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Civil Partnership & Marriage: What they mean to same-sex couples

A summary of findings

2016



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Executive Summary

An online qualitative survey was used to explore the perspectives of those who have had a civil partnership, a same-sex marriage or have converted a civil partnership to a marriage. The survey asked for views about the legal recognition of relationships and the impact (or not) the introduction of same-sex marriage in England, Wales and Scotland is having. A total of 82 responses were received between Oct 2015 – Apr 2016. This report provides an overview of the findings. The broad issues that were addressed and some themes in participant responses are as follows:

What civil partnership and marriage mean to same-sex couples:

- Romance
- Rights
- Recognition

Reasons for getting married rather than a civil partnership:

- Marriage came along
- We want 'full' recognition

Reasons for converting a civil partnership to a marriage:

- To gain equal status
- We considered civil partnership as a marriage
- An opportunity to re-new vows and celebrate the relationship

Reasons for not converting a civil partnership to a marriage:

- It's just a piece of paper
- It would devalue our civil partnership
- Resisting patriarchal/heteronormative connotations of marriage
- Avoiding family difficulties

How marriage has impacted same-sex couples' relationships and lives:

- It hasn't changed anything
- It's strengthened the relationship
- It's increased our sense of security
- It's normalised our relationship in the eyes of others
- Exposure to negative reactions among family and friends

What civil partnerships mean to same-sex couples now:

- A second class form of marriage
- Marriage by another name
- Legal recognition free from the cultural baggage of marriage

What same-sex couples think should happen to civil partnerships now:

- They should be abolished
- It should be opened up to opposite-sex couples
- Civil partnerships should be expanded beyond the normative couple
- The current system should continue

Introduction

The Civil Partnership Act (2004) provided a legally recognised status for same-sex relationships for the first time in the UK. Within a decade The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 and the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2014 provided same-sex couples in England, Wales and Scotland access to civil marriage while also keeping the option of civil partnership available for same-sex couples. Civil partnership currently remains the only form of legal relationship recognition for same-sex couples in Northern Ireland. Couples who registered a civil partnership have been able to convert this to a marriage since 10 December 2014 in England and Wales and since 16 December 2014 in Scotland. In England and Wales, converting a civil partnership to a marriage was free for the first year for all civil partnerships formed before 29 March 2014. When converting a civil partnership couples can choose to have a ceremony or simply sign a declaration in the presence of a Superintendent Registrar or their deputy. Couples choosing to convert receive a marriage certificate, on which the date of their marriage is backdated to the date of their civil partnership.

The introduction of same-sex marriage in England, Wales and Scotland has resulted in two legislative frameworks (civil partnerships and marriage) for recognising same-sex relationships that are almost identical.

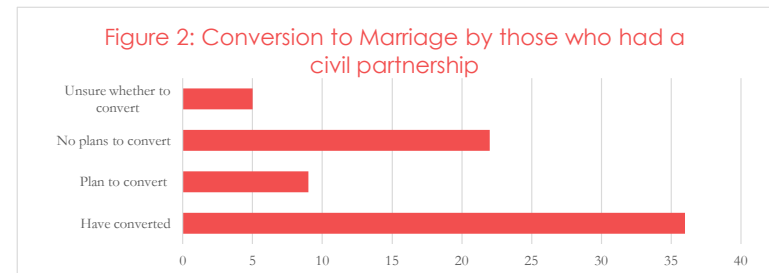
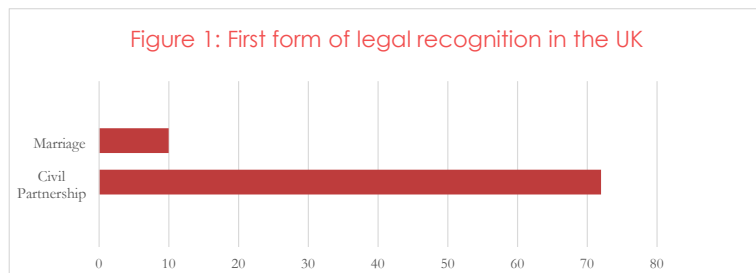
This is, to our knowledge, the first study to examine British same-sex couples' understandings of same-sex marriage and civil partnership now that they co-exist in legislature. This project aimed to explore the perspectives of same-sex couples who have had a civil partnership, a marriage or have converted a civil partnership to a marriage in order to examine the meanings same-sex couples give to both marriage and civil partnership, how they experience marriage and how they frame the importance of legal recognition for their lives, relationships and society more broadly.

