

Wedding Planning Checklist

England and Wales

A printable workbook for legal steps, venue decisions, suppliers, guest logistics, timelines and final checks. Sussex examples are included where they help explain common planning issues.

Best for	Couples planning a marriage or civil partnership in England or Wales.
Use it as	A working checklist alongside your budget spreadsheet, guest tracker and local register office guidance.
Last reviewed	19 September 2026

Legal scope

This checklist is for England and Wales. Scotland, Northern Ireland and overseas weddings have different rules. Always confirm legal steps, appointment availability and fees with GOV.UK and the relevant local register office before booking.

How to use this checklist

- ☐ Work through the legal and venue sections before paying major non-refundable deposits.
- ☐ Add owners and deadlines beside each section if planning with family, friends or a coordinator.
- ☐ Use the final month and final week pages as your handover sheet.
- ☐ Keep supplier contracts, payment notes, ceremony paperwork and final timeline in one shared folder.

Start Here: The Planning Order That Makes Sense

The short version

Choose your ceremony type, set your budget, draft the guest list, shortlist the area and venue, check whether the venue can host a legal ceremony, book the ceremony or registrar, give notice, then build the celebration around that legal foundation.

1. Ceremony Type

Decide what kind of ceremony you are planning before committing to a venue.

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| ☐ Choose marriage or civil partnership. | ☐ Choose civil, religious, celebrant-led, or separate legal ceremony plus celebration. |
| ☐ Decide whether the legal ceremony and reception should happen in the same place. | ☐ If using a celebrant, confirm whether a separate legal ceremony is needed. |
| ☐ If using a religious building, check who is authorised to conduct and sign the paperwork. | ☐ If using a civil ceremony, confirm the venue is a register office or council-approved venue. |

2. Legal Essentials

Confirm the official requirements early. Local appointment availability can affect your timeline.

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| ☐ Choose the final ceremony venue before giving notice. | ☐ Check registrar or authorised-person availability. |
| ☐ Identify the register office where each partner must give notice. | ☐ Book notice appointments once the ceremony venue is known. |
| ☐ Give notice at least 29 days before the ceremony. | ☐ Plan to hold the ceremony within 12 months of giving notice. |
| ☐ Choose at least two witnesses for a civil ceremony. | ☐ Remember civil ceremonies cannot include religious content. |
| ☐ Check whether nationality or immigration status changes the notice process. | ☐ Check whether an Anglican wedding follows a different process. |

Sussex example

A Sussex couple might book a licensed countryside venue, then separately confirm registrar availability with the relevant council. A Brighton city wedding may need different parking, hotel and guest movement planning from a South Downs or rural West Sussex venue.

Legal Notice and Planning Foundations

3. Give Notice: Documents to Prepare

Use this as a preparation list, then check GOV.UK and your local register office for your exact situation.

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| ☐ Final ceremony venue details. | ☐ Proof of home address. |
| ☐ Valid passport or accepted UK birth certificate. | ☐ Proof of any name change, if relevant. |
| ☐ Evidence of ending a previous marriage or civil partnership, if relevant. | ☐ Former partner's death certificate, if relevant. |
| ☐ Immigration status documents, if either partner is from outside the UK or Ireland. | ☐ Passport-sized photos if required. |
| ☐ Certified translations for documents not in English. | ☐ Appointment fee and any local documents requested by the register office. |

4. Budget Foundations

Set the financial boundaries before detailed venue shopping.

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| ☐ Write down your comfortable target budget. | ☐ Write down your absolute maximum budget. |
| ☐ Agree who is contributing and any guest-list expectations. | ☐ Create a contingency fund for fees, changes and emergencies. |
| ☐ Create a payment tracker for deposits, balances and due dates. | ☐ List likely costs: ceremony, registrar, venue, catering, drinks, photography, video, flowers, music, outfits, beauty, transport, stationery, accommodation, insurance and tips. |
| ☐ Decide your top three priorities. | ☐ Review the guest list before increasing major costs. |

5. Guest List

The guest list shapes the venue, budget, catering, transport and atmosphere.

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| ☐ Create an essential guest list. | ☐ Create a preferred guest list. |
| ☐ Create an extended guest list. | ☐ Decide whether children are invited. |
| ☐ Decide whether plus-ones are invited. | ☐ Decide whether evening-only guests are part of the plan. |
| ☐ Collect addresses, emails, dietary requirements and accessibility needs. | ☐ Keep a live RSVP tracker. |

Venue, Registrar and Supplier Checklist

6. Venue Checks

Ask these questions before signing or paying a major deposit.

