

Wedding laws are outdated and restrictive, new research suggests

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8 March 2022 By UK News



Wedding laws in England and Wales are outdated and restrictive, according to research from the University of Warwick and Exeter.

The study suggests the laws do not reflect the diversity of faith and beliefs in modern society.

Ash Patel from the Nuffield Foundation, which funded the research, said it demonstrated the “disconnection” between wedding law and the demography and preferences of modern society.

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“It makes a clear case for urgent reform to wedding law so that it better reflects the cultural and social diversity and richness of the individuals and communities that make up the population of England and Wales,” he added.

Researchers spoke to 170 people via focus groups and interviews, of whom 82 were involved in conducting non-legally binding ceremonies and 88 had gone through such a ceremony.



OUR FINDINGS SUGGEST THAT REFORM OF WEDDINGS LAW IS NOT ONLY IMPORTANT BUT ALSO ACHIEVABLE AND IS LONG OVERDUE.



Dr Rajnaara Akhtar

The Law Commission is currently considering reforms that the authors of the report support, including removing the need for prescribed words in wedding ceremonies and allowing a wider range of locations.

They also suggest accommodating independent celebrants.

Lead researcher Dr Rajnaara Akhtar said: "Our findings suggest that reform of weddings law is not only important but also achievable and is long overdue.

"Our participants believed the Law Commission's proposals for reform would make it easier, more inclusive, and cheaper for couples to have a legal wedding that was meaningful to them."