

The Marriage
(Same Sex Couples)
Act 2013:

The Equality and Human Rights
Implications for Marriage and
the Law in England and Wales



What is the purpose of this publication?

This publication provides guidance on the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 which extends marriage to same sex couples in England and Wales. It explains the changes introduced by the Act, and how it relates to equality and human rights law.

Who is it for?

This document is useful for same sex couples, employers, employees, service providers, customers, public authorities and their service users, religious organisations and their officials, as well as schools, their employees, pupils, governors and teachers.

What is inside?

This guide covers:

- The application of the Act
- The requirements for a marriage
- The impact on same sex couples
- The impact on a married person who wishes to change legal gender
- The impact on religious organisations
- The impact on registrars
- The impact on premises shared by religious organisations
- Equality and human rights law and freedom of expression
- The impact on school education
- Possible future changes

When was it published?

This guide was first published in March 2014.

Why has the Commission produced it?

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has responsibility for the promotion and enforcement of equality and human rights laws in England, Scotland and Wales.

What formats are available?

This Guide is available as a PDF file (in English) and as a Microsoft Word file (in English or Welsh) from www.equalityhumanrights.com.

Introduction

The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 (the Act) extends marriage to same sex couples in England and Wales. This guide explains the changes introduced by the Act, and how it relates to equality and human rights law. It complements our accompanying guidance on: the workplace and service delivery; the provision of school education; public authorities; and religious organisations. This document is useful for same sex couples, employers, employees, service providers, customers, public authorities and their service users, religious organisations and their officials, as well as schools, their employees, pupils, governors and teachers.

Rights under equality law protect against unlawful discrimination and harassment based on various protected characteristics, including marriage and civil partnership, religion or belief, sexual orientation and gender reassignment. Human rights law also provides protection against discrimination in the enjoyment of certain rights, and protects the rights to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of assembly and freedom of expression.

Key points

- The Act applies to England and Wales only; Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own legislation on marriage.
- The Act enables same sex couples to solemnize marriages in accordance with civil marriage laws. It allows for solemnization of the marriage of same sex couples to be carried out in register offices and on approved premises (such as hotels).
- Religious organisations that wish to can opt in to conduct religious marriages of same sex couples. It is not legally possible for a same sex couple to marry according to the rites of the Church of England and Church in Wales.
- Marriages of same sex couples can be held in places of worship which have been registered for that purpose with the consent of the religious organisation's governing authority.

- No one can compel religious organisations or their officials to participate in religious marriages of same sex couples.
- Civil partnerships will still be recognised when same sex couples can marry. Civil partners will be able to convert their partnership into a marriage, if they wish. Work is underway across the Government to enable couples wanting to convert their civil partnerships into marriages to do so as soon as possible. The Government aims to do this before the end of 2014.
- Individuals will be able to change their legal gender without having to end their marriage, provided both spouses agree. These changes can only be implemented once the new marriage arrangements and conversion processes are in place, which the Government aims to have in place before the end of 2014.
- Individuals may express positive or negative views about marriage of same sex couples. The right to free expression can be limited where appropriate and necessary to protect the rights of others.
- The Act requires the Government to review whether non-religious belief organisations should be able to solemnize legally recognised marriages according to their usages; the operation and future of the Civil Partnership Act 2004 in England and Wales; and the relevant differences in survivor benefits offered by occupational pension schemes.

Application of the Act

The Act applies to England and Wales. Scotland has a different legal system and has its own legislation about marriage. Marriage in Scotland is a devolved matter for consideration by the Scottish Parliament, which has passed the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2014. The EHRC will produce separate guidance on marriage of same sex couples in Scotland when that legislation is implemented. Before marriage of same sex couples becomes lawful in Scotland, a marriage of a same sex couple formed under the law of England and Wales will be treated as a civil partnership in Scotland.

The law about marriage is also significantly different in Northern Ireland. As of March 2014, the Northern Ireland Assembly is not planning to extend marriage to same sex couples. As a result, marriages of same sex couples that take place under the law of England and Wales will be treated as civil partnerships in Northern Ireland; and individuals who wish to change their legal gender under the law of Northern Ireland will still have to end a pre-existing marriage with a person of the opposite sex in order to do so.

Provision is also made in the Act for English and Welsh marriages of same sex couples to take place overseas, for example in British consulates and on Armed Forces bases outside the United Kingdom.