Methodology & Demographics

The research used an online qualitative (free-text) survey to gather the opinions and experiences of an opportunistic sample of same-sex couples. The survey was advertised using lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender email lists and on social media. The survey was live between October 2015 – April 2016. Couples were asked about their views on the legal recognition of same-sex relationships and the impact (or not) the introduction of same-sex marriage in England, Wales and Scotland is having on their relationships and families. It also asked about their views on civil partnerships a decade after their introduction.

82 people who have had a civil partnership or a same-sex marriage took part in the survey. Of these 56% (n=46) were currently married and 44% (n= 36) were currently in a civil partnership.

The majority of survey respondents (88%) had originally entered a civil partnership as their first form of legal recognition for their relationship in the UK (see Figure 1). Of these half (50%) had subsequently converted their civil partnership to a marriage when it became possible to do so following the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 or the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2014 (see Figure 2). The sample thus comprised of 12% (n=10) who had got married post-2014, 44% (n=36) who had initially registered a civil partnership but subsequently converted their civil partnership to marriage and 44% (n=36) who were in a civil partnership.



The opportunistic sample was not fully representative consisting predominantly of white, middle class, able-bodied, women. Survey responses are broken down by demographic categories in Table 1.

Table 1: Participant information

Demographics	Statistics
Gender	74% (61) Female, 22% (18) Male, 1% (1) Trans Female, 2% (2) Non-binary
Sexuality	59% (48) Lesbian, 28% (23) Gay, 10% (8) Bisexual, 3% (3) Other (queer and pansexual)
Age	Average age 44 (range 25 – 71), partners' average age 45 (range 25 – 80)
Ethnicity	All respondents were 'White' or Caucasian apart from one 'White/Asian'. Their partners were also predominantly white.
Disability	96% (79) were able-bodied, 4% (3) were disabled
Class	70% (57) described themselves as 'middle class', 17% (14) as 'working class'. Remainder refused to answer.
Education	73% (60) were educated to graduate level or above
Relationship duration	Average 13 years (range 2 – 49 years)
Living Arrangement	Over 95% (78) currently lived with their civil partner/spouse. Average length of time living together was 12 years (range 1 - 44 years).
Property ownership	73% (60) jointly owned property with their partner/spouse.
Children	41.5% (34) had children, 58.5% (48) had no children. Of those without children 63% (30) did not plan on having children in future.

Survey Results

In this section some of the broad issues that were addressed in the survey and some key themes in the data are summarized and illustrated with participant responses. The extracts are labelled with the participant's respondent number together with whether they got married post-2014 (M), initially registered a civil partnership but then converted to marriage (CPM) or if they are currently in a civil partnership (CP).

What Civil Partnership and Marriage mean to same-sex couples

Respondents reported a mixture of reasons for having a civil partnership or marriage, typically involving reasons that we have categorised as **Romance, Rights and Recognition**. Respondents typically cited a mixture of these reasons for both civil partnership and marriage, although **Romance** appeared particularly prominent among those who had got married after the introduction of same-sex marriage, while **Rights and Recognition** featured more prominently in responses by those in a civil partnership.

