



Department
for Culture
Media & Sport

CIVIL PARTNERSHIP REVIEW (ENGLAND AND WALES) - REPORT ON CONCLUSIONS

June 2014

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Executive summary

We have now analysed responses to the consultation on the Civil Partnership Act 2004. A majority of respondents who expressed a view on them were opposed to each of the three main changes to civil partnership. There was therefore no united call for change from respondents to the consultation at this stage.

Of the over 10,000 online survey answers to each of the relevant questions:

- Less than a third of respondents supported abolition of civil partnership
- The majority were against closing civil partnership to new couples
- Over three-quarters were against opening up civil partnership to opposite sex couples.

Several important organisations thought it was too soon to consider making changes to civil partnership – this should wait until we know the impact of extending marriage to same sex couples. Other organisations, in contrast, put forward a case for opening up civil partnerships to opposite sex couples now, for example because civil partnership and marriage were different relationships and couples should have equal access to both.

In time we will know how many same sex couples are marrying and how many entering a civil partnership, and how many couples are remaining in civil partnerships rather than converting them to marriages. At present we do not have this information, and civil partnership conversion to marriage will not be available until December 2014.

Given the lack of consensus on the way forward, the Government will not be making any changes.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The Civil Partnership Act 2004 (“the CPA”) enabled same sex couples to obtain legal recognition of their relationship by registering a civil partnership in the United Kingdom (UK). By the end of 2012 more than 60,000 couples had registered a civil partnership. In December 2011 it also became possible to register a civil partnership on religious premises in England and Wales, with the religious organisation’s consent. Since 29 March 2014 same sex couples have been able to marry under the law of England and Wales. From 10 December 2014, civil partners will be able to convert their civil partnership into a marriage.

1.2 Civil partnership was created to give same sex couples access to equivalent legal rights to marriage at a time when they did not have access to marriage itself. The Government did not make changes to civil partnership in the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 because of the important role it plays in the lives of many couples. The Government saw little benefit at that stage in changing a well-understood legal institution without evidence of a clear need to do so and of the impact such a step would have.

1.3 During the parliamentary passage of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013, questions were raised about the future of civil partnership once marriage was extended to same sex couples. Parliament agreed to insert a provision into the Act requiring a formal review of the operation and future of the CPA in England and Wales.

1.4 The objectives for the England and Wales civil partnership review were to carry out a full public consultation, to assess the evidence and to publish a report on:

- The functioning and operation of the CPA
- The future of civil partnerships including whether they should apply to all couples
- Options and recommendations for changes to civil partnerships.

1.5 The Government has carried out the required policy analysis of civil partnerships¹ and their future. The nature and possible future of civil partnership has been extensively debated since before the CPA was first mooted and many of the issues and arguments have been very well rehearsed over many years, most recently in debates on the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013. The policy analysis covered how well civil partnership had been working, the context for any reforms and what possible changes had been proposed. It looked at the arguments that had been put forward in favour of or against the main potential

¹ A select bibliography is at Appendix A.

changes. It considered how these changes could be made and identified the issues which would need to be considered in each case. It also identified those changes to administrative processes and IT systems which would be needed and identified the main costs and benefits.

1.6 The Government has now also consulted widely to gather views and evidence on others' ideas for the future of civil partnership in England and Wales, through a consultation document *Civil Partnership Review (England and Wales): a consultation*. The consultation document was informed by the policy analysis described above.

1.7 The consultation document set out the principles and scope² of the review. It invited views on the three main potential changes to civil partnership suggested in Parliament and elsewhere. It asked 10 consultation questions to ascertain views about these ideas and other issues for the future of civil partnership. The Government has not itself made any proposals for changes to civil partnership. Through the consultation there has been the opportunity for advocates of particular changes to set out their case for them and to obtain an indication of the degree of support or opposition to the potential changes in question. The consultation also sought an indication of the demand for opening up civil partnership to opposite sex couples.

1.8 The publication of the consultation document was announced in both Houses of Parliament and also on the Culture, Media and Sport website. Officials from the Department directly contacted around 50 organisations with an interest in the issues and asked other Departments to do the same. Officials also offered meetings to the principal stakeholders, several of whom took up the offer, emailed more than 1300 organisations and individuals who had registered an interest in receiving updates on equal marriage or related issues and highlighted the consultation in the February edition of the Women's Engagement Newsletter, which is circulated to more than 2,000 organisations and individuals. The consultation ran from 23 January to 17 April 2014.

1.9 We received almost 11,500 responses from a wide range of interested parties and individual members of the public by the end of the consultation period. Demographic information about the respondents who provided it is set out in Appendix B. Views on the issues in the consultation tended to vary in line with sexual orientation, religious affinity and to a lesser extent age. For example supporters of retaining civil partnership were more likely to be lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB), of no religion and younger. The pattern was similar for views against phasing out civil partnership and in favour of opening it up to opposite sex couples.

