

Advice - Getting Married in China – British Citizens.

INFORMATION ON MARRIAGE TO A CHINESE NATIONAL

If you are a British Citizen and you wish to marry in China, the local authorities require that you produce a document to show that you are free to marry. This document is called a Certificate of No-Impediment (CNI) and can be obtained from the British Embassy Beijing Consular Section, or your local registrar in the UK.

BRITISH EMBASSY, BEIJING

Under the Marriage with Foreigners Act 1906 you must reside continuously in China for 21 clear days before giving notice of your intended marriage. The period of residence must be immediately prior to acceptance of the notice. 21 clear days means that the day you arrive in China or the day you submit your Notice of Intention to Marry may not be counted. It is necessary for the applicant to visit this office. No appointment is necessary; the office hours are 08.30 - 12.00 and 13.00 - 15.30. On a visit to this office, it is necessary to swear an affidavit before a Consular Officer, in addition to completing the notice of intent to marry. For the affidavit we require your full name and an address in the United Kingdom, your partner's full name and address in English (Pinyin), your passport and, if you have been married before, the original divorce decree or death certificate which shows any previous marriage is no longer subsisting. The notice of intent to marry should be completed during your visit. For this, the Chinese partner's name and full address is required in Chinese characters. The notice is displayed at this office for a period of 21 days after which time a Certificate of no Impediment is issued in both English and Chinese. Once issued, the certificate is valid for use for three months. If it is not used within this time, you will have to repeat the procedure. You should check with the local Chinese authorities as to their residency requirements. Some areas state that a foreigner must have been living in China continuously for a period of six months before being allowed to marry here.

For the cost of this service, please refer to our list of fees for consular services. In addition, there is a 30 RMB fee for the postage of the certificate by EMS. Details required for EMS postage service are: name, full address in Chinese Characters, post code and telephone number.

We have been advised by the Beijing Marriage Registration Office of the Beijing Municipal People's

Government that two foreigners can marry in Beijing provided at least one of them is in possession of a Chinese residency card. Please contact them direct for further information at the addresses below;

Marriage Registration Office

Ministry of Civil Affairs
No 147 Bei HeYan Dajie
Dong Cheng District
Tel: 62028454

or

Marriage Registration Office
Beijing Municipal People's Government
No 36 Dongxi Dajie
Tel:6512 4422

LOCAL REGISTRY OFFICE, UK

You can also apply for a Certificate of No-Impediment from a Register Office in the UK. The procedure is the same as for marriage in the UK. The applicant must complete the notice of intent to marry and will need to show the required documents (as listed above; the same as if you apply at the British Embassy, Beijing). The notice is then displayed at the Register Office for 21 days, and a certificate is issued. The certificate will be in English only. Once issued it should be sent to the Chinese Embassy in London for authentication. We have no details of the charges for these services.

For the document to be accepted by the relevant Chinese Authorities it will be necessary for it to be notarised by a Consular Officer at the British Embassy. In some circumstances this service can be performed by post. The certificate of no impediment issued in the UK should be sent to the Consular Office of the British Embassy, Beijing along with the Chinese partners' name in Chinese characters. For the cost of this service, please refer to our list of fees for consular services, plus 30 RMB postage.

A marriage that takes place in China is recognised under UK law. While it is not possible to obtain a British Marriage certificate you may, if you wish, deposit your Chinese certificate with the General Registrar's Office (GRO) as a means of obtaining further copies of the documents in the UK rather than from the Chinese authorities.

The normal procedure is to send your original marriage certificate, together with a translation to the

consular officer in the district where the marriage took place. After checking that the certificate has been issued by the proper authorities, and that the translation is accurate, the consular officer will forward the documents to the General Register Office for deposit. You should note that neither the certificate nor its translation will be returned to you. They will be kept by the General Register Office in order that certified copies may be issued when required.

The statutory Consular fee for this service is £20 payable in local currency (please refer to our list of fees for consular services for local rates) and your, or your spouses, full British Passport will be required as evidence of British Nationality; this will be returned to you as soon as possible.