

New divorce laws will come into force from 6 April 2022

On 6 April this year changes to the legislation on divorce will come into force. We will be launching a new online service to accommodate this change.

The old service will be unavailable from 31 March 2022 while we prepare for these changes.

Changes to divorce law

The Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Act 2020 reforms the legal requirements and process for divorce. The act aims to reduce the potential for conflict amongst divorcing couples by:

- removing the ability to make allegations about the conduct of a spouse
- allowing couples to end their marriage jointly

The act also introduces a minimum period of 20 weeks between the start of proceedings and application for conditional order. This provides couples with a meaningful period of reflection and the chance to reconsider. Where divorce is inevitable, it enables couples to cooperate and plan for the future.

It will no longer be possible to contest a divorce, except on limited grounds including jurisdiction.

If you're getting divorced and have started your application

If you have an application saved on the current digital service and still want proceed, you'll need to access your account and submit your application by 4pm on 31 March 2022.

Alternatively, you can wait until the new digital service is launched. If you still want to apply for a divorce, you can start your application again from 6 April 2022.

If you've started filling out a paper application form, you'll need to make sure it's received by the court by 4pm 31 March 2022. If you're sending it in the post, you'll need to make sure it reaches the court by that date.

If you haven't started your application

It can take time to get the right documents together for your application. So, if you haven't started an application yet, you may want to wait until the new services are available from 6 April 2022.

Important dates

Whether you're a solicitor or applying for a divorce yourself, remember:

- from 31 March 2022 you can no longer apply on the current paper or digital systems or access a saved digital application which is yet to be issued by the court
- from 31 March to 5 April 2022 the digital service will not accept new applications
- from 6 April 2022 the new paper and digital services will be available

Urgent applications

Urgent applications can only be used when the issue of the divorce petition is time critical. This includes when time is critical for jurisdiction or when a freezing injunction is needed. You'll likely need legal advice to make an application.

We'll continue to accept urgent applications that need to be considered after the deadlines set out above and before the 6th April. We'll issue where possible, if received by post or email, before 4pm on the 5th April.

If you're submitting your urgent application by email, use this address: onlineDFRjurisdiction@justice.gov.uk (this inbox will not be monitored after 4pm on 5 April 2022).

Additional information

Decree Nisi and Decree Absolute applications that have been issued will be saved and remain available on the service.

More information on [getting a divorce](#) is available on GOV.UK.

G7 Leaders' Statement: 24 February 2022

We, the Leaders of the Group of Seven (G7), met virtually today and resolved to make progress towards an equitable world. As open democracies, we are driven by shared values and universal human rights, our commitment to the rules-based multilateral system, sustainable development and the needs of the wider global community. We are united in our commitment to addressing both the biggest systemic challenges and immediate crises of our time.

We condemn in the strongest possible terms the Russian invasion of Ukraine. We declare our unwavering support and solidarity for Ukraine and have issued a separate statement on the situation in and around Ukraine.

More broadly, we commit to protect and strengthen democratic systems and to step up our cooperation on global priorities such as climate, environment, and health. The commitments we make today will shape our path towards a

sustainable and inclusive economic recovery, and a prosperous and peaceful future.

Working towards a sustainable planet, we reaffirm and will implement our climate commitments made in Paris and Glasgow across mitigation, adaptation and finance, as well as our wider commitments to the environment and biodiversity. We continue to commit to a 1.5°C pathway, transition to a net-zero economy and climate neutrality by 2050 at latest, including through accelerated decarbonisation this decade. To this end we urge all countries, especially major emitters, whose 2030 targets are not yet aligned with these goals, to revisit and strengthen them by COP27 in line with their commitments. We will explore establishing an open, cooperative international Climate Club, consistent with international rules, and with participation beyond the G7. We are committed to achieving a true paradigm shift, by demonstrating that ambitious climate action is conducive to strong and sustainable growth for all economies. We task our relevant Ministers to make progress on concrete policies to effectively reduce emissions such as carbon pricing, on a transformational agenda for our economies, and on international support and engagement to partners beyond the G7 – in particular towards emerging markets and developing countries, including through tailor made just energy transition partnerships. We recommit to the global mission to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030.