From 13 March 2014, overseas marriages of same sex couples will be recognised as marriages in England and Wales in the same way as marriages of opposite sex couples.

Requirements for a marriage

Over time, the law in England and Wales relating to how and where marriages can be solemnized has evolved. For example, at one time the law only recognised marriages conducted by the Church of England, but later it allowed legally-recognised marriages to be conducted by other religious organisations (set out below), and State-provided register offices for people who wanted non-religious marriages. Other religious marriages that take place in England and Wales are legally recognised if there is also a valid civil solemnization.

The Civil Partnership Act 2004 brought about legal recognition of same sex relationships through the creation of civil partnerships in the UK. The Act now extends marriage to same sex couples in England and Wales. Civil partnerships continue to be recognised following the introduction of marriage of same sex couples. They will not automatically be converted to marriages, but the opportunity to convert them will be available in accordance with a defined legal process (see 'impact on same sex couples' and 'possible future changes' sections below for further details).

Marriage in England and Wales is governed by several statutes which recognise religious and civil marriages and set out a series of requirements for a legally valid ceremony. For example, a marriage must be conducted by authorised officers in permitted premises and may be solemnized:

- in a church by a priest of the Church of England or Church in Wales
- by a registrar in a register office or on premises which have been approved for the solemnization of marriages
- in the presence of an authorised person in a place of religious worship registered for marriages; or
- under Quaker and Jewish marriage procedures

Particular words or oaths must be used for valid solemnization of marriages. Marriages must be witnessed by others, and must satisfy other certification and registration requirements relating to the form of the marriage as required under the law of England and Wales.

In addition, the couple marrying must have the capacity to marry, according to the law of the place where they were domiciled before the marriage took place. In England and Wales, they must be of an age to marry (aged 16 and over with the parent's or guardian's consent, or aged 18 and over); they must not be already married or in a civil partnership; they must not be too closely related to each other; and they must have the necessary mental capacity.

The General Register Office oversees the registration of marriages in England and Wales. If a marriage occurs on unregistered premises and/or through an unauthorised person and/or in an unauthorised form, it will be void if the couple knowingly and willingly marry in such circumstances.

The dissolution of a marriage in England and Wales is governed mainly by the Matrimonial Causes Act 1973. This sets out the facts on which courts will rely to grant a divorce or annulment. This Act now also applies to married same sex couples, with certain exceptions set out below.

Impact on same sex couples

Ability to marry

The extension of marriage to same sex couples means that they can now marry in accordance with legal requirements applicable in England and Wales. Civil partners will be able to convert their partnership into a marriage in accordance with a procedure set out in regulations which will follow at a later date.

The law of England and Wales that applies to marriage will apply to marriages of same sex and opposite sex couples, unless otherwise provided. This means that, in most circumstances, married same sex couples will be treated in the same way as married opposite sex couples. But there are some exceptions, primarily concerning pension entitlements for surviving spouses. In this instance, the Government has decided that, with the exception of married opposite sex couples one of whom undergoes gender reassignment and changes their legal gender, married same sex couples generally will be treated in the same way as civil partners.

Solemnization of marriages

Marriages of same sex couples can be solemnized by people authorised to do this in register offices, in other approved premises (such as hotels) and in registered places of religious worship in accordance with religious rites or marriage procedures (other than those of the Church of England or Church in Wales), where the relevant governing authority (RGA) of the religious organisation has explicitly opted in to marriages of same sex couples and the place of worship has been registered for the solemnization of marriages of same sex couples. Officials of religious organisations who conduct religious marriages are free to choose whether or not they wish to conduct marriages of same sex couples.

The RGA of a religious organisation is the body which is recognised as such by the members of that organisation. In some cases, it will be the recognised national body of that organisation. In others, where there is no hierarchical structure, it will be local congregations or groups. In some instances, the RGA will be an external body. It is beyond the scope of this guidance to state the RGA for all religious organisations. Sections 4(4) and 5(5) of the Act set out in more detail how to identify the RGA for each religious organisation.

Divorce, adultery and void marriages

The law permits divorce when the marriage of a same sex couple irretrievably breaks down. The factual basis for divorce of married same sex couples is similar to that available to married opposite sex couples.