Romance

An element of it would be romantic...We did both value the romance of getting married. (48M)

Mainly it was because marriage seems to be the biggest and best way of saying I love her. (51M)

She's the best person I ever met and I never wanted to let her go! I was always pretty anti-marriage, but meeting her changed it and I turned quite romantic, I suppose. (49CPM)

Rights

It was quite pragmatic, we decided it offered us legal protection. By 2005 we had a home, pets and a large mortgage we were fully committed. (75CP)

To protect ourselves as a family unit under the law, particularly given my partner's parents were unaccepting of us. (42CP)

We decided to have a civil partnership in case one of us went under the proverbial bus. (54CPM)

We 'had' to enter into a CP in order to obtain residency for my partner; we may have waited longer otherwise (as would be the case for opposite sex couples with the same visa issues). I would have had more difficulty getting residency in her country as they don't recognise same-sex relationships in law in any sense. (19CP)

Recognition

As a committed monogamous couple we did not wish to be denied that which heterosexuals would take for granted, namely legal recognition. (38CPM)

We had been together for 20 years and felt that it was only right to have the partnership legally recognised. (30CP)

Civil partnership felt like a nice way to recognise our relationship without buying into an institution that neither of us really believed in. (57CP)

Reasons for getting married rather than having a civil partnership

Since the introduction of same-sex marriage with the passage of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 and the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2014, same-sex couples wishing to gain legal recognition have had the choice between civil partnership and marriage. The 10 respondents who had chosen to get married after its introduction expressed several reasons for getting married rather than having a civil partnership. These included that **Marriage came along** before they decided to legally formalise their relationship and because they **wanted 'full' recognition**:

Marriage came along

When we originally booked the ceremony it was going to be a civil partnership but the law changed in the April and we were booked for August so changed it to a marriage. (11M)

We would have had a civil partnership if marriage hadn't come available. (47M)

Marriage for same-sex couples came in just a couple of weeks or so before our wedding date, which was [date] 2014. Perhaps we would've had a civil partnership if marriage hadn't been available. (51M)

We wanted 'full' recognition

We wanted the full recognition like any heterosexual couple. (73M)

Didn't see the point of a civil partnership when we could get married. (81M)

Civil partnership to us is a watered down half way house of marriage. (53M)

Reasons for converting a civil partnership to a marriage

Those respondents who had converted their civil partnership to a marriage, or were planning to do so, gave several reasons for doing this including **to gain equal status**, because they **considered civil partnership as a marriage** or they saw it as **an opportunity to re-new vows and celebrate the relationship**:

To gain equal status

We will convert for equal status. (52CP)

To be equal in every respect. We never hesitated we knew as soon as the law allowed it that we would convert. (10CPM)

We didn't want to be seen as second-class citizens. A CP is not the same thing as a marriage and we wanted our full rights...so we wanted to say yes, we are two women who are married to each other, and we're just as good and just as deserving of rights as any straight couple. (49CPM)

We already considered our civil partnership as a marriage

Because we are married! Our ceremony was a marriage, but at the time it legally had to be called a CP! (25CPM)

We always saw our Civil Partnership as a marriage and treated it as such and we were overjoyed when we could finally change it and get the green certificate that all other married people had got. (72CPM)

We converted our civil partnership to marriage because marriage was what we had wanted all along. (80CPM)

To re-new vows and celebrate the relationship

It gave us an excuse to celebrate all over again. (40CPM)

A good opportunity to celebrate our relationship again with friends and family, much as opposite-sex couples who renew their vows do. (64CPM)

We wanted to share our commitment to each other with our respective families and felt that in 2006 [when they had their civil partnership] this wasn't the right time as it still wasn't seen as that OK. We worried especially that my partner's family may not take it well as sometimes they referred to us a

couple and sometimes we appeared to be just friends (in their eyes), their use of language and behaviour was sometimes confusing for us to understand what their perception of our relationship truly was...so this was the trigger for getting married and finally "coming out" to all of the family! (79CPM)

Reasons for not converting a civil partnership to a marriage

Those who had chosen not to convert their civil partnership to a marriage also provided several reasons for this. Some respondents reported that in their opinion there was no meaningful difference between civil partnership and marriage and so converting would be **just a piece of paper**. Some even felt it would **devalue the civil partnership** they had entered. Others wanted to **resist the patriarchal/heteronormative connotations** of marriage. Two respondents reported not converting to **avoid family difficulties** as their family would not accept same-sex marriage or because they had not told their family about their civil partnership.