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| ☐ Is the venue approved for civil marriages and civil partnerships? | ☐ Can the legal ceremony and reception happen in the same place? |
| ☐ What is the capacity for ceremony, meal and evening reception? | ☐ What is included in the hire fee? |
| ☐ Is catering in-house, preferred supplier only or external? | ☐ Are tables, chairs, linen, crockery and glassware included? |
| ☐ What time can suppliers access the venue? | ☐ What time must music finish? |
| ☐ Are there noise restrictions or curfews? | ☐ What is the wet-weather plan? |
| ☐ Are candles, confetti, sparklers or fireworks allowed? | ☐ Is there enough parking and step-free access? |
| ☐ Are nearby hotels, taxis or train links realistic for guests? | ☐ What are the cancellation and postponement terms? |

7. Registrar or Ceremony Team

Do not assume venue booking automatically includes the registrar.

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| ☐ Confirm who books the registrar: you, the venue or council process. | ☐ Check ceremony room, outdoor ceremony and approved-premises rules. |
| ☐ Ask when ceremony choices, readings or music forms must be submitted. | ☐ Build registrar interview time into the wedding-day timeline. |
| ☐ Confirm witnesses, legal wording and signing arrangements. | |

8. Supplier Booking

Prioritise suppliers who can only take one wedding per day.

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| ☐ Photographer booked. | ☐ Videographer booked, if using one. |
| ☐ Caterer booked, if not included with the venue. | ☐ Florist or stylist booked. |
| ☐ Hair and makeup artist booked. | ☐ Band, DJ or musicians booked. |
| ☐ Celebrant booked, if using one. | ☐ Transport booked. |
| ☐ Cake or dessert supplier booked. | ☐ Stationer or digital invitation tool chosen. |
| ☐ Planner or coordinator booked, if using one. | ☐ Wedding insurance considered. |

Guest Experience, Ceremony and Reception

9. Guest Communication

Make the practical details easy for guests to find.

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| ☐ Create a wedding website or guest information page. | ☐ Add venue address, postcode and arrival time. |
| ☐ Add parking, train station and taxi information. | ☐ Add accommodation suggestions or hotel block details. |
| ☐ Add RSVP deadline and RSVP method. | ☐ Collect meal choices and dietary requirements. |
| ☐ Explain dress code, outdoor areas or footwear considerations. | ☐ Add accessibility information and a contact person for questions. |
| ☐ Explain children and plus-one policy clearly. | ☐ Add gift list or registry information, if using one. |

10. Ceremony Planning

Civil ceremony wording and personal additions may need approval.

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| ☐ Choose entrance order. | ☐ Choose ceremony music. |
| ☐ Choose readings. | ☐ Draft personal vows, if using them. |
| ☐ Choose ring bearer or ring holder. | ☐ Choose witnesses. |
| ☐ Confirm guest photography or unplugged ceremony rules. | ☐ Confirm confetti or exit plan. |
| ☐ Print vows and readings. | ☐ Submit ceremony forms by the local deadline. |

11. Reception Planning

Build the flow before choosing the smaller details.

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| ☐ Confirm drinks reception plan. | ☐ Confirm group photo list. |
| ☐ Confirm couple portrait timing. | ☐ Confirm wedding breakfast layout. |
| ☐ Confirm menu and dietary meals. | ☐ Draft seating plan after RSVPs. |
| ☐ Plan speeches and order. | ☐ Confirm evening guest arrival time. |
| ☐ Confirm cake cutting, first dance and evening food timings. | ☐ Confirm last orders, last dance and guest transport home. |

12-Month Wedding Planning Timeline

12+ Months Before

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| ☐ Decide ceremony type. | ☐ Set the budget. |
| ☐ Draft the guest list. | ☐ Choose the area. |
| ☐ View venues. | ☐ Check ceremony and registrar availability. |
| ☐ Book the venue. | ☐ Book the registrar, where needed. |
| ☐ Start researching suppliers. | ☐ Create planning spreadsheet. |
| ☐ Consider wedding insurance. | |

