

Your Family Tree Series: 25



General Register Office

The General Register Office is part of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and is primarily concerned with the administration of the registration of births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships. The registers themselves are not open to inspection, but information from them is supplied in the form of certificates. The office does not engage in genealogical research although the records can contain valuable information for anyone compiling a family tree.

What information is available?

Registers of births and deaths (from 1864) and registers of marriages (from 1845) for Northern Ireland only. These civil registers make up the main series of records maintained by the General Register Office.

Where are the registers held?

In the General Register Office in Belfast, birth and death registers are available for the period on and after 1 January 1864, marriage registers are only available for marriages on and after 1 January 1922.

In the District Registrars' offices marriage registers dating from 1 April 1845 for non Roman Catholic marriages and 1 January 1864 for all marriages are available but birth and death registrations are available only from 1997.

What other records of births, deaths and marriages are held?

Adopted children register (from 1931)

Records of persons adopted under orders made by Courts in Northern Ireland on or after 1 January 1931.

Marine register of births (from 1922)

Records of births at sea of children who were registered on or after 1 January 1922, one of whose parents was born in Northern Ireland.

Marine register of deaths (from 1922)

Records of deaths at sea of persons born in Northern Ireland where death was registered on or after 1 January 1922.

Service Department registers (from 1927)

Records of births, deaths and marriages registered on or after 1 January 1927 by way of "Army Act 1879".

Consular returns of births (from 1922)

Records of births of children of Northern Ireland parents born abroad and registered by British Consuls on or after 1 January 1922.

Consular returns of deaths (from 1922)

Records of deaths of Northern Ireland persons registered by British Consuls abroad on or after 1 January 1922.

Consular returns of marriages (from 1923)

Records of marriages of Northern Ireland persons registered by British Consuls on and after 1 January 1923.

High Commissioner's returns of births, deaths and marriages (from 1950)

Records of births, deaths and marriages of Northern Ireland persons registered by the British High Commissioner in Commonwealth countries on or after 1 January 1950.

Foreign marriages (from 1947)

Certified copies of certificates (with translations) relating to marriages of persons from Northern Ireland in certain foreign countries according to the laws of these countries, without the presence of a British Consular Officer.

War deaths

Records of deaths of persons born in Northern Ireland who died on War service between 1939 and 1948.

Information required

How do you apply for birth, death, marriage and civil partnership certificates?

You can apply for these in person, by telephone or fax or on-line at the [General Register Office](#) or by post to the General Register Office, Oxford House, 49-55 Chichester Street, Belfast BT1 4HL.

Personal applications are processed within 3 working days and postal, telephone, fax and on-line applications are processed within 7 working days.

Application forms are available from the General Register Office, District Registrars' Offices, Citizens Advice Bureaux and PRONI.

Birth Certificates

Full name of person whose birth certificate is required. Date and place of birth. Names of parents (including Mother's maiden name).

Marriage/Civil Partnerships Certificates

Full names of the married couple (including Bride's maiden name). Date and place of marriage/civil partnership.

Death Certificates

Full name of deceased. Date and place of death.

The GRO can undertake a search provided they are given sufficient information about the person concerned. If the search is likely to be too time consuming because of lack of information, the GRO cannot undertake the task. You will therefore be asked to conduct the search personally or arrange for someone else to search on your behalf.

Searches

General searching for tracing family trees can be carried out in person by anyone over 16 years of age. See below for details.

Search only

For each 5 year period or part of it the cost is £6.00.

Assisted Search

General search of records assisted by members of GRO Staff for any period of years and any number of entries. However there is a waiting list for this service and bookings must be made in advance (preferably 2-4 weeks). The cost is £26.00 per hour.

Index Search

The indexes up to the present have now been computerised and are available for searching for a period not exceeding 6 hours. Cost is £12.00 which includes 4 verifications with the option of further verifications at £3.00 each. Bookings should be made as you may need to give 2-4 weeks notice.

Indexes available

Birth Indexes, 1864 - to present; Death Indexes, 1864 - to present; Non-Catholic Marriage Indexes, 1845 - to present; All Marriage Indexes, 1864 - present.

