

CUSTOM OF LONDON RELATING TO APPRENTICESHIPS IN LIVERY COMPANIES

Masters (those persons to whom apprentices are bound)

Liverymen and freemen of London Livery Companies may take apprentices but an apprentice may only be bound in a master's first or 'mother' livery company.

Masters may be male or female, but in either case are referred to as 'master.'

A master may take any number of apprentices. Restrictions in number are a domestic matter for individual Companies.

Parents may bind their own children apprentice, but children of freemen and liverymen who, upon reaching the age of twenty-one, will have the right by patrimony to the freedom of the Company and of the City, should not be bound apprentice.

Apprentices

Apprentices, male or female, must be unmarried, above the age of fourteen years and below the age of twenty-one years at the time of binding.

Apprentices below the age of eighteen require consent of parent or guardian unless, of course, the master is also a parent.

Apprentices must be bound willingly.

Term of service

Continuous service not less than four years, not more than eight years.

Indentures

Livery Companies may use their own forms of indenture providing they conform to the Custom of London; otherwise, pre-printed indentures are obtainable from the Chamberlain's Court, Guildhall.

The Chamberlain's Court will prepare indentures on request.

The Chamberlain's Court will be pleased to check draft text of indentures in advance of binding.

There must be two identical documents of indenture - one to be signed by the apprentice, one to be signed by the master (or they may each sign both.) Both indentures to be witnessed and signed by the Clerk of the Company.

It is customary for the indenture signed by the master to be kept by the apprentice and vice versa, but it is strongly recommended that the part signed by the apprentice be retained for safekeeping by the Clerk, as this is the part required by the Chamberlain's Court when the apprentice eventually proceeds to the freedom of the City.

Binding

Master and apprentice must be present at the binding, which must take place at the Company's hall or offices at a Court meeting.

The binding must be entered in the Company's binding book and a record of it included in the minutes of the Court meeting.

The act or ceremony of binding is of the Company's own devising.

Inrolement

Indentures may be inroled at the Chamberlain's Court within one year of the date of binding but not on the day of binding. If, for convenience, the apprentice wishes to inrole at the Chamberlain's Court on the day of binding, the indentures may be pre-dated by one day.

The apprentice must attend in person and by appointment with the following:

Indentures signed by the apprentice and Master

Apprentice's full birth/adoption certificate

Master's copy of freedom.

There is no fee.

The presence of master/parents is welcome but not required.

Inrolement is not essential and non-inrolement does not prevent or hinder eventual admission to the freedom of the City when the term has been completed. However, inrolement does provide an independent record of the binding, ensures correct binding procedure has been followed and that both master and apprentice are eligible for the undertaking.

Turning over an apprentice

If the master dies during the term of servitude or is for some reason unable to continue as master, the apprentice should be turned over to another master who is a freeman or liveryman of the Company for the remainder of the term.

The apprentice should bring indentures and new master's copy of freedom to the Chamberlain's Court by appointment to have indentures turned over. An apprentice who does not do this is deemed not to be in continuous service and the apprenticeship discontinued.

If there are less than eighteen months of the term remaining to be served it may not necessary to turn over but before the apprentice can be admitted to the freedom of the City the Court of Aldermen must be petitioned in the matter. Forms of petition to be signed by the apprentice are available from the Chamberlain's Court.

Marriage of an apprentice

Apprentices who marry during the term may not be admitted to the freedom of the City unless they first petition the Court of Aldermen in the matter. Forms of petition are available from the Chamberlain's Court.

Master's Testimony

If the Master is not in attendance at the Chamberlain's Court when the apprentice receives the freedom of the City of London, the Master should provide written evidence that the term has been properly and fully served. Printed forms for this purpose may be obtained from the Chamberlain's Court, or the Company may provide its own form of testimony or the testimony may be written on the reverse of the indenture to be presented for City freedom.

If the Master has died since completion of the term, or is otherwise unable to sign the testimony, it may be signed by any freeman or liveryman of the Company.

Freedom of the City of London by right of service

When the term has been satisfactorily served the apprentice may be admitted to the freedom of the Company and a certificate of freedom of the Company by servitude issued. Or certification of Company freedom may be written on the reverse of the inroled indenture. The apprentice is then eligible for freedom of the City of London by servitude, providing the age of twenty-one has been reached and should telephone the Chamberlain's Court for an appointment to be admitted to the freedom by servitude.

On production of correct documentation, one personal visit to the Chamberlain's Court, Guildhall is required. Freedom admissions cannot be made by post or by proxy. By appointment only.

Documents required

If indentures were inroled

Inroled indenture

Certificate of livery freedom

Fee £100

If indentures were not inroled

Indenture

Certificate of livery freedom

Full birth/adoption certificate

Master's copy of freedom

Fee £100

Presence of master/parents is welcome but not essential. If the master is not in attendance when the apprentice receives the freedom of the City the master should provide written evidence that the term has been faithfully and fully served. 'Master's Testimony' forms are obtainable from the Chamberlain's Court. Alternatively, the Company may provide their own forms of testimony, or it may be written on the back of the inroled indenture.

Chamberlain's Court

Guildhall

London EC2P 2EJ

Telephone 020 7332 1369/1008

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