² Changes to the law on cohabitation, marriage and all eligibility criteria for civil partnership other than the need for partners to be of the same sex were out of scope. Differences between survivor benefits provided to same sex and opposite sex couples under occupational pension schemes are the subject of a separate review under section 16 of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013.

1.10 The Government has considered the responses to the consultation alongside evidence about marriage of same sex couples, civil partnership and possible options for the future of civil partnerships.

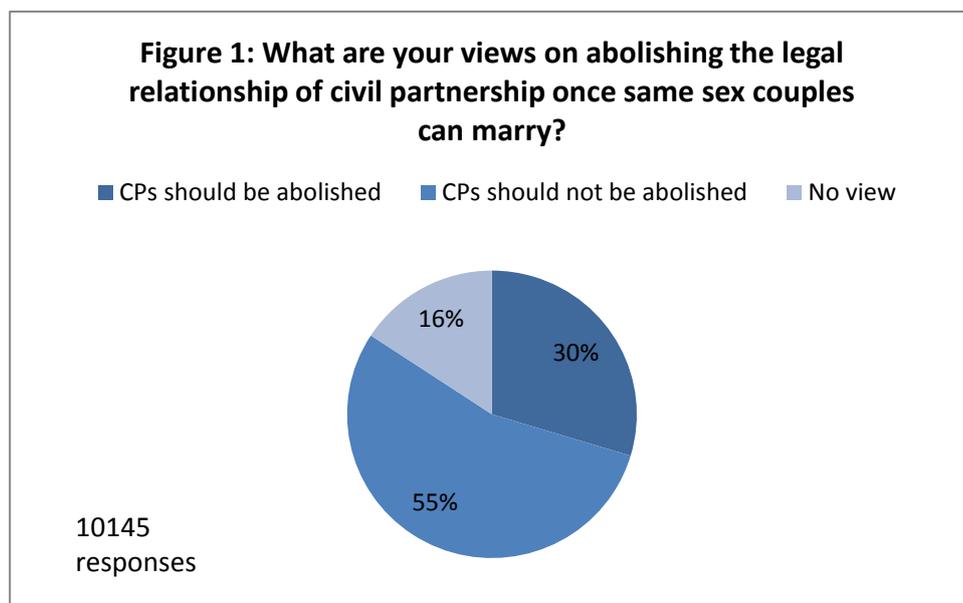
Chapter 2: Response to the consultation

2.1 This section of the report provides a summary of responses to the consultation from organisations and individuals. It does not provide an exhaustive account of all consultation responses, but rather focuses on the extent of support or opposition to potential changes and the key points and themes which emerged. The sample is a self-selecting sample of people who responded to the consultation. It is not representative of the general population. Details of responses to the closed survey questions and information about who responded to the consultation are in Appendix B.

Abolishing or phasing out civil partnership

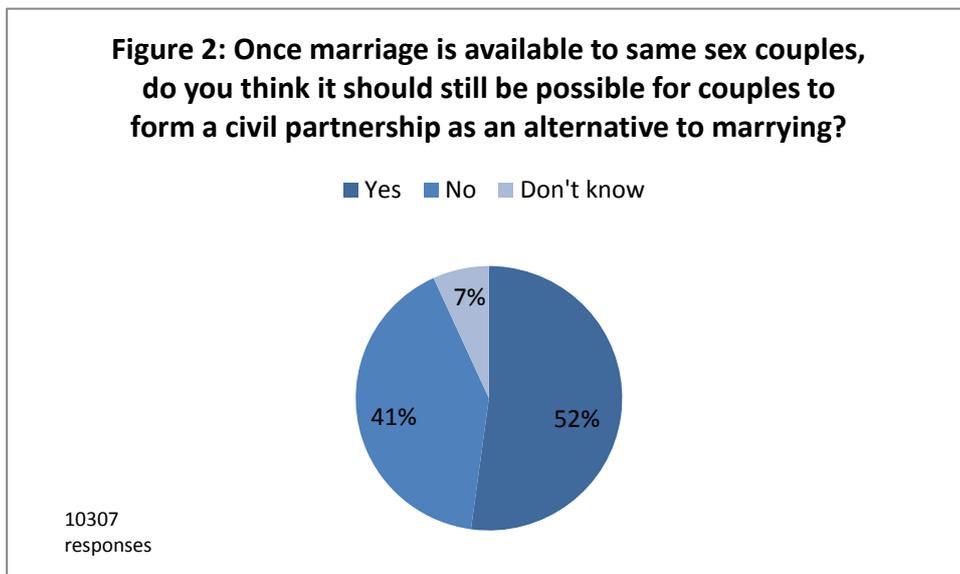
2.2 The consultation sought views about abolishing the legal relationship of civil partnership and converting existing civil partnerships into marriages and about stopping new civil partnerships being registered, but retaining existing ones.