It's just a piece of paper

It feels like a paper exercise - we're both non religious and can see very little benefit in doing it. (75CP)

I don't want to get married as I do not consider a ceremony or a piece of paper with a different word on it a meaningful expression of love. (7CP)

I don't feel like our relationship will mean any more depending on the type of certificate we have. (57CP)

It would devalue our civil partnership

The CP was our legal recognition. Since we had no family support then it made no difference to family and they did not recognise it in any case. To now 'convert' it to a marriage would feel like we were devaluing what our CP represented to us. Our family would also perceive that we had only been married from the point of the new marriage, which would leave a bad taste in my mouth. (19CP)

As far as we are concerned, we are married, and converting would feel like an admission that civil partnerships are second best. (57CP)

Resisting patriarchal/heteronormative connotations

We will never convert. I do not wish to be married. I do not wish to buy more in to the patriarchy than I am forced to do so. (13CP)

We chose to have a CP after marriage became legal. We like the sense of freedom of being in a CP, just because you can fit your relationship into a heteronormative box now doesn't mean that feels like the right box for us. (15CP)

My partner is against, for all the feminist reasons to be against marriage (patriarchal connotations, etc)! So we currently have no plans to do so! (20CP)

Avoiding family difficulties

We will most likely do it, sadly, when our parents have passed on. Though they are both happy that we got CP'd and can fully understand it - they do not understand marriage for same sex people - we respect that and will not convert until they have passed away. (43CP)

It would of course provide an opportunity to tell and invite our families but this also complicates matters. I'd like to think we'd both like to be married, and be able to describe ourselves as such, but the fact that it became an option so far down the line in our relationship makes it a complicated issue...If the act of converting our civil partnership could just be about us then I believe we wouldn't give it a second thought. However, now we would be obligated to involve family and then discuss our Civil Partnership. It now feels like the event would now become about their involvement in it. And so it has become a hurdle we are currently evading. (29CP)

How marriage has impacted same-sex couples' relationships and lives

Those who had married their partners or converted a civil partnership to a marriage expressed a range of views concerning how marriage (specifically) has or has not affected their lives and relationships. Some simply felt that **it hasn't changed anything**. Others suggested that it had **strengthened the relationship** or that it had provided an **increased sense of security**. Several suggested that it had **normalised their relationship in the eyes of others**. Although no one suggested that they had regretted getting married, a minority of respondents reported that the process of getting married had **exposed them to negative reactions among family and friends**:

It hasn't changed anything

We have been together for over 40 years so it hasn't changed anything significantly. (1CPM)

It has only changed in name. (6CPM)

It has legally changed the status of our relationship but not how we feel about it. (14CPM)

Strengthened the relationship

Getting married has made our relationship stronger. (81M)

It made me feel a lot better and closer to [partner] to be legally married to her, and definitely felt as though it strengthened our commitment to each other. (66M)

Our relationship has just been cemented in God's eyes. (61M)

Increased sense of security

None of the ceremonies have really changed anything other than to make us feel more secure legally. (8CPM)

Made me feel more secure for my partner under the law. I want every protection for him as far as my pension, benefits etc are concerned. (78CPM)

Being part of the Christian community, it has made me feel more secure to handle the conversations and difficulties that come with being gay. (47M)

Normalisation of the relationship in the eyes of others

I think it is good that the children know we are married and that two girls/boys can get married too! It "normalises" it for them. (4CPM)