However, there is one distinction. Adultery has been defined in long-established case law as sexual intercourse of a married person with a person of the opposite sex outside marriage. So sexual intercourse between a married person and a person of the same sex outside marriage does not constitute adultery (and has never done so). Where a person married to someone of the same sex has sexual intercourse outside marriage, then the Act provides that the current definition of adultery applies.

Although sexual activity with a person of the same sex will not constitute adultery, it will constitute unreasonable behaviour, and both opposite sex and same sex couples can apply for divorce using this fact to prove irretrievable breakdown of the marriage. Same sex couples who have married under the law of England and Wales but subsequently move to live in Scotland or Northern Ireland will be treated as civil partners under the law of Scotland or of Northern Ireland. (When marriage of same sex couples becomes lawful in Scotland, such couples will be recognised as married in Scotland.) The dissolution of their civil partnership in Scotland or Northern Ireland will be treated as the dissolution of the marriage in England and Wales.

The grounds on which the marriage of a same sex couple is voidable (that is, where an application can be made to declare the marriage void if one of the parties wishes to end the marriage) are slightly different from those available to opposite sex couples. Non-consummation of the marriage (whether due to incapacity or wilful refusal) is not a ground on which the marriage of a same sex couple is voidable.

Applicability of other rules and presumptions

The common law presumption that a child born to a woman during the course of a marriage is the child of the husband is not extended to married same sex couples. However, there are other means of securing parental recognition in law which are already available to civil partners. These will also be available to married same sex couples.

The Act does not alter marriage kinship rules; for example, prohibiting marriages between siblings. These rules remain in place and now apply to same sex couples also.

Terminology

The Act provides that marriage of same sex couples will generally have the same effect in law as marriage of opposite sex couples (section 11(1) and (2) and Schedule 3). This means that, for example, the terms 'husband', 'wife', 'widow' and 'widower' when used in existing England and Wales legislation will now also refer to married same sex couples (unless specifically provided otherwise). In new legislation, 'husband' will mean any married man, and 'wife' will mean any married woman.

This does not affect private legal instruments such as wills or deeds or the governing documents of a charity, if they were drafted before the Act takes effect. References to marriage in those documents will continue to be understood to have the meaning they had before the Act applied.

Impact on a married person who wishes to change legal gender

The Gender Recognition Act 2004 (GRA) enables an individual to change their legal gender by the issue of a full Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC). Previously, if an applicant for a GRC was married or in a civil partnership, the applicant had to end that legal relationship before a full GRC could be issued (since marriage before the Act was available only to opposite sex couples and civil partnerships were only available to same sex couples).

Amendments to the GRA made by the Act provide that where a person married to someone of the opposite sex wishes to change his or her legal gender, s/he will no longer have to end the marriage in order to receive a full GRC. Instead, the original marriage can continue as a marriage of a same sex couple, provided that the applicant's spouse consents by making a statutory declaration. If, however, the spouse does not consent, the applicant will have to go through the existing procedure to end their marriage before a full GRC can be issued. Where a civil partner wishes to change his or her legal gender, the couple will be able to convert their civil partnership into a marriage before going through the process outlined above. All these amendments to the GRA will come into force at a later date.

Continued...

Impact on religious organisations

The Act allows religious organisations to choose whether to marry same sex couples according to their rites and marriage procedures.

If a religious organisation chooses not to marry same sex couples, their officials are bound by that decision. In that situation, an individual religious official cannot marry a same sex couple according to the religious rites and marriage procedures of that organisation.

If a religious organisation, other than the Church of England or Church in Wales, wishes to marry same sex couples according to their rites and marriage procedures, they can opt in to do so. If the religious organisation opts in, it is still lawful for an individual minister, or a person who acts as an authorised person, to refuse to conduct or participate in the marriage. If the religious organisation has previously opted in, it can choose to opt out.

The Act states that no one can compel religious organisations or their officials to conduct or participate in religious marriages of same sex couples.

The Act recognises the distinct position of the Church of England and the Church in Wales under the law of England and Wales. It is not legally possible under the Act for a same sex couple to marry according to the rites of the Church of England or the Church in Wales.