2.3 Figure 1 shows responses to the question about abolishing civil partnerships outright.



Of those 10,145 respondents who answered this question less than a third supported abolition of civil partnerships.

2.4 Figure 2 shows responses to the question about closing civil partnerships to new couples.



Of the 10,307 respondents who answered this question, the majority agreed that civil partnerships should remain available for same sex couples to enter into.

2.5 Respondents who favoured civil partnerships being retained gave a range of reasons for doing so.

The retention of civil partnership will mean that Christian and other same sex couples who hold the traditional understanding of marriage as being between a man and a woman, will still have a social and legal framework in which their relationship can be honoured and recognised.

(Church of England)

To remove civil partnerships and retain marriage would in our view suggest that civil partnerships were never truly recognised in the same light as marriage and that they would become of a lesser recognised status.

(a:gender)

Some respondents also argued that it was too soon to consider abolishing or phasing out civil partnerships.

There is currently no evidence to support proposals to abolish civil partnerships and we therefore believe that such proposals are premature.

(Stonewall)

2.6 The main points made in favour of retaining civil partnership for same sex couples included the following:

- Abolishing civil partnership would significantly harm couples currently in a civil partnership. It would be unfair to couples who had never intended to marry and forcing couples to convert their civil partnerships into marriages was unacceptable and would be very damaging
- Civil partnership and marriage are different relationships. Couples should be able to choose the one that suits their relationship
- Civil partnership is felt to be the appropriate relationship for a same sex couple
- Civil partnership is seen as a secular alternative to marriage without its traditional associations
- Civil partnership gives couples access to legal rights and responsibilities without going against a belief that marriage is between one man and one woman
- The current position should be maintained.

2.7 A few other arguments supporting retaining civil partnerships were also raised. It may encourage many couples to formalise their relationship. Some couples may value having a separate institution for same sex couples as they did not want to emulate opposite sex couples. Some also expressed a belief that civil partnership enabled couples to enter a relationship that stopped short of marriage. Respondents opposed to the legal recognition of same sex couples' relationships and same sex relationships in general frequently expressed that view here and across many or all of the answers to the consultation questions.

2.8 In respondents' comments, strong opposition was expressed to converting civil partnerships to marriages as part of abolishing civil partnership.

It would be particularly unkind to do away with civil partnership retrospectively, forcing those who have already contracted them to either dissolve them or convert them into marriage.

(The Church in Wales)

..abolition would make it compulsory either for existing Civil Partners to get married or to separate and this would be a brutal enforced change of their preferred status..

(The TUC)

2.9 Respondents who thought civil partnerships should be abolished or phased out gave a range of reasons for their views. The main ones are set out below:

- Civil partnership is no longer needed. It was a stepping stone for same sex couples on the way to gaining the right to marry

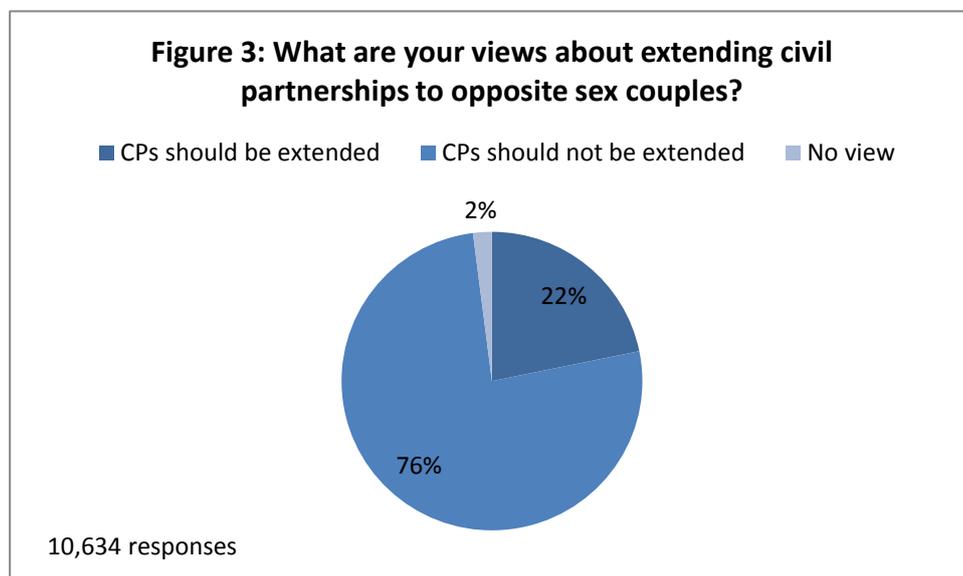
- When all couples can marry, retaining two separate but equivalent legal relationships would be complicated, confusing and/or costly
- Marriage is the “gold standard”, civil partnership is “inferior”. A separate institution is never equal
- Maintaining civil partnership will undermine and devalue marriage and harm family life
- Very few people were likely to choose to register a civil partnership rather than marry
- Only all couples having the same rights to gain legal recognition for their relationship will achieve fairness and equality between people of different sexual orientations.