My mother-in-law didn't give us a gift when we had our CP (not that we expected gifts), but she did give us one when we converted it to a marriage. This suggests she sees marriage as the real thing and that she recognises us as a married couple. I imagine lots of people feel that way. (49CPM)

The vocabulary around marriage is more established and seems to have reassured older members of the family about how to refer to our relationship. Family members as a whole are much more 'out' about us, I believe due to having confidence around the words they can now use. (80CPM)

Exposure to negative reactions among family and friends

We had problems with her family. Her dad would not walk her down the aisle and her brother was venomously against the whole thing. Her aunt did not attend nor would any of her children. We received many letters trying to talk us out of it. She had a few friends who sat her down and told her they could not support it...We got married within the context of wider discussions within the Church about gay marriage and so were exposed to many opposed views throughout the

engagement and wedding period. Our own church was completely unsupportive, and did not acknowledge our engagement at all. (47M)

Some commented that it was inappropriate as Marriage was a religious ceremony (This was from both straight relatives who had accepted the Civil Partnership and from a gay friend who said our marriage was wrong - on religious grounds). (78CPM)

What civil partnerships mean to same-sex couples now

There was also a wide range of opinions about the meaning of civil partnership 10 years on from their introduction. Many, particularly among those who had married, converted their civil partnership or were planning to convert felt that civil partnership represents a **second class form of marriage**, a historic stopgap between full equality and no rights at all. Meanwhile for some it was simply **marriage by another name**. For some of those who have chosen to remain in a civil partnership, it represents a modern form of relationship recognition that is **free from the cultural baggage of marriage**.

Second class marriage

When they were introduced I think many people viewed them and accepted them as 'gay marriage'. However, I think as time progressed, for many reasons, it began to feel like 'second best' as it became clear many people didn't view them as equal. (29CP)

My opinion is that civil partnership is a watered down version of marriage. The civil partnership does not provide the same social 'status' as a marriage does. (53M)

Since the introduction of same-sex marriage, I do feel like the social status of civil partnerships has shifted, with some asking when we'll get married for real. (57CP)

Marriage by another name

People CALL it the same thing, and in many ways, that makes it the same. No-one asks 'so are you married or was it actually a civil partnership?'... we have the same public sector equality duty protections, and mortgages and bank accounts etc seem to give us the same privileges as marriages do. For me, the similarities are structural. (13CP)

Most people do appear to think it's the same as marriage and treat my partner as though he was my husband. (44CP)

More or less the same contract, or "institution". (54CPM)

Uncertainty about the difference

Not quite sure on legalities but I would say it [civil partnership] gave us the same rights as married couples? But not sure I am right with that. (32CP)

Legally, I don't honestly know if there is any difference or benefit to being married over CP. (34CP)

There are some legal subtleties which I do not know the full details of but that I know do make a slight difference. (12CP)

Free of the cultural baggage of marriage

It [civil partnership] doesn't carry the same societal baggage - people don't have expectations of things like monogamy (I'm poly). (15CP)

A better option for us because we don't like the patriarchal baggage of marriage. (19CP)

I think there are positive differences between civil partnerships and marriage, in that CP's aren't bound by the same archaic traditions as marriage, and I like the partnership aspect. Marriage still has connotations of ownership that I don't think CP's do. (57CP)

What same-sex couples think should happen to civil partnership now

The diversity of opinions about civil partnership was also reflected in respondents' views about what should happen to civil partnership now that same-sex marriage has been introduced in England, Wales and Scotland. Respondent views were largely split between those who felt **it should be abolished** and those who felt that **it should be opened up to opposite-sex couples**. One respondent even felt that marriage should be abolished and replaced with civil partnerships for all. Some expressed no strong view either way but felt it should be changed one way or the other. Others went further and felt that **civil partnerships should be expanded beyond the normative couple** to include non-sexual relationships and/or those in polyamorous relationships. A small minority felt that **the current system should continue** as it is.

