



## PRESS RELEASE

### **Civil Partnership Bill – Pension Gains for same-sex couples**

The Directors of Isis Financial Planners, the UK's leading authority on financial discrimination against same-sex couples, are delighted by the Government's announcement today (26 October 2004), that Civil Partners, as defined in the Civil Partnership Bill, will gain pension benefits in contracted-out private occupational schemes. It is understood that this will also apply to State Pensions. Civil Partners will have the right to pass on survivor pensions as married people do.

When the Bill was published at the end of March, the Isis Directors welcomed the Bill, but were disappointed that the proposals for Civil Partners' pension rights would not mirror those for married couples. One area of inequality concerned a surviving partner's right to a State pension based on the deceased's National Insurance Contributions. Until today, under the terms of the Bill, this right would not have been retrospective – only the years after the passing of the Civil Partnership legislation would have counted towards a pension. Jacqui Smith, Minister of State at the DTI announced, during the Committee Stage of the Bill on 26/10/04, that the Civil Partnership Bill would be amended so that contracted-out pension schemes will be required to provide survivor pensions for civil partners from rights built up all the way to 1988, replicating the current position for widowers. This should apply to the State pension as well.

*Isis Director Louis Letourneau said, 'Back in May earlier this year, we supported this very acceptable compromise presented by the Liberal Democrat peers Lord Lester of Herne Hill and Lord Goodhart. Going back to 1988 is logical, as this was when widowers achieved equality with widows. I am delighted that the Government has listened to experts in the area. This is absolutely fair and we are very pleased with the result.'*

*'We are still hoping that the Government will allow public service pension schemes such as the NHS and the teacher schemes to fully recognise the whole length of service for all Civil*



*Partners on the same footing as married couples. Unfortunately, the Bill leaves the respective Departments to amend these superannuation schemes and one can only hope that Ministers will do the right thing. Hopefully, this will be amended within the spirit of equality.'*

The amendments will be introduced at the Report Stage in the House of Commons, before being sent back to the House of Lords next month. If the Bill receives Royal Assent in this Parliament, it is expected to become law toward the end of 2005.

*'One financial issue still remains', said Director Maggie Fleming. 'We would like to see a clear announcement by the Treasury that the next Finance Bill will introduce full equality with respect to Inheritance Tax exemption, and Capital Gain transfer between same-sex couples which is currently enjoyed by married couples. I don't think that we can rest until this is clearly stated.'*

## **Editors' Notes**

### **Resources for Journalists and the Media**

More information on this issue can be found at [www.gay-partnership-rights.info](http://www.gay-partnership-rights.info). Our main site, [www.gayfinance.info](http://www.gayfinance.info), contains a wealth of material on gay financial discrimination, and has been used by many organisations as the basis of their articles.

### **Isis Financial Planners Limited**

Isis was founded in February 2002 by Letourneau, Fleming and Mudge – three highly experienced Financial Planners who had previously worked for the gay financial advisers, Rainbow Finance. In their first 3 years of trading Isis have become the most prominent, totally independent, gay-focussed financial planners in the country, with help and advice offered to gay men, lesbians and same-sex couples. All three of them have been active in campaigning for change for many years. They see the proposed Bill as the best opportunity in years to bring about major reform.



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