



## **Civil Partnership Registration at a glance**

- Same-sex couples face many problems in their day-to-day lives because there is no legal recognition for their relationship. In many areas, each partner in the couple is treated as a separate individual; they are denied rights and responsibilities that could help them to organise their lives together. Opposite-sex couples have the choice to marry and have their relationship recognised in law. Same-sex couples have no such choice.
- The Government's consultation paper proposes setting up a civil partnership registration scheme through which same-sex couples could gain legal recognition for their relationships.

### **What would a civil partnership registration scheme look like?**

- The Government proposes to create a scheme under which same-sex couples in England and Wales would be able to register their partnership.
- The scheme would be for adult same-sex couples who are not in an existing registered partnership or marriage and are not closely related.
- Couples who registered would have a new legal status as "registered civil partners", and would acquire a package of rights and responsibilities.

### **How would people register?**

- Couples would give notice of intention to register at a registry office, and could sign the civil partnerships register 15 days later.

### **How would people dissolve a partnership?**

- The Government intends registered civil partnerships to be long-term, stable relationships, so there would be a formal, court-based process for dissolution. The partner applying for the partnership to be dissolved would have to show that it had broken down irretrievably.

### **What would the legal consequences of registering a civil partnership be?**

- Couples would acquire a package of rights and responsibilities that would reflect the commitment they had made and help them organise their lives together. These legal consequences would follow from registration.

- Rights and responsibilities during the relationship might include:
  - joint treatment for income-related benefits,
  - joint state pension benefits,
  - ability to gain parental responsibility for each other's children,
  - recognition for immigration purposes,
  - exemption from testifying against each other in court;
- Rights and responsibilities on dissolution might include:
  - fair arrangements for property division,
  - residence arrangements,
  - appropriate contact with children; and
- Rights and responsibilities following the death of one partner might include:
  - right to register the death of a partner,
  - right to claim a survivor pension,
  - eligibility for bereavement benefits,
  - compensation for fatal accidents or criminal injuries,
  - recognition under inheritance and intestacy rules,
  - tenancy succession rights.

You can obtain a copy of the full consultation document, quoting URN 03/1010, from:

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