Civil partnerships should be abolished

They should be done away with don't understand why people would still want one when they can be married. (11M)

I think those people who are already in civil partnerships and do not want to convert to marriage should be allowed to stay as they are but that in future civil partnership should be abolished. The legal distinction between the two (civil partnership and marriage) is so small that there is no point

having the two options and it gives a false impression that the two are hugely different under the law. I think those who advocate for extending civil partnership to heterosexual couples do not realise that the distinction is so small, or if they do then they are just wanting not to use the word 'marriage', which is just semantics. (12CP)

Civil partnerships were a temporary - and possibly essential - step on the way to marriage equality. Now that we have marriage equality, it's time to get rid of civil partnerships. It's pointless bureaucratic nonsense to maintain two similar parallel systems. We have no time for opposite sex couples whining about wanting a civil partnership - such nonsense. You want legal recognition for your relationship? Get married. Don't want all the historical baggage? Well don't accept it. Check your bloody privilege. (35CPM)

Civil partnerships should be opened to opposite-sex couples

I think civil partnership should continue and should be made available to opposite sex couples. (32CP)

Keep CPs for people like us who have already celebrated our vows. If heterosexual people would prefer a CP then I think it should be opened to them too. I think the surprising thing from the figures on same-sex marriage is the considerable number of couples who have opted for CP despite marriage being available. I think quite a few free thinking, non religious heterosexual couples would be interested in a CP if it was available to them. It would also stop CP being perceived as only a gay thing. And keep CPs available to same-sex couples of course who would prefer that to a marriage. (74CP)

I think CPs should be opened up to all couples who don't like the institution of marriage but want their relationship to be protected and recognised legally (pensions, next of kin etc). (9CP)

Civil Partnership should be expanded beyond the normative couple

Civil partnerships should be available to all. Not just all couples, because civil partnerships make no demand for sexual or romantic connection. Civil partnerships should evolve to affirm many different constellations of families. For example, an aunt and a birth mother raise a child together. Where is their legal protection and affirmation? A terminally ill person wants to leave everything to their pal? Civil partnership could be an option. Civil partnerships could evolve to provide affirmation and protection for polyamorous relationships and should not turn on the old definitions of nuclear families. (80CPM)

It should remain and it should be made open to opposite sex couples too, and it should be made open to sets of people in polyamorous relationships. That would be real equality. (82CP)

Continue with the current system

For a few people who are ordained, they cannot get legally married and continue as a vicar and therefore CPs are important as an option for them. On a logical basis, I would say that if having both systems doesn't cost our society any more then they should just both stay so that people have the option for those who prefer it. Also some people who have been happily CP'd for 10 years may not want to be forced to change that to a marriage. I don't think heterosexual couples should be able to have CPs. This is because CPs were a response to the specific needs of the LGB community and one which we fought hard for and mattered to us- it was a real equality triumph. I feel it is simply out of principle that heterosexual couples want CPs (because it isn't equal that they can't) but they don't experience the same drivers which LGB couples did for CPs so there isn't really any reason they require an option. (47M)

I'm not convinced there is much demand for opposite sex civil partnerships in practice. They already have a choice between religious (often traditional) and civil (meaning different things to different couples in practice) marriages. The major remaining inequality lies in religious marriages which are not open to many same-sex couples. I want to see the different faiths forced to confront their homophobia under pressure from their own LGBT members which I am sure will happen. As for civil partnerships I would leave them as they are in the expectation that they will die out naturally over time. (70CPM)

Other issues raised by same-sex couples about the current state of legislation

In addition to issues discussed above, respondents also raised a number of concerns regarding marriage and civil partnership legislation as it currently stands. These included **geographical inequalities** and problems of recognition in different jurisdictions (even within the UK), **perceived inequality between same-sex and opposite-sex marriage**, and **the spousal veto** whereby the consent of a spouse is required for a married trans person to be issued with a Gender Recognition Certificate (in England and Wales).