In order for the Church of England to solemnize marriages of same sex couples, its General Synod would have to approve a Measure and Parliament would subsequently have to approve this. Similarly, the Governing Body of the Church in Wales would have to ask the Lord Chancellor to make an order to this effect (which s/he must do under a power granted under the Act). Accordingly, in both cases a procedure is in place which would enable those churches to marry same sex couples according to their rites, if they so choose. Unless this occurs, neither church (nor their clergy) is permitted to marry same sex couples according to their rites, and any marriage of a same sex couple solemnized by those churches will be void. The common law duty of Church of England and Church in Wales clergy to conduct marriages of parishioners is not extended by the Act to marriages of same sex couples. In addition, Anglican Canon law is not affected by the Act, so it can continue to state that marriage is the union of one man with one woman.

The position of chaplains is examined in the guidance documents for religious organisations and for the workplace and service delivery. The giving or withholding of consent to solemnize marriages of a same sex couple according to religious rites rests with the RGA of the religious organisation and not with its chaplains or other ministers/officials.

Impact on registrars

The Act provides that civil marriages of same sex couples may take place at register offices and on approved premises. Registrars, superintendent registrars and the Registrar General are public officials and they are required to exercise their functions without discrimination. The Act does not allow them to refuse to marry same sex couples, even if they have a religious or philosophical objection to doing so. The position of registrars is discussed more fully in the guidance on the workplace and service delivery.

Impact on premises shared by religious organisations

Religious organisations with different approaches to marriage of same sex couples will sometimes share places of worship. Special rules have been formulated to ensure that in shared premises, marriages of same sex couples can only take place where agreement has been obtained from the governing authorities of all the religious organisations that share the premises. These are set out in the Act and in Regulations made under it: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2014/9780111108734>

A sharing organisation can agree to another organisation marrying same sex couples in the building, without opting in itself to marrying same sex couples according to its rites or marriage procedures. If a chapel shared by the Church of England (or Church in Wales) were to be registered for the marriage of same sex couples, it would still not be legally possible for persons of the same sex to marry according to the Church of England (or Church in Wales) rites in that chapel.

The Government carried out a public consultation on the draft Regulations for Shared Religious Buildings, which closed on 1 November 2013. The Government published its response to the consultation on 23 January 2014 and the relevant response can be viewed here: <https://consult.justice.gov.uk/digital-communications/marriage-same-sex-couples-act-2013>

Equality law and marriage

The Equality Act 2010 (the Equality Act) prohibits unlawful discrimination and harassment based on protected characteristics, which include marriage and civil partnership, religion or belief, gender reassignment and sexual orientation. It also prohibits unlawful victimisation which comprises subjecting someone to a detriment for carrying out a protected act under the Equality Act. People with those (and other) protected characteristics have individual rights under the Equality Act. Employers, service providers, schools and public authorities all have duties under the Equality Act.

The Act made specific amendments to the Equality Act. In particular, the effect of the amendment in paragraph 43 of Schedule 7 to the Act means that it is unlawful sexual orientation discrimination to treat a person married to someone of the same sex less favourably than a person married to someone of the opposite sex, or vice versa (subject to certain exceptions set out in the Equality Act). The Act also amended the Equality Act to protect religious organisations and their officials who do not wish to marry same sex couples from claims of discrimination.

Existing religious exceptions contained in the Equality Act remain in place. These include:

- Where employment is for the purposes of organised religion, occupational requirements relating to sex, marriage and sexual orientation (amended by the Act to include a requirement not to be married to a person of the same sex) (Schedule 9, paragraph 2)
- Occupational requirements based on religious ethos (Schedule 9, paragraph 3)
- Worship and religious observance in schools with a religious character (Schedule 11, paragraphs 5 and 6)

- Educational appointments based on religion, including relevance of incompatible conduct (Schedule 22, paragraphs 3 and 4)
- General exceptions for non-commercial organisations relating to religion or belief (Schedule 23, paragraph 2).

The public sector equality duty (section 149 of the Equality Act) places a general duty on public authorities and those exercising public functions to have 'due regard' when exercising their functions to three matters: a) eliminating conduct (such as discrimination, harassment and victimisation) that is prohibited by the Act; b) advancing equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and c) fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The duty to have 'due regard' is not a duty to deliver particular outcomes, or to prioritise one aspect of equality over another. It does not authorise unlawful discrimination. The application of this duty would be governed by the same principles applying to any other decisions or actions by a public body. These are discussed more fully in the guidance for public authorities and in our codes of practice on the public sector equality duty.