2.10 A few other points relevant to abolishing or phasing out civil partnerships were also raised. It would avoid demands for opposite sex civil partnerships and help dispel the misunderstanding that marriage was always a religious matter.

Opening up civil partnership to opposite sex couples

2.11 The consultation sought views about the principle of opening up civil partnership to opposite sex couples.

2.12 Of those 10,634 respondents who answered this question about opening up civil partnerships to opposite sex couples, more than three quarters were against the proposal. (Figure 3).



2.13 The majority of respondents who did not want to see civil partnership extended to opposite sex couples gave a range of reasons for their views, of which the following were the main ones:

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.

(Christian Concern and Christian Legal Centre)

- Civil marriage entirely free from any religious element was already available to opposite sex couples
- There was no need for opposite sex couples to have an alternative to marriage
- Only very few opposite sex couples would want a civil partnership
- Marriage is felt to be the appropriate relationship for an opposite sex couple
- Civil partnership was a relationship created specifically for same sex couples
- Would create a two-tier system based on the assumption that civil partnership entails a lesser degree of commitment and is less stable than marriage
- It would entail significant costs.

For respondents who did not think that civil partnership should be retained for anyone for whatever reason, it followed that they should not be extended to opposite sex couples.

2.14 Respondents who thought opposite sex couples should be able to enter civil partnerships put forward a range of arguments, of which the main ones are the following:

As a basic democratic and human rights right principle, everyone should be equal before the law. To deny opposite-sex couples the right to have a civil partnership is discrimination and discrimination is wrong. It cannot be justified, no matter how many or how few opposite-sex couples may want a civil partnership.

(Peter Tatchell Foundation)

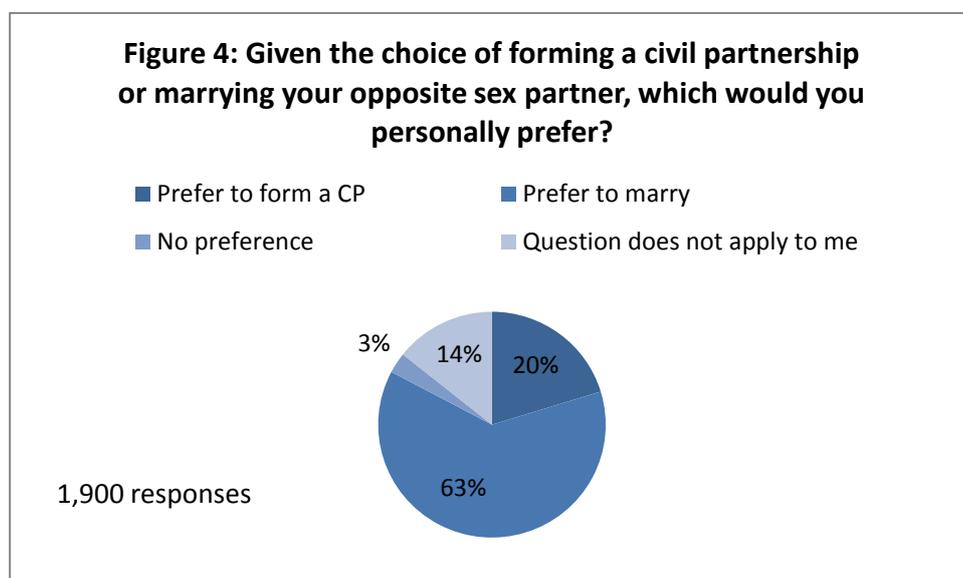
- This is needed for fairness and equality and to eliminate discrimination between opposite sex and same sex couples. All couples should have the same options for formalising their relationship in law
- Civil partnership would enable opposite sex couples to enter a legal relationship that was a secular alternative to marriage without its traditional associations
- Couples may prefer civil partnership to marriage; they should be able to make this personal choice.

