consider and comment on the content of this report. The report serves to outline the services provided by the Registration Service (set out at Appendix 1), describe current performance and highlight future challenges.

2.2 An annual performance report, to be presented to this Committee in future years. In this way, Members can assess performance over time for this crucial element of the Authority's work.

3. Key Issues

3.1 To maintain a high level of customer satisfaction for our residents whilst managing and responding to public demand and providing an excellent, value-for-money service.

4. Performance during 2024/2025:

4.1 The General Register Office sets targets and key performance indicators on statutory time frames and customer service priorities. Each month GRO publishes the performance data for each District on our system so we can monitor our own performance and compare it to similar districts and nationally. Any District that is perceived to be failing to meet the standards will have meetings with their Compliance Officer to look at ways to improve performance. Monmouthshire has not required any such meeting this year.

Type of appointment	Total for year 2024-2025	% within statutory time-frame	Last year's figures for comparison
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Births (births registered for another district – not in KPI)	21 (633)	95% (below target, one birth registration outside target time)	23
Deaths	1019 (497 within criteria for KPI)	94% (below target – 29 registrations out of target time)	1034
Still-births	0	N/A	0
RO & AP Marriages (all marriages registered in Monmouthshire)	704 (786)	N/A	652 (760)
Civil Partnerships	14	N/A	15
Notices of marriage/CP	692	N/A	766
New British citizens	30	N/A	38
Customers seen within 10 mins of appointment/arrival time	All customers	100%	100%
Appt.s offered within time-frame guidelines	All types	100%	100%

4.2 Marriages and Civil Partnerships: 704 marriages and 14 civil partnerships registered between 34 approved premises and the register office. The total number of marriages registered within Monmouthshire is also included, these additional ceremonies are religious. GRO have set a 7 day target for marriages to be registered on the national system following the ceremony (2 days for CPs) Over the summer, due to the high number of ceremonies, it continues to be a struggle to meet these targets. We monitor this closely to try to ensure sufficient time is allocated to staff to manage this task and it is an improving picture.

The Office for National Statistics published a report in June 2024 year on marriage statistics for 2022. This report confirmed that throughout England and Wales, Monmouthshire had the highest percentage increase in ceremonies from 2019 to 2022 at 67.4%.

[Marriages in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)

There were also news reports confirming that per capita of population, Monmouthshire had the highest rates of marriage in Wales, and 5th highest in England and Wales.

4.3 Birth numbers in Monmouthshire remain low following the closure of the maternity unit at Nevill Hall Hospital. The low numbers mean that each individual birth has a significant impact on the percentages for the target.

The figures in the table above include a figure for birth registrations completed for other Districts across 'Gwent' through partnership working. Partnership working contributes to the figures for Torfaen's birth registrations which is currently at 98% of target.

The figures for Welsh Districts range from 93% to 100%, the overall figure for Wales as an area is on target 95%

4.3 Deaths – The process for registering deaths changed significantly in September when the Medical Examiner's role became statutory. The new process takes longer than the previous process and additional difficulties have been encountered in embedding the process, which have caused further delays. We have regular meetings with the Medical Examiners office so we are aware of the steps they are taking to try to reduce the time and resolve the problems they have encountered.

The target for the registration service changed to registering a death within 5 days of the Medical Certificate being signed. At 94% Monmouthshire is 1% below target and would expect to hit target next year, after a full year of the new process.

The figures for Wales range from 88% to 99% and the overall figure for Wales as an area is 96%, above target.

4.4 Audit – The Register Office had a financial audit in the autumn and received a '**Reasonable Assurance**' opinion rating reflecting that generally a sound system of governance, risk management and control exists.

4.5 Oversight: We have had our annual meeting with our compliance officer to highlight and discuss legislative changes in the pipeline and our response to the introduction of the statutory Medical Examiner process. This meeting also introduced the new Proper Officer to the Compliance Officer.

4.5 Customer feedback – we regularly receive feedback from couples following ceremonies however we are still developing the mechanism for feedback to be requested following birth and death registrations.

'Hi J and team,

E and I wanted to extend our deepest gratitude for the outstanding support and assistance you provided in organising our wedding. Your professionalism and amazing support made the entire process seamless and stress-free. From guiding us through the necessary paperwork to accommodating our requests with kindness, your efforts ensured that our special day was perfect. We are incredibly grateful for everything you did for us, and we will always remember your kindness and dedication. Thank you once again for making our wedding day so memorable.

E & E'

'Dear MCC ceremonies

I just wanted to say thank you to the registrar for the lovely service on Saturday for our wedding. We are just watching the video now and it reminded me to message you.

It was perfect.

D and S P'

'Hello,

We just wanted to say a HUGE thank you for leading our ceremony on Sunday! N, you were more than we could have wished for, passionate and fun getting our day off to the perfect start.

Thank you so much,

S & J'

Hi N , I don't think we had a chance to thank you properly on the day after our marriage but thanks so much for the great way you conducted the legalities :) You set the tone for the whole day . We had a great day from start to finish - nothing could have gone better really so thanks again

Best wishes

D & E x

Hello!