Geographical inequalities

Those trying to live as a married couple abroad converting a CP is frustrating...The U.K. needs to work with foreign countries (we are in France for crying out loud, it's an EU country, the UK's NEIGHBOUR) to help CP converted couples be legally recognised as married in the countries they live...we're a minority, maybe it isn't affecting enough to make someone react...but it DRASTICALLY affects our lives! I do not exist in France as a married woman, we are living and being taxed as single people...we want to move abroad with my wife's work as a teacher but cannot as she is listed as single status in France...we simply are forgotten, lost in the cracks. (25CPM)

Civil partnerships were implemented UK-wide but same-sex marriage has been devolved. Scottish marriage law is slightly different to English/Welsh marriage law (e.g. trans veto) but that is not well understood. Recognition of my relationship varies depending where I go geographically in the UK. That concept feels odd. (14CPM)

Equal marriage needs to be extended to Northern Ireland and the Crown Dependencies, and for that matter to our overseas territories too. (12CP)

Continued inequality between opposite and same-sex marriage

I think there is still a long way to go in the UK as same-sex marriage is still not the same as heterosexual marriage in the UK. E.g. With respect to pensions etc. Additionally, most other countries have changed their marriage laws to be gender neutral whereas the UK introduced a separate act which means same-sex marriage is separate from heterosexual marriage. (53M)

The spousal veto

I'm aware that trans people were/are made to jump through hoops for no apparent logical reason. Again it seems the obstacles exist just to attempt to placate the haters, who should be told to butt out of other people's affairs. e.g. 'spousal veto' is an incredibly offensive idea to anyone with any liberal sensibilities. (19CP)

There is still the issue of the spousal veto for some people (this is where your spouse has to consent to you changing your legal gender) - which thankfully will not be a problem in my case. (66M)

Conclusions and policy considerations

- The reasons same-sex couples entered a civil partnership and marriage appeared to be broadly similar, although those who entered a civil partnership since the introduction of same-sex marriage or chose not to convert their civil partnership to a marriage tended to emphasise the legal rights and protections it provided over more romantic considerations.
- Many of those who had initially entered a civil partnership treated it as a 'marriage' and welcomed the opportunity to convert to a marriage when this became possible. All respondents who had got married were overwhelmingly positive about the introduction of same-sex marriage legislation.
- Some felt that there was a perception that civil partnerships were not equal to marriage prior to the introduction of same-sex marriage. Others however, felt that civil partnerships were broadly considered to be equal or equivalent to marriage but that the introduction of same-sex marriage implies a two-tier system of relationship recognition for same-sex relationships. The Government should consider this when reviewing such legislation in future.
- The vast majority of those who took part in the survey felt that the current system of having civil partnership and marriage for same-sex relationships but only marriage for opposite sex-couples was either confusing or unjust. Most believed that civil partnerships should either be discontinued or extended to opposite-sex couples. They were however, divided as to which of these options were preferable. A small minority suggested opening civil partnerships to non-sexual or non-dyadic relationships or believed the current system should continue.
- While many same-sex couples who are now married feel civil partnership is redundant, replacing civil partnerships with marriage would not be acceptable to those who have entered civil partnership specifically as a form of legal relationship recognition other than marriage. If uptake of civil partnerships continues to decline significantly, the Government could consider a 'grandfather clause' (continue to recognise those civil partnerships that have taken place but discontinue issuing civil partnerships).
- Some people continue to be unclear about what the legal differences between a civil partnership and marriage are, including those who have already entered into one. If the Government continues to offer parallel forms of legal recognition, they should do more to educate the public and ensure that same-sex couples are aware of the legal similarities and differences between civil partnership and marriage.

What next?

The authors plan to conduct further analysis of the survey data to write up for publication. We are also contacting some of the survey respondents who indicated a willingness to be interviewed. If you would like further information you can contact the authors via the email addresses provided below.

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