Protection of human rights of religious individuals, religious organisations and same sex couples

Relevant human rights

The Human Rights Act 1998 (the Human Rights Act) incorporates the rights contained in the European Convention on Human Rights (the Convention) into domestic law. The Human Rights Act requires the domestic courts to interpret the law in accordance with the Convention rights, taking the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights into account. The Human Rights Act also requires public authorities to act compatibly with Convention rights.

Several Convention rights are relevant to marriage including:

- Article 8, respecting the right to private and family life

- Article 12, providing the right to marry and found a family in accordance with national laws governing the exercise of this right
- Article 14, prohibiting discrimination in the application of Convention rights

The right to marry under Article 12 does not require states to provide marriage for same sex couples. However, if a state does provide marriage for same sex couples under the law, it must do so without unjustifiable discrimination under Article 14.

Convention rights also protect religious freedom, notably:

- Article 9, protecting freedom of thought, conscience and religion
- Article 10, protecting freedom of expression
- Article 11, protecting freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association with others
- Article 14, prohibiting discrimination in the application of Convention rights
- Article 2 of Protocol 1, providing a right to education

Many of these rights are 'qualified', not 'absolute'; this means that they can be limited where it is necessary to do so, for example, to protect the rights and freedoms of others.

Quadruple lock

The Act takes account of the Convention rights. It provides a 'quadruple lock' to protect religious organisations and their officials, whilst allowing same sex couples to marry by civil or religious ceremony. The quadruple lock:

1. Makes clear that a religious marriage of a same sex couple will only be possible if:
 - the governing body of the religious organisation has opted in by giving explicit consent to marriages of same sex couples, and
 - the individual official is willing to conduct the marriage, and
 - if the marriage takes place in a place of worship, those premises have been registered for marriages of same sex couples.

2. Explicitly states that no religious organisation can be compelled to opt in to marry same sex couples or to permit this to happen on its premises; and no religious organisation or official can be compelled by any means to conduct or participate in marriages of same sex couples.
3. Amends the Equality Act to make clear that it is not unlawful discrimination for a religious organisation and/or its officials to refuse to marry a same sex couple.
4. Ensures that the common law legal duty on the clergy of the Church of England and the Church in Wales to marry parishioners does not extend to same sex couples. The Act also protects the Church of England's Canon law, which says that marriage is the union of one man with one woman, so that it does not conflict with civil law.

In the event that a religious organisation chooses to opt in to marrying same sex couples according to its rites or marriage procedures, but an individual official of that organisation does not wish to conduct such marriages due to his or her religious or other beliefs, the religious organisation should consider finding a suitable replacement. This could be another official authorised to solemnize marriages within that organisation, or a marriage registrar who is available where an authorised person is required to be present during the solemnization of the marriage.

If neither of those options is available, the Act clearly states that it would be unlawful for the religious organisation to try to compel its official by any means to conduct such marriages. However, religious organisations also have rights under Articles 9 (freedom of thought, conscience and religion) and 11 (freedom of assembly) of the Convention, which allow them to control their internal affairs without unnecessary and disproportionate state interference.

It is strongly suggested that opting-in religious organisations and their officials discuss and mutually agree who will and who will not officiate over marriages of same sex couples. This should include what needs to be done, and by whom, in the event an official refuses, at short notice, to officiate over a marriage because it is a marriage of a same sex couple. This will help to avoid internal conflict and will ensure that the legitimate and reasonable expectations of same sex couples can be met.

Freedom of expression

The Act protects the right to freedom of expression as set out in Article 10 of the Convention. So individuals may express positive or negative views about marriage of same sex couples. The Government has recognised that the belief that marriage can only be between a man and a woman is a belief worthy of respect in a democratic society.

People are free to express personal views on marriage of same sex couples, depending on the form of words used and the particular context in which they are used. This applies to all forms of communication in public and in the workplace. Individuals who express support for, or opposition to, marriage of same sex couples, in public or in work, should do so in reasonable and moderate terms.

The right to free expression can be limited where appropriate and necessary to protect the rights of others.

Individuals who publicly express support for, or opposition to, marriage of same sex couples must avoid abusive or threatening behaviour which is illegal. Conduct during employment or service provision should not breach laws on discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender reassignment, sexual orientation or religion or belief.

Employees are expected to operate in accordance with relevant workplace dignity at work and/or equality and diversity policies, and those policies must be applied consistently with Convention rights. Religious clergy and priests are expected to comply with religious doctrines. Teachers must adhere to rules about the education curriculum and the religious ethos of the school.