We had our wedding at Llantilio House back in the summer, 24th August and I just wanted to send you this picture as it's one of my favourites, and I hope it reaches the lovely Registrar who conducted our ceremony. I can't recall her name I'm afraid

but she was the loveliest, warmest person and I think that's shows in the photo!
Please pass on our heartfelt thanks! She read a beautiful Welsh blessing to close our ceremony, and I love it so much, it's being printed and framed in our new home!
Kind regards,
H and J B

5 Challenges/Future Proofing:

5.1 Partnership working continues across 'Gwent' for birth registrations, enabling us to meet demand and support each other if any office is facing specific pressures.

5.2 We have to be very flexible, to meet the demand for registration appointments, which can change on an almost daily basis. The biggest challenge within Registration is to keep on top of the constant developments in legislation and changes in the local environment.

5.4 It remains a balancing act to ensure that we have sufficient staff to conduct the ceremonies without too much pressure on individual availability as most of our ceremony staff have other jobs Monday to Friday. Plus, there has to be enough work for each individual to ensure that we meet their expectations and maintain their skills during quieter periods.

5.5. There has still, to date, been no response from the Government to the Law Commission report on marriage therefore we don't know what changes if any, might be coming down the line to marriage law. It is still the case currently that only Registration staff can conduct civil marriages so we are trying to attend as many wedding fayres at our venues as possible to explain to the venues and our couples exactly what we are able to do for them.

Appendix 1:

Register office remit and purpose

A1.1 Civil registration has been mandatory in the UK since 1837. Initially Registration Officers were employed by our Head Office, the General Register Office but that changed in 2007 and we are now employed by the Local Authority. Monmouthshire became the District that it is now for the purposes of registration in 1996 as part of the Local Government restructure, prior to that it was Abergavenny, Monmouth and

Chepstow and was occasionally partly in England. Boundaries historically have changed regularly which has often resulted in registers moving around between Offices, and Churches and Hospitals suddenly reporting to a different area. We are the custodians of the records of all Births, Deaths and Marriages which have taken place in Monmouthshire since 1837. They are all stored and safeguarded within our strong room.

A1.2 The Registration Service currently sits within Public Protection, under Social Care and Health and this fits well with our remit, which has expanded over the years to become more customer focussed, and to take on additional duties on behalf of the Home Office, for example reporting possible sham marriages, vulnerable persons within the community, fraudulent applications for the issue of certificates, and sending statistical information to the Office for National Statistics about births and mortality. All of this information allows the Council to make informed decisions about priorities for the future, be it school provision, or targeting specific health issues in specific areas, which in turn allows the council to contribute directly to the well-being goals in Wales

A1.3 Each year we prepare an annual report to GRO and a Seasonal Variance Plan as well as our Monmouthshire Service Improvement Plan and Business Continuity Report.

2. The purpose of the Registration Service is as follows:

- The registration of all births, deaths and stillbirths occurring within the County
- Taking notices of intended marriages and civil partnerships from persons resident within the County
- Conducting and registering all civil marriages and civil partnerships (including conversions from civil partnership to marriage) taking place in any venue registered or licensed for the purpose, including prisons and hospitals or private residences in certain circumstances
- Registering religious marriages where required
- Conducting citizenship ceremonies for Monmouthshire residents who make successful applications for British nationality
- Safe custody of all historic records of births, deaths, civil partnerships and marriages dating back to 1837 and issue of certified copies of these records on demand
- Inspection and registration of new venues for marriage and civil partnership
- Giving assistance and advice to all customers on all aspects of registration, citizenship and nationality

- Providing data for vital work on population statistics and medical research
- Management of data; including protection of both physical and electronic data and assisting with public protection and counter fraud by reporting suspicious applications and sham marriages as well as suspicions about immigration abuse and other crimes
- Safeguarding secure stock and accounting for fees
- Promote and contribute to the Home Office priorities

3. Premises:

5.1 We are based next door in the Old Parlour, we employ a team of 23, 15 on a casual basis for ceremonies only. The staff are made up of me, the Superintendent Registrar, one Registrar, Jenny Luciani, and 6 Deputies who can all register births, deaths and marriages and also take notices of marriage (6 FTE). Most also conduct ceremonies. The staff are all deliberately trained to the highest level to provide the maximum flexibility and resilience to the service.

5.2 As well as the Old Parlour we have 3 out-stations, at Nevill Hall and at the Hubs in Chepstow and Monmouth, to help us provide the best possible service to residents. During the pandemic we stopped attending the out-stations and held all appointments in the Register Office so that we could better control our environment, however we are now attending all 3 on a regular basis.

5.3 The Approved Premises, which are venues which have chosen to licence rooms for marriages and civil partnerships, cover the length and breadth of Monmouthshire, there are 32 in total at the present time, and we are very fortunate to enjoy a very good relationship with them all. Covering such a large area and striving to provide the chosen days and times for each couple can be a challenge but it is vital that we all work together to give each couple the best service possible and promote Monmouthshire at every opportunity.