



HM Passport
Office

General Register Office
Parliamentary Correspondence Unit
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Our Ref: GROPC/15/519

Tracey Crouch MP
House of Commons
London
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19 November 2015

Dear Ms Crouch

Re: Inclusion of Mothers' Names on Marriage Certificates

Thank you for your letter of 19 October you have received from a number of your constituents, who are asking you to add your support to an Early Day Motion raised by Caroline Lucas MP on 14 September 2015 calling for the mother's name to be added to the marriage entry.

The details entered into a marriage register, and therefore produced on a certificate, are set out in law and there can only be one form of marriage register in use at any one time. Currently, the law only allows for the details of the fathers of the bride and groom to be recorded, but not the mothers. The format of the marriage entry is historic and the Government agrees that there should be provision to include the mother's name.


Marriage registers are bound books issued to those responsible for registering marriages. Consequently, any change to the format of the marriage entry would necessitate the closure of those registers currently in use and the issue of new registers to those responsible for registering marriages. These include registrars, the clergy of the Church of England and the Church in Wales, ministers of other churches and chapels, registering officers of the Society of Friends and Secretaries of Synagogues. There are approximately 84,000 open marriage registers in use in register offices and some 30,000 religious buildings and replacing them would be a costly and lengthy process. Achieving this will require the amendment of existing legislation, is likely to require additional funding, and would also involve updating the computer systems and administrative processes used by Her Majesty's Passport Office and local registration services.

Notwithstanding this complicated position, I can confirm that the Home Office is actively working with all interested parties to confirm the most efficient and effective way to enable mothers' names to be recorded in the marriage register entry. When there is an opportunity to legislate, the Government will confirm a timetable for the transition to a new system to introduce the changes.

I hope that this helps to clarify the position.

Yours sincerely



 **Mark Thomson**
Director General & Registrar General
Her Majesty's Passport Office