

Civil partnership review in Scotland

Response by:

Christian Concern

Christian Legal Centre

**Christian
Legal Centre**

**Christian
Concern**

About Us

Christian Concern is a policy and legal resource centre that identifies changes in policy and law that will affect the Christian heritage of our nation. The team of lawyers and advisers at Christian Concern conduct research into, and campaign on, legislation and policy changes that may affect Christian freedoms or the moral values of the UK. Christian Concern reaches a mailing list of over 80,000 supporters. www.christianconcern.com

Christian Concern is linked to a sister and separate organisation, the Christian Legal Centre, which takes up cases affecting Christian freedoms. www.christianlegalcentre.com

Andrea Minichiello Williams CEO

Christian Concern & the Christian Legal Centre, 70 Wimpole Street, London W1G 8AX

020 3327 1120

077 12 59 1164

andrea.williams@christianconcern.com

Question 1. Please provide any additional arguments you wish to make in favour of the no change option.

- We disagree with the concept of civil partnership, and remain of the view that same-sex couples cannot be 'married', as marriage is the unique union of one man and one woman.
- We agree with the Government's position that civil partnerships should not be extended to opposite sex couples. Marriage has already been significantly undermined by the enactment of no-fault divorce laws, the introduction of same-sex 'marriage' and the increasing recognition afforded to pre-nuptial agreements. Allowing heterosexual couples to form civil partnerships will weaken the institution of marriage even further by permitting couples to enter into a less stable alternative which is void of exclusive, lifelong commitment.
- The introduction of heterosexual civil partnerships will inevitably discourage some opposite sex couples from marrying, and result in greater instability within families, by offering a parallel institution that provides all the legal rights and privileges of marriage without the need for lifelong commitment.
- The concept of civil partnership was introduced exclusively to provide a means by which homosexual couples could obtain legal recognition of their relationship. Extending civil partnerships to opposite sex couples is unnecessary since they already have the option, in marriage, to legally formalise their relationship.
- According to Annex H of the consultation document, the introduction of heterosexual civil partnerships could cost the taxpayer millions of pounds per year. Scarce public resources should be used to tackle the ever increasing rates of family breakdown in Britain and to promote marriage as between one man and one woman as the ideal family model for children and society. A 2014 report published by the Centre for Social Justice revealed that "Britain is now a world-leader when it comes to family breakdown" and that family instability costs the UK £46bn per year.¹
- There is no popular call by the public for the extension of civil partnerships to heterosexual couples. In fact, evidence supports the proposition that most individuals seek a life-long union through marriage as other forms of relationship, such as cohabitation, do not offer the same degree of stability.

Question 2. Please provide any additional arguments you wish to make against the no change option.

We agree with the Government's position that civil partnerships should not be extended to opposite-sex couples (please see our answer to Question 1).

Question 3. Please provide any additional arguments you wish to make in favour of the option of no new civil partnerships being entered into from a date in the future

We disagree with the concept of civil partnership, and remain of the view that same-sex couples cannot be 'married', as marriage is the unique union of one man and one woman.

Marriage as between one man and one woman has been the cornerstone of a stable society throughout history. Marriage, as the most ideal environment for raising children, should be

¹ http://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/UserStorage/pdf/Pdf%20reports/CSJJ2072_Family_Breakdown.pdf

promoted and encouraged as a matter of public policy (please see our answer to Question 6).

Question 4. Please provide any additional arguments you wish to make against the option of no new civil partnerships being entered into from a date in the future.

Please see our answer to Question 3.

Question 5. Do you have any comments on the Government's view that there are insufficient reasons for introducing opposite sex civil partnership in Scotland? If yes, please outline these comments.

We disagree with the concept of civil partnership, and remain of the view that same-sex couples cannot be 'married', as marriage is the unique union of one man and one woman.

We agree with the Government's position that civil partnerships should not be extended to opposite sex couples (please see our answer to Question 1).

Question 6. Please provide any comments you have on the partial Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment (BRIA), on the partial Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) and on the screening report for the Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA)

Heterosexual civil partnerships would be void of life-long commitment and result in greater instability within families, with damaging consequences for children and society. A 2014 report published by the Centre for Social Justice revealed that "Britain is now a world-leader when it comes to family breakdown" and that "it is already more likely that a teenager sitting their GCSEs will own a smartphone than live with their father (only 57 per cent of 15 year olds are still living with their fathers while 62 per cent own a smartphone);"² Scarce public resources should be used to introduce family-friendly policies that promote marriage as between one man and one woman as the most ideal environment for the raising of children.

Option 1 would not result in a difference in treatment between opposite and same-sex couples since heterosexual couples already have the option, in marriage, to legally formalise their relationship.

² http://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/UserStorage/pdf/Pdf%20reports/CSJJ2072_Family_Breakdown.pdf