We aim to deliver on economic stability and transformation. Following unprecedented economic support for the global economy, stability- and growth-oriented economic policy and sound public finances shall guide our pathway to recovery that supports investment, quality job creation and prosperity for all. In the face of current geopolitical tensions, pandemic-related uncertainties and macroeconomic challenges, notably including elevated inflation dynamics, we remain unwaveringly committed to driving strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive recovery and long-term growth in our economies and worldwide, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement, enabling the green and digital transformation in a socially just and gender equitable way. We will support progress towards the global ambition of USD 100 bn of support to countries most in need, including through the voluntary channeling of Special Drawing Rights or equivalent contributions. We will also continue to monitor major global risks, including those arising from heightened geopolitical tensions. We are committed to ensuring energy security. Recalling the critical importance of free, fair and sustainable trade, we remain strongly committed to reforming and strengthening the rules-based multilateral trading system and will work together to bolster the resilience and sustainability of global supply chains and energy markets, while continuing to consult on collective approaches to policies and practices which undermine the fair and transparent operation of the global economy. We reaffirm our commitment to ensure the swift global implementation of the historic 2021 G20/OECD two-pillar international tax package towards a fairer global tax system.

To promote healthy lives worldwide, we will step up our efforts to tackle COVID-19 and prepare for future pandemics and health crises globally. We reaffirm our commitment to support the leading and coordinating role of World

Health Organisation (WHO) and to contribute to the WHO's goal of 70% COVID-19 vaccination coverage worldwide. We will support all pillars of the ACT-Accelerator. Our collective action will include following up on all of our 2021 commitments and making new commitments for 2022, including financial pledges and accompanying measures such as vaccine rollout. We will continue our collective efforts to end the pandemic in 2022, and more broadly support health sovereignty at national and regional levels, including by intensifying our support to local vaccine production, distribution and scientific research worldwide. We will fortify long-term pandemic prevention, preparedness and response, including through the One-Health approach, and further improving the coverage of pathogen surveillance networks, advance universal health coverage and strengthen equitable and resilient and gender-responsive health systems as well as the global health architecture while working towards appropriate financing mechanisms.

We are committed to investing in a better future. We reconfirm our resolve to narrow the infrastructure investment gap in emerging markets and developing countries, through partnerships such as Build Back Better World, Global Gateway, Clean Green Initiative, G20 Compact with Africa and others, in particular in Africa and the Indo-Pacific. We will deliver a step change in our approach to sustainable financing and quality infrastructure, highlighting the importance of international rules and standards adhered to by all actors, thereby contributing to a strong and inclusive recovery from the pandemic and rapid progress towards global climate, health, food security, digital, transport and energy connectivity, education infrastructure, gender equality and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. To this end, we task relevant Ministers together with Sherpas, to work with developing country and emerging market partners, as well as International Finance Institutions and development banks, to build and strengthen regional and country-led partnerships.

Above all, we share the conviction that we are stronger together. As a community based on shared values, we are committed to open, inclusive and equitable societies and to democracy, human rights, freedom and gender equality, and we are determined to shape the digital transformation, including by updating our regulatory frameworks. We will collaborate with partners to advance democracy and human rights and stand ready to act as bridge-builder and mediator for lasting peace, security and prosperity, in a rules-based multilateral order.

To this end, we will take concrete actions, task our relevant Ministers and Sherpas, and take stock of the progress made at the G7 Leaders' Summit to be held from 26 to 28 June 2022 in Elmau.

Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioner speech at the National ANPR Conference 29 November 2021

Thank you for your kind invitation to this key event which addresses one of the most critical aspects of policing surveillance technology. I'm Fraser Sampson and I'm the – no longer quite so new – Surveillance Camera Commissioner having replaced Tony Porter in March. I'm also the Biometrics Commissioner having also replaced Paul Wiles in March. The government is planning to simplify the arrangements for oversight and regulation in this area and so to that extent at least I am the walking embodiment of simplification – 2 commissioners in one pair of shoes.

When considering the sprawling issues covered by these roles I usually look at them from 3 vantage points: the technological (what's possible) the legal (what's permissible) and the societal (what's acceptable). And while the technology often gets a lot of the 'look what they can do now' headlines I'm going to focus on the combined effect of the technological, legal and societal developments. Now these aren't discrete categories and they overlap in many areas – but they're helpful in framing some of the issues in what is a very fast moving and increasingly complex area.

Let's start with the law. Lawyers love a definition so how about this one:- "A critical system, the loss or compromise of which would result in major detrimental impact on the availability, delivery or integrity of essential services, leading to severe economic or social consequences or to loss of life." You may recognise that as the government's definition of our Critical National Infrastructure.

Transport is of course one of the wider areas but does our ANPR capability meet the definition all by itself?