2.15 Other arguments in favour of opening civil partnership to opposite sex couples were also put forward. It would enable couples to remain in a civil partnership if one partner changed their legal gender. It would prevent being in a civil partnership effectively being a declaration of sexual orientation. It was claimed that in practice it would not be legally sustainable to maintain the current position.

2.16 It was important to consider not only what people thought about opposite sex civil partnership in principle, but also to look at what the potential demand was in practice from people who were themselves in a position to enter an opposite sex civil partnership. The consultation therefore also invited people to say what type of relationship they themselves would prefer with their opposite sex partner³.

2.17 These questions were not aimed at LGB respondents or people who were already married although many such respondents gave hypothetical answers to these questions.

2.18 In total 10,216 respondents answered the question about whether they personally would prefer to form a civil partnership or marry. Figure 4 shows the responses to the question of the 1,900 of these respondents who were heterosexual/straight and unmarried.



2.19 Of the unmarried, heterosexual respondents to the question: 63 per cent said that they would prefer to marry; 20 per cent that they would prefer to form a civil partnership; and the remaining proportion either had no preference or said that the question did not apply to them.

2.20 When thinking about choosing between entering a civil partnership and marrying, the main reasons respondents gave are listed below. Many of the reasons put forward for personal choices reflected those given for the questions of principle.

Respondents would prefer a civil partnership because:

- Of not wanting a wedding
- Of not wanting the religious connotations of marriage

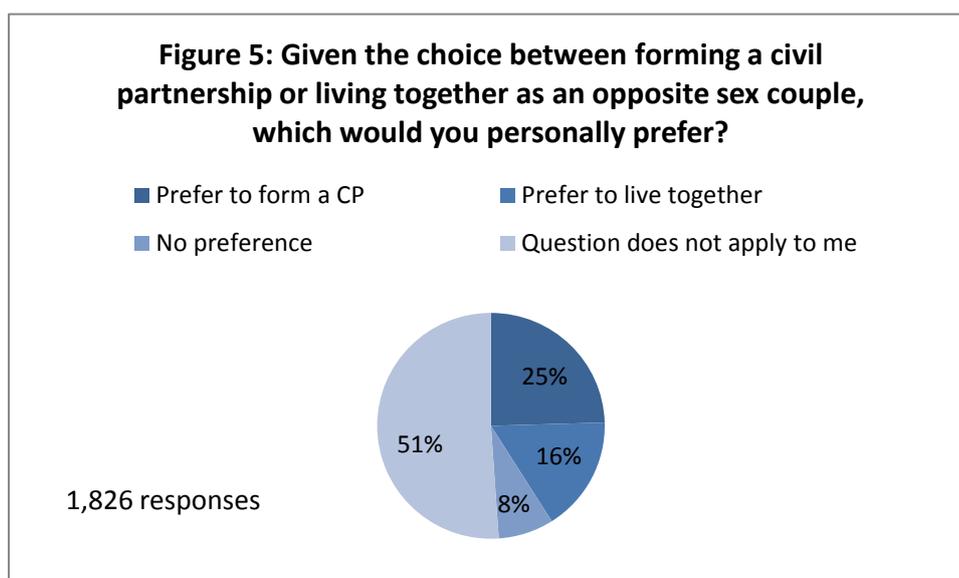
³ Many respondents used these questions to express support for or opposition to civil partnership or marriage although the questions did not in practice apply to them, for example because they were married or were or would in future be in a same sex relationship.

- Of not wanting the traditional connotations of marriage.

Respondents would prefer to marry because:

- Of believing that marriage represents a life-long commitment
- Of seeing marriage as important
- Of the legal rights, stability and circumstances for bringing up children that marriage brings and the benefits to society
- It is in line with their religious beliefs
- Of seeing marriage as a traditional and long established
- Marriage is commonly understood
- It is possible to have a religious wedding.

2.21 Overall 9,773 respondents answered the question about whether they personally would prefer to form a civil partnership or live together as an opposite sex couple. Figure 5 shows how the 1,826 of these respondents who were heterosexual/straight and unmarried answered.



2.22 Of those who responded to the question, and were unmarried and heterosexual/straight: more than half (51%) said that the question did not apply to them; a quarter (25%) said that they would prefer to form a civil partnership; and 16 per cent said that they would rather live together as an opposite sex couple. Across all categories of respondent many of the reasons put forward for personal choices again reflected those given for the questions of principle.

2.23 When thinking about choosing between forming a civil partnership or living together, the main reasons respondents gave are set out below.

Respondents would prefer a civil partnership because:

- It gives the relationship legal status and provides legal benefits

- It demonstrates the love, commitment and bond between a couple
- It is closer to marriage than living together
- They do not want a traditional marriage.