9 to 11 Months Before

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| ☐ Book photographer and videographer. | ☐ Book caterer, if needed. |
| ☐ Book florist, entertainment and hair/makeup. | ☐ Create your wedding website. |
| ☐ Start outfit shopping. | ☐ Reserve accommodation blocks, if useful. |
| ☐ Send save-the-dates if guests are travelling. | ☐ Choose wedding party members, if having them. |

6 to 8 Months Before

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| ☐ Give notice if your ceremony is booked and your local register office recommends doing it now. | ☐ Plan the ceremony structure. |
| ☐ Start invitation design. | ☐ Arrange transport. |
| ☐ Confirm wedding party outfits. | ☐ Plan honeymoon or minimoon. |
| ☐ Start decor and stationery decisions. | |

3 to 5 Months Before

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| ☐ Send invitations. | ☐ Buy wedding rings. |
| ☐ Confirm food and drink. | ☐ Choose readings and music. |
| ☐ Draft the seating plan. | ☐ Book final fittings. |
| ☐ Confirm evening entertainment. | ☐ Plan speeches. |
| ☐ Arrange gifts, if giving them. | |

Final Planning Timeline

1 to 2 Months Before

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| ☐ Chase RSVPs. | ☐ Confirm final guest numbers. |
| ☐ Send dietary requirements to the caterer. | ☐ Submit ceremony choices forms where required. |
| ☐ Finalise the seating plan. | ☐ Confirm supplier timings. |
| ☐ Create the wedding-day timeline. | ☐ Prepare final payments. |
| ☐ Write vows and speeches. | ☐ Confirm transport. |

Final Week

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| ☐ Confirm supplier arrival times. | ☐ Pack ceremony documents. |
| ☐ Pack rings. | ☐ Print vows and speeches. |
| ☐ Steam outfits. | ☐ Break in shoes. |
| ☐ Pack an emergency kit. | ☐ Confirm the weather plan. |
| ☐ Confirm guest transport. | ☐ Prepare payment or tip envelopes. |
| ☐ Label decor boxes. | ☐ Assign gift/card collection. |
| ☐ Assign take-home items. | ☐ Assign hire returns. |

Wedding-Day Timeline

Share the final timeline with the venue, registrar or celebrant, planner/coordinator, photographer, videographer, caterer, florist, entertainment, transport providers, wedding party and immediate family.

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| ☐ Venue access time. | ☐ Supplier arrivals. |
| ☐ Hair and makeup start. | ☐ Photographer arrival. |
| ☐ Dressing time. | ☐ Transport departure. |
| ☐ Registrar interviews. | ☐ Ceremony start and end. |
| ☐ Confetti or exit. | ☐ Drinks reception. |
| ☐ Photos. | ☐ Meal call. |
| ☐ Speeches. | ☐ Evening guests. |
| ☐ Cake cutting and first dance. | ☐ Evening food, last orders, last dance and transport home. |

Final Checks and After the Wedding

Final Month Master Checklist

☐ Notice completed.	☐ Registrar or ceremony team confirmed.
☐ Legal documents checked.	☐ Witnesses chosen.
☐ Final guest numbers confirmed.	☐ Dietary and accessibility needs sent.
☐ Venue layout and wet-weather plan confirmed.	☐ Supplier balances paid or scheduled.
☐ Contact list shared with helper/coordinator.	☐ Table plan and place cards ready.
☐ Rings, vows and speeches packed.	☐ Outfits altered, steamed and ready.
☐ Transport and accommodation confirmed.	☐ Emergency kit packed.
☐ Gift/card collection assigned.	☐ Hire returns assigned.

After the Wedding

☐ Return hired outfits and decor.	☐ Collect anything left at the venue.
☐ Pay any final supplier balances.	☐ Order extra certificates if needed.
☐ Send thank-you messages.	☐ Leave supplier reviews.
☐ Preserve flowers, outfits or keepsakes if wanted.	☐ Back up preview photos and final gallery.
☐ Begin any name-change admin, if relevant.	

Notes

Official sources to check

GOV.UK marriage and civil partnership guidance: gov.uk/marriages-civil-partnerships
 Plan your ceremony: gov.uk/marriages-civil-partnerships/plan-your-ceremony
 Give notice: gov.uk/marriages-civil-partnerships/give-notice
 Documents for notice: gov.uk/marriages-civil-partnerships/documents-youll-need-to-give-notice
 Local register office finder: gov.uk/register-offices