A "critical system"? In terms of Its contribution to overt and covert investigations, traffic monitoring, vehicle safety, safeguarding, disrupting organised crime, counter-terrorism unarguable I think. Would the loss or compromise of the National ANPR system result in major detrimental impact on the availability, delivery or integrity of essential services, leading to severe economic or social consequences or to loss of life?

The NASPLE Document (at 8.9.7.) makes provision for what it describes as "the unlikely event that connections to the National ANPR System are unavailable for more than 7 days". What would happen if the system itself was unavailable to the police for 7 hours or even 7 minutes? It would be like switching off the internet. It wouldn't just be an unlikely event – it would be unthinkable.

Perhaps wait until the end of the conference but I believe that each of the speakers from whom you will hear are witnesses whose evidence will corroborate my proposition that ANPR is now part of our CNI.

If it is part of our critical national infrastructure – and it is unquestionably part of our Critical Policing Infrastructure – shouldn't it have an express legal basis? The lawyers will know why it should but let's shift vantage points for a moment and look at ANPR from a citizen's perspective.

Wouldn't the person on – or even driving – the famous Clapham omnibus expect to be able to look up such an intrusive tool and its parameters in an act of Parliament with all the express enabling sections, limitations and safeguards which have been the product of democratic scrutiny?

Pity the poor motorist who begins a quest to find out who can look at their ANPR data and for what purposes. It's a perfectly reasonable Q for them to ask. But try to plot their journey through the GDPR and Law Enforcement Directive, the Data Protection Act, the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act, the Protection of Freedoms Act – eventually arriving at the NASPLE document – consider their epic journey through our current regulatory landscape and the case for greater legal clarity and consolidation is made out from the citizen's perspective too. You could of course begin the journey at the NASPLE document but I fear many would never arrive at their destination.

The Societal perspective – what's acceptable to people whether it's legally permissible or not – is where the future of biometric surveillance is being shaped across the world. The evidence for that proposition is set out in my formal responses to recent government consultations and we ignore it at our peril.

ANPR is a well-established form of surveillance – The fact that it's established is important – because people have grown up with it and to an extent have so far – generally – trusted its use – or at least haven't been as worried about its misuse as some newer surveillance capability – In that respect ANPR is a bit like old school Closed Circuit TV – but there is nothing closed about our surveillance systems anymore – in fact their adaptability and scalability is one of their strengths. Technological capability means that – like other forms of surveillance – ANPR can now do far more than it was originally designed to do. Increasingly it's able to capture non-vehicular data, monitoring people, their behaviour, associations, networks and habits – not just the driver but occupants. Which means it's increasingly difficult to separate its output from the mass of aggregated surveillance data. This is important both for the legal perspective and also the societal one.

In terms of the law, the revised Surveillance Camera Code provides – at 1.3 – “A surveillance camera system should only be used in a public place for the specific purpose or purposes it was established to address. It should not be used for other purposes that would not have justified its establishment in the first place.” – that's an interesting test. – partly because people's attitudes and awareness have changed. When looking at increasing the functionality of ANPR in the future ask yourself whether this new purpose would have justified its establishment at the outset.

It goes on to provide that “Any proposed extension to the purposes for which a system was established and images and information are collected should be subject to consultation before any decision is taken. When using surveillance systems, you can only use the data for a new purpose if either this is compatible with your original purpose, you get consent from individuals, or you have a clear obligation or function set out in law”.

In terms of what’s acceptable, since this audience last met there have been some very specific policing issues arising from the exigencies of the COVID 19 pandemic. Aside from the relationships between communities and their police where there has been a blurring of law enforcement and health enforcement, the use of ANPR to identify potential breaches of lockdown arrangements has attracted criticism in some areas – how has that been received more broadly by our communities? We should probably find out. The exigencies of the COVID pandemic required temporary, emergency measures and it is critical to ensure that they were exactly that – temporary and used only to the extent necessary to counter the threat at the time. I’ve reported to Parliament on this in the very specific context of National Security Determinations but I think there’s a much wider need to assure ourselves that we’re not living – as if in a constant state of emergency. Temporary structures can become very convenient particularly when the demands of the day job are unrelenting and they can quickly become a permanent fixture – ask anyone who’s worked in a Portakabin.

But the risk of permanent and irreversible incursion by the state during times of emergency is well documented and one of our many challenges now will be to ensure that the balance between responsible intrusion, accountable regulation and societal expectation is resumed. I think this will be particularly important in retaining public support for the use of ANPR.