Respondents would prefer to live together because:

- If they were to form a legal relationship, they would marry, not enter a civil partnership
- They do not want to enter any legal relationship
- They saw living together as the first step towards marriage
- They believed that civil partnership demonstrated a lack of commitment
- Civil partnership should be only for same sex couples.

Views about when any changes might be made

2.24 The three potential changes discussed would all be extremely significant and some respondents expressed concern about acting prematurely. It was questioned whether it was too soon to invite views about the future of civil partnership.

This consultation had been entered into at a very early stage: commencing before same-sex marriage became possible, and closing when it has been in place for less than a month. It is important to allow time to see how the new legislation is received. Leaving things as they are now (with civil partnerships alongside marriage, potentially even for mixed-sex couples) does not preclude future change or consultation.

(The Church in Wales)

2.25 It was pointed out that only in time would it become clear how many people wished to enter or remain in a civil partnership.

It was agreed that (whatever the decision) it would be sensible for the current civil partnership arrangements to run in parallel for an agreed period to establish the level of demand for civil partnerships once marriage is in place.

(National Panel for Registration)

2.26 It was also noted that it was possible not to want change at this stage while also supporting a consideration of change in the future.

Stonewall believes that it is good practice to keep all public policy under review. We would therefore support a future review of civil partnership which takes into consideration the long-term impact of same-sex marriage and the civil partnership conversion process on the uptake of civil partnerships.

(Stonewall)

2.27 This was not only a question of how the new system affected the popularity of civil partnership; a wider perspective could also be warranted.

It may be appropriate for the Government to consider allowing the Civil Partnership Act to remain unaltered for a longer period – for example for another ten years – to allow for a fuller picture of the impact, expectations and commitment associated with civil partnerships.

(Mothers' Union)

Evidence about costs and benefits and implementation issues

2.28 The consultation document set out information about the costs and benefits and implementation issues associated with each of the three main potential changes to civil partnership and invited respondents to provide details of any that had been omitted.

2.29 The responses on both topics contained very little relevant information and in the majority of cases respondents did not directly answer the questions asked. Of the 2,660 responses to the question asking about omissions from the costs and benefits identified in the consultation document, a couple did highlight fresh points. Some members of the National Panel for Registration thought that as marriages required two registrars to attend each ceremony while civil partnerships required only one, there may be additional costs if there was only marriage for all couples. Other members of the Panel thought that if only marriage was available to all couples, there may be savings on not having to cover two systems in literature, discussions with couples etc. Stonewall commented that if civil partnership was abolished and existing civil partnerships converted into marriage the Government may face legal costs for challenges from affected couples who were unhappy with this.

2.30 Common themes emerging from the more general comments on costs and benefits included the following:

- Views on the scale of potential costs if civil partnerships were opened to opposite sex couples and on whether spending on making this change would be appropriate
- Running two parallel systems (marriage and civil partnership) would cost more than one

- If any couples were obliged to convert their civil partnerships into marriage, the costs should be met from public funds.

Many respondents again mentioned issues covered in other questions or outside the scope of the consultation such as expressing views about the moral or societal costs of extending marriage to same sex couples. Almost no respondents mentioned benefits other than in terms of advancing equality if civil partnerships were opened up to opposite sex couples.

2.31 The vast majority of the 1,748 responses to the question asking whether there were implementation issues not covered in the consultation document did not provide the information sought by the question. The comments made most frequently were either opposition to marriage of same sex couples or concerns that opening civil partnership to opposite sex couples would undermine marriage.

2.32 Of the respondents who did address the question, the topic covered most often was how existing civil partnerships would be converted into marriages. Some respondents saw civil partnerships as legal contracts which it would be difficult to convert into marriages. Other issues raised were costs, the challenge of ensuring that all civil partnerships had been converted and the consequences if a couple deliberately or otherwise did not convert their civil partnership which was dissolved as a result. The other topic raised most commonly was the complication of running more than one system of legal relationship.

2.33 A range of other individual points were made. Examples included questions about the position of couples in overseas opposite sex civil unions, about courtesy titles and the unknown legal territory of ending one type of legal relationship to enter another.

Other potential changes to civil partnership and the public sector equality duty

2.34 The consultation document also invited views on other potential changes to civil partnership and on the public sector equality duty, which requires consideration of how people who share the characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 might be affected.

2.35 The first category of potential changes the consultation document asked about was to the process of forming a civil partnership and the language used to describe it. Some 1,196 respondents commented on this question; however, the majority of these comments were out of scope.

2.36 Of those that were in scope, the view expressed most frequently was agreement that civil partnerships and marriages should have distinct processes.

2.37 The consultation also asked if there were other options for changes to civil partnership that were within the scope of the review and consistent with its principles. Almost none of the comments some 988 respondents made here answered the question posed in the consultation.