Freedom of expression is explicitly protected under the Public Order Act 1986 (POA) provisions concerning the offences of inciting hatred on the grounds of religion or sexual orientation (see Part 3A and sections 29J and 29JA POA). Under the Act, Parliament has further protected the rights of individuals to express their views on marriage of same sex couples through discussion or criticism without facing any criminal sanction under the POA, by inserting a new sub-section into section 29JA. In order to guarantee that simply giving a view on marriage of same sex couples is not caught by the offences of threatening behaviour and hate speech on the grounds of sexual orientation, the new Section 29JA (2) of the POA specifies that: 'any

discussion or criticism of marriage which concerns the sex of the parties to marriage shall not be taken of itself to be threatening or intended to stir up hatred.' It mirrors the existing sub-section (1) which makes clear that 'the discussion or criticism of sexual conduct or practices shall not be taken of itself to be threatening or intended to stir up hatred'. For conduct or behaviour in public to violate criminal law, the POA requires proof beyond reasonable doubt that the behaviour is threatening *and* is intended to stir up hatred on the grounds of religion or sexual orientation. The investigation, prosecution and determination of potential offences, under the POA and criminal law more generally, must be carried out in accordance with an individual's right to freedom of expression.

Impact on school education

The Act does not change education law, but it does impact upon the legal duty on maintained schools to teach about 'the nature of marriage', which now covers marriage of both opposite sex and same sex couples under the law of England and Wales. Our guidance for schools explains the effect of this in more detail.

Possible future changes

The Government has been clear since the Act was passed in July 2013 that the process of converting a civil partnership into a marriage would come in later than marriage of same sex couples because completely new procedures and processes will need to be introduced. This contrasts with the work to make new marriages of same sex couples possible, which builds on existing processes and makes implementation more straightforward. The Government is aiming to have everything in place to enable couples to convert their civil partnerships into marriages by the end of 2014.

The Act contains measures affecting state pension and occupational pension rights of married same sex couples. In particular, the occupational pension rights of same sex surviving spouses are currently set at the same level as those for civil partners (generally backdated to occupational pension rights accrued since 5 December 2005). This restriction does not apply to occupational pension rights for married

opposite sex couples. Schedule 9, paragraph 18(1) of the Equality Act permits this. At the time of writing, litigation concerning this provision has determined that it is lawful under European Union law through the case *Innospec Limited & Others v Mr J Walker (2014 UKEAT 0232)*. However, this case may proceed further through the appeal courts so that conclusion is not final or definitive at this point in time. The Government is also currently reviewing differences in survivor benefits of same sex couples and opposite sex couples.

The law of England and Wales requires that a marriage must take place in a register office, on approved premises (such as a hotel), or in registered places of worship (with exceptions for marriages according to Jewish or Quaker marriage procedures, deathbed marriages and marriages where one or both of the couple are housebound or detained). However, non-religious belief organisations, such as Humanists, could not meet these requirements to allow them to conduct marriages according to their usages. This is, however, a developing area, both in the courts (see R (on the application of *Hodkin and another v Registrar General of Births, Deaths and Marriages (2013 UKSC 77)*) and because the Act requires (in Section 14) the Government to conduct a review of whether marriages should be permitted according to the usages of non-religious belief organisations. The review must include a full public consultation and a report on the outcome must be published before 1 January 2015. The Act provides a power for the Government to make secondary legislation to permit marriages according to the usages of non-religious belief organisations, if that is the Government's decision following the review.

More information

The EHRC has published a series of complementary guidance documents:

- *The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013: The Equality and Human Rights Implications for Public Authorities*
- *The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013: The Equality and Human Rights Implications for Religious Organisations*
- *The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013: The Equality and Human Rights Implications for the Provision of School Education*

- *The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013: The Equality and Human Rights Implications for the Workplace and Service Delivery*
- *A Quick Guide to the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013*

See also the following statutory codes of practice:

- *Equality Act 2010 Code of Practice: Employment Statutory Code of Practice*
http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/EqualityAct/employment_code.doc
- *Equality Act 2010 Code of Practice: Services, Public Functions & Associations*
http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/EqualityAct/services_code.doc

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For advice, information or guidance on equality, discrimination or human rights issues, please contact the Equality Advisory and Support Service, a free and independent service.

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