Aside from the emergency provisions, integrated surveillance solutions themselves bring their own challenges. Will people still be as accepting of ANPR once it can recognise the occupants of a moving vehicle, identifying their children, when and where they got their flu jabs, their passport and if they’ve paid their tax bill?

Integration can bring new ethical considerations too. I spoke recently at a security conference where a former intelligence officer asked why Hikvision routinely fitted ANPR capability in all of its CCTV cameras sold in the UK. I don’t know the answer and to be fair to them they weren’t present to answer my questions either. But Parliament has heard how their surveillance systems are facilitating human rights atrocities against Uyghur Muslims in Northern China. How comfortable would policing professionals be in teaming up with a company that is capable of doing that? How much of their money would your local communities like to see spent on contributing to the profits of those companies? The more intrusive your technological capability, the more careful you need to be about who you partner up with.

Back to the permissible and the acceptable – Proportionality is a key legal concept as we know and it’s a relative concept – the greater the anticipated harm the more room for intrusive tactics. When stacked up against the global threat of a pandemic, “local law enforcement tactics” can suddenly become

“proportionate” in a way previously only seen in high harm criminality such as terrorism or even national security. When measured in terms of the enormity of the overall global threat the citizen’s individual expectation of privacy can be easily overridden – but is that really a legitimate comparator?

If it is, how about the end of the world? Literally – that’s what climate change and the COP26 risks are ultimately about. Does that mean the State can use whatever methods it likes in the name of combatting climate change because nothing is comparable to the enormity of the overall threat? If so, using ANPR to enforce low emission zones is a breeze and the privacy of the individual citizen will be easily blown away.

In such a fast-moving and unpredictable area as biometrics and surveillance, identifying and balancing what is technologically possible with what is legally permissible and societally acceptable is as good a starting point as I can come up with.

In terms of the possible – Large volumes of valuable data can now be merged quickly and easily with datasets from a wide variety of other sources including surveillance camera systems – publicly and privately owned – with greater accuracy and specificity. The clear bright line beyond which this becomes Directed surveillance is perhaps becoming less clear and less bright than in the past but Technological developments in biometrics and surveillance have meant that our capability to prepare for, respond to and recover from global crises has increased beyond anything our forebears might have realistically imagined. Technological development means having fewer and larger aggregated databases which in turn means that – while they ought to reduce the likelihood of breaches – they potentially increase the impact of any such breach should it happen- and it probably will at some point

In terms of permissibility – The law should reflect the importance of this part of our Critical National Infrastructure. In the area of biometrics and surveillance the govt is committed to a strong legal framework and simplification. This area needs both strengthening and simplifying.

But the biggest risk to ANPR as I see it is societal – it’s that people withdraw their support for it. We are getting more used to surveillance and are installing our own personal systems – even ANPR – more readily and cheaply than ever before. But when it’s done by the State with all its apparatus of enforcement some feel wide scale surveillance is becoming highly questionable – especially as the Government doesn’t yet follow its own Surveillance Camera Code. Understanding public acceptability is a matter for your elected local policing bodies, knowing the views of your communities sits squarely in their job description – they are the voices and advocates of their communities in ensuring the style of policing fits with what is locally acceptable and we would do well to keep them at the centre of this critical discussion.

Look around at the regulatory framework within which we currently operate. GDPR, DPA, PoFA, ... This wasn’t the product of some Eureka policy moment – it is largely the product of litigation and challenge, mainly by or on behalf of

the dissatisfied citizen, not just here but across the world. We've been sued into our current framework – surely it's better to design the next one in response to thoughtful and comprehensive consultation?

This is not just about ANPR – We need to be able to have confidence in the whole ecosystem of surveillance and be sure that what is technologically possible is only being done in a way that is both legally permissible and societally acceptable.

Thank you once again for your kind invitation and I hope you have a very productive conference.

Health Secretary sets out ambitious tech agenda

- The Health and Social Care Secretary set out his priorities to focus on personalised care, levelling up and harnessing the power of technology breakthroughs
- Electronic Patient Records to be rolled out to 90% of trusts by December 2023 so NHS staff can access all relevant patient information quickly
- Ambition set for 75% of adults in England to be using the NHS App by March 2024 and commitment to publish Digital Health Plan later this year

Patients and health and care staff across the country will benefit from more personalised, easier to access, digitally delivered health and care as the Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid delivered his first health technology focused speech since his appointment.