2.38 Although some respondents called for or suggested changes to civil partnership, these were generally of the sort that were outside the scope of the review⁴. Other respondents thought that there were no other options for change within the review's scope. Some directly expressed support for keeping civil partnership in its current form or cautioned against changes. The call for the relationship to avoid the concept of gender was repeated in responding to this question.

2.39 Examples of changes raised that are outside the scope of the review included many that were raised in the passage of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 and indeed during the passage of the CPA.

2.40 The consultation asked whether people who shared a protected characteristic other than sexual orientation, gender reassignment and religion or belief would be particularly affected by any of the potential changes to civil partnership described in the document.

2.41 In commenting here, very few of the 1,254 respondents who did so directly addressed the consultation question. Instead respondents took the opportunity to set out their views and concerns about marriage for same sex couples or to call for civil partnership to be made

⁴ See footnote 2.

available to siblings, close friends or dependents, both of which are outside the scope of the review or to comment on issues raised elsewhere in the consultation.

2.42 Some respondents called for consideration to be given to the protected characteristics of disability and age. On the former the concern was about people who may be unable to understand any changes and are vulnerable as a result.

2.43 On the latter, respondents referred to implications for children of any changes to civil partnership and different generations having different views. The protected characteristic of pregnancy and maternity was also mentioned as one that should be considered. Other matters highlighted amongst the responses were the particular positions of bisexual people under the protected characteristic of sexual orientation, gender neutral people in relation to sex and minority religions and beliefs under the corresponding protected characteristic. A number of respondents wanted to see protection for religious people given particular consideration and for the view that marriage can be only between a man and a woman to be protected as a belief under the Equality Act 2010. This is already the case.

Chapter 3: Conclusions of the review

3.1 In deciding the way forward we have been able to take account of the policy analysis carried out in order to prepare the consultation document, and what people told us in responding to the consultation and in direct discussions. We have also considered any further evidence on costs and benefits, experience in other countries and other relevant evidence that people drew to our attention through the consultation. We have also learned that the application to the European Court of Human Rights challenging the availability of civil partnership only to same sex couples was declared inadmissible on 12 December 2013.

3.2 The work undertaken leading up to the publication of the consultation document suggested that people were generally happy with the operation of the CPA for same sex couples. The relationship had proved popular and provided significant benefits to same sex couples and their families and friends. This has generally been borne out by responses to consultation document. Where people took a different view, this was generally linked to opposition to the existence of civil partnership at all. Many respondents emphasised how valued civil partnerships are and what an important purpose they served for same sex couples. When invited to suggest changes to how civil partnerships operate, some respondents specifically urged that they be kept as they are now and the suggestions that were put forward were generally outside the scope of the review⁵. The Government has therefore concluded that changes to how civil partnerships operate are not needed at this time.

3.3 Three main potential changes to civil partnership have been identified and considered in depth. We looked at the diverse range of arguments that had been advanced for abolishing or phasing out civil partnership and those for retaining civil partnership alongside marriage for same sex couples. Similarly, we considered the varied reasons given for their point of view by supporters and opponents of opening up civil partnership to opposite sex couples. For each of these potential measures we looked not only at whether they should or should not be made, but also at how and what each would entail. We identified the detailed issues that would need to be considered, administrative changes and the main costs and benefits.

3.4 There was some support for each of the three main potential changes but this was outweighed by the opposition to each of them from a majority of respondents. There was no loud call for change and no united view around what the future of civil partnership should be.

⁵ See footnote 2

3.5 There were more reasons for wanting to retain civil partnerships expressed in the consultation responses than anticipated in the consultation document. Respondents also stressed that they saw marriage and civil partnership as different relationships, for example, and that abolishing or closing down civil partnership could leave some same sex couples without access to a legal relationship if marriage was not an option for religious or other reasons. Most of the reasons put forward by respondents in favour of abolishing or phasing out civil partnership were those set out in the consultation document, but some respondents also expressed their view that maintaining civil partnership could harm marriage and family life. Different views on the case for and against these potential changes were strongly held by some respondents. The consultation responses did not much add to what was already known about implementation issues, costs and benefits and the public sector equality duty, suggesting that the analysis set out in that document was accurate.

3.6 The responses confirmed that there was a similar range of reasons for supporting or opposing opening up civil partnerships to opposite sex couples as those set out in the consultation document.

3.7 For all three potential changes the consultation responses did not much add to what was already known about implementation issues, costs and benefits and the public sector equality duty, suggesting that the analysis set out in that document was broadly comprehensive and sound.

3.8 The work undertaken for the review and the responses to the consultation have highlighted the range of mutually exclusive views about the future of civil partnership. People's views can change over time as has been the case with civil partnership, where initial concerns have died down and the relationship secured broad support.

