

December 2014

The Marriage of Same Sex Couples (Conversion of Civil Partnership) Regulations 2014

Background

On 18 November 2014 Parliament approved the above regulations, which follow on from Section 18(2) of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013. This policy briefing summarises the new legislation and sets out what it means for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGB&T) community.

These regulations allow for the conversion of a civil partnership into a marriage from the 10 December 2014 onwards. In July 2014, the Government published draft regulations but these were criticized by a successful [campaign](#), as they did not allow couples to have a ceremony or receive a marriage certificate.

The Government consulted with relevant stakeholders, including same sex couples, and revised the regulations to allow couples a full ceremony if they wish to have one and be issued with an official marriage certificate.

What will the regulations do?

The new regulations give couples who wish to convert their civil partnership into a marriage following options:

- a simple process at a register office. This was outlined in the original regulations and now also includes a wider range of local authority offices where registrars have access to the necessary systems;
- or a two-stage process where a superintendent registrar or their deputy can complete the conversion at another venue. This will allow the couple's family and friends to attend and a ceremony can follow immediately afterwards.

Couples will receive a full marriage certificate and the date of conversion will also be published on this certificate.

Couples currently in a civil partnership do not have to convert this to a marriage if they don't want to, and are able to retain their civil partnership status indefinitely. Earlier in 2014, the Government consulted on the future of civil partnership legislation, but as there

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was no consensus of opinion, they decided to make no changes (see the [report](#) for more information).

Cost

For the first year, all couples who had a civil partnership before 29 March 2014 (the date the first same sex marriage was able to take place) will receive a fee reduction of £45, so it will be effectively free for these couples. This fee reduction will be in place until 9 December 2015. The cost of a marriage certificate will be £4.

Charges for a full civil register office ceremony or private venue ceremony will be in line with the local register office or venue fees. To find out what documentation is required for a conversion ceremony, contact the register office local to the venue you wish to use.

If you wish to convert through the simple process without a ceremony, you can do this through your local register office. For more information on converting your civil partnership into a marriage, please contact The LGF helpline on 0845 3 30 30 30 or email info@lgf.org.uk.