Speaking at the HSJ Digital Transformation Summit, Sajid Javid set out his plans for a more inclusive digital health service which better harnesses the power of innovation to drive a new era of recovery and reform, which will include the publication of a Digital Health Plan later this year.

This move puts digital transformation at the heart of health and care reforms and will be instrumental in embedding technologies and processes which will help clear the COVID backlog, in time leading to reductions in waiting lists.

He announced ambitions including:

- for 90% of NHS trusts to have Electronic Patient Records in place or be processing them by December 2023 and for all social care providers to adopt a digital social care record – both of which will save clinicians time, for example freeing-up 23,000 hours of nursing time for care every year. This will also deliver better, safer care for patients as electronic treatment plans increase consistency, reduce risk and can shorten the length of hospital stays.

- for 75% of adults in England to use the NHS App by March 2024, and expand functions on estimated waiting times and personalised advice. This will help people manage their health by having access to their data, including their GP health records, as well as make it easier to order repeat prescriptions, book appointments online and register preferences for services, such as organ donation, which will save lives.

The Health and Social Care Secretary set out his new targets for the roll out of Electronic Patient Records across both health and social care. He said:

We have undeniably seen brilliant progress. But this progress hasn't always been consistent across the board – for example one in five trusts still do not have Electronic Patient Records.

Electronic patient records are the essential prerequisite for a modern, digital NHS. Without them, we cannot achieve the full potential for reform.

So I want to accelerate the rollout of these vital records, with a new approach so that we hit 90% coverage by the end of next year.

I want to see a particular focus on social care, where around 40% of providers are still grappling entirely with paper-based records. So want to see all social care providers adopt a digital social care record.

Embracing personalised technologies, Sajid Javid will outline his ambition for 75% of the adults in England to use the NHS App by March 2024. He said:

To get there, we need to show people the app is for life, not just for COVID, and that it will be a future front door for interacting with the NHS.

The NHS is already working on new features, including how we can show estimated waiting times and the results of blood tests within the app.

The NHS app has shown how people are receptive to having healthcare literally in their hands – and we have the opportunity to use platforms like apps and websites to access diagnostics and therapies, helping them to manage their own conditions.

The Health and Social Care Secretary will also set out his ambitions to utilise NHS data to drive innovation, building on the pioneering work during the pandemic to develop diagnostics and treatment for COVID-19 – including the RECOVERY trial which led to the discovery of Dexamethasone, the world's first proven treatment for COVID-19 in just 100 days, which has saved at least a million lives across the world. He said:

NHS data is making the whole world safer and healthier.

Thanks to this country's single, national health service, the NHS has a precious resource in the form of data – that can offer so much insight to pioneers in the life sciences – including some of the world's largest genomic datasets.

But we know that there is more to do to build trust in the use of data and reassure the public that the data will be used securely. For instance, making it smoother and safer for researchers to access and use data, through requiring the use of trusted research environments.

By developing a gold-standard security driven environment, researchers will be encouraged to drive innovation, while ensuring patient data is protected to the highest standard.

Looking to the future, the Health and Social Care Secretary announced his intention to publish a Digital Health Plan later this year which will build on lessons learned from the pandemic and drive change across the digital health space.

- The Health and Social Care Secretary spoke at the HSJ Digital Transformation Summit on Thursday 24 February.
- The speech was live streamed on DHSC social channels.
- A checked against delivery version of the speech is available [here](#)

[Summons of Russian Ambassador to the UK \(February 2022\)](#)

Press release

Russia: Foreign Secretary summons Russian ambassador, following Russia's attack on Ukraine



Foreign Secretary Liz Truss (Thursday 24 February) summoned the Russian ambassador, Andrey Kelin, over Russia's unprovoked and unjustified attack on Ukraine this morning.

The Foreign Secretary said the Russian government had repeatedly lied about having no plans to invade Ukraine, and its unprovoked aggression had made it an international pariah.

She condemned Russia's outrageous attack on Ukraine as a clear breach of international law.

She reiterated there would be severe sanctions in retribution for the invasion, which will inflict pain on the Russian economy and those closely associated with the Kremlin.

The Foreign Secretary said the UK's support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity was unwavering.

She added that Russia should expect a long, protracted conflict that would inflict a huge human, economic and political cost on the Russian government. She said allies and partners are united in support for Ukraine, providing economic and defensive support.

She informed the Ambassador that the UK will continue to work closely with international partners and called on Russia to withdraw its troops.

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