3.9 Several important organisations thought it was too soon to consider making changes to civil partnership – this should wait until we know the impact of extending marriage to same sex couples. In time we will know how many same sex couples are choosing to marry and how many to enter a civil partnership and how many couples are remaining in civil partnerships rather than converting them to marriages. At present we do not have this information and civil partnership conversion to marriage will not be available until the end of 2014.

3.10 Experience with the introduction of civil partnership indicates that it will take some time for people to get used to the introduction of the new system where marriage is open to same sex couples alongside civil partnership. From December 2014 couples in a civil partnership will be able to convert their relationship to a marriage. In time official statistics will be available to show the long term trend on the numbers of marriages, civil partnerships and conversions. Given the lack of consensus on the way forward, the Government will not be making any changes.

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Appendix B: Consultation response analysis

Profile of people who responded to the consultation

Sexual Orientation	Respondents	Percent
Bisexual	248	2.6
Heterosexual/straight	7,518	78.7
Lesbian/gay	1,153	12.1
Other	113	1.2
Prefer not to say	517	5.4
Total Responses	9,549	100.0
Did not answer	1,717	
Total	11,266	

Age	Respondents	Percent
<18	40	0.4
19-24	413	4.4
25-34	940	10.1
35-44	1,110	11.9
45-54	1,425	15.2
55-64	1,961	21.0
65+	3,456	37.0
Total Responses	9,345	100.0
Did not answer	1,921	
Total	11,266	

Marital Status	Respondents	Percent
Never married and never registered a same sex CP	1,855	19.3
Married	5,862	61.0
Separated but still legally married	66	0.7
Divorced	406	4.2
Widowed	396	4.1
Registered in same sex CP	578	6.0
Separated - legally in same sex CP	9	0.1
Formerly in same sex CP which is now dissolved	17	0.2
Prefer not to say	417	4.3
Total responses	9,606	100.0
Did not answer	1,660	
Total	11,266	

Religion	Respondents	Percent
No Religion	1,616	16.9
Any Religion	7,792	81.6
Prefer not to say	142	1.5
Total Responses	9,550	100.0
Did not answer	1,716	
Total	11,226	

Response rates (the number of people who provided an answer to a question, expressed as a percentage of the total number of people who submitted a consultation response)

	Q1: What are your views on abolishing the legal relationship of civil partnership once same sex couples can marry?	Q2: Once marriage is available to same sex couples, do you think it should still be possible for couples to form a civil partnership as an alternative to marrying?	Q3: What are your views about extending civil partnerships to opposite sex couples?	Q4: Given the choice of forming a civil partnership or living together as an opposite sex couple, which would you personally prefer?	Question 5: Given the choice of forming a civil partnership or marrying your opposite sex partner, which would you personally prefer?
Answered the question	10,145	10,307	10,634	9,773	10,216
Did not answer	1,121	959	632	1,493	1,050
Response rate to question	90%	91%	94%	86.7%	90.7%

Distribution of responses by question

Q1: What are your views on abolishing the legal relationship of civil partnership once same sex couples can marry?

	Responses	Percent
Response		
Abolish	3,005	29.6
Do not abolish	5,545	54.7
No view	1,595	15.7
Total Responses	10,145	100.0
Did not answer	1,121	
Total	11,266	

Q2: Once marriage is available to same sex couples, do you think it should still be possible for couples to form a civil partnership as an alternative to marrying?

	Responses	Percent
Response		
Yes	5,388	52.3
No	4,216	40.9
Don't know	703	6.8
Total Responses	10,307	100.0
Did not answer	959	
Total	11,266	

Q3: What are your views about extending civil partnerships to opposite sex couples?

	Responses	Percent
Response		
CPs should be extended	2,317	21.8
CPs should not be extended	8,102	76.2
No view	215	2.0
Total Responses	10,634	100.0
Did not answer	632	
Total	11,266	

Q4: Given the choice between forming a civil partnership or living together as an opposite sex couple, which would you personally prefer?

	Responses	Percent
Response		
Prefer to form a CP	1,318	13.5
Prefer to live together	1,296	13.3
No preference	589	6.0
Question does not apply to me	6,570	67.2
Total Responses	9,773	100.0
Did not answer	1493	
Total	11266	

Q5: Given the choice of forming a civil partnership or marrying your opposite sex partner, which would you personally prefer?

	Response	Percent
Responses		
Prefer to form a CP	781	7.6
Prefer to marry	6,467	63.3
No preference	199	1.9
Question does not apply to me	2,769	27.1
Total Responses	10,216	100.0
Did not answer	1,050	
Total	11,266	



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