

Andy Slaughter MP
Chair, Justice Select Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

MoJ ref: SUB127780

2 October 2025

Dear Andy,

WEDDINGS REFORM

In January, you wrote to Lord Ponsonby asking (amongst other things) when the Government intends to respond to the Law Commission's 2022 report: *Celebrating Marriage: A New Weddings Law*, and what the Government's position is on future reform to Humanist marriages. Lord Ponsonby responded in February explaining that the Government was giving this lengthy report proper and careful consideration before setting out a public position.

I am therefore pleased to write to you with a substantial update. Today we have announced that the Government intends to reform weddings law when parliamentary time allows, with a view to undertaking a consultation on the detail of reform early next year. Our reforms will be underpinned by two key features, as recommended by the Law Commission's 2022 report referenced above.

First, the legal framework will shift from a system based on the regulation of buildings to one focused on the regulation of the officiant responsible for the wedding ceremony. This change will remove restrictions on where weddings take place, provided ceremonies meet strict requirements to ensure they remain seemly and dignified.

Second, we will introduce a single set of universal rules for all weddings, with the exception of Anglican weddings. This will remove the wide range of inconsistencies in the current law, simplify the process of getting married and will enable us to create a level playing field for all groups. As a consequence of these changes, humanist celebrants will be able to conduct legally binding weddings in England and Wales for the first time.

However, weddings reform is about much more than just weddings law; it is about marriage and its meaning in society. Weddings mark the beginning of marriage, a lifelong partnership that provides emotional support, financial security, and legal protections. Because marriage plays a vital role in society, we want to protect and strengthen the institution through weddings reform while giving couples greater choice and flexibility to marry in a way that is meaningful to them.

Reforms will also support the Government's mission to Kickstart Economic Growth, boosting the economy by an estimated £535 million over a decade, creating 12,000 jobs in the wedding sector, and making weddings more affordable for couples.

My officials will continue to engage with a wide range of interested groups, including Humanists UK to build consensus on the remaining policy details in the lead up to, and throughout, the upcoming consultation.

I will deposit a copy of this letter in the Library of the House.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'The Baroness Levitt', with a long horizontal flourish extending from the end.

THE BARONESS LEVITT KC