CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

The registration of civil partnerships

Question 1  (Paragraphs 2.12 and 2.13)

Do you agree that legislation should be changed so that civil partnerships could be registered through religious ceremonies?

Yes  ☐
No    ☒
Don’t know ☐

Please give reasons for your answer.

As is stated in paragraph 2.35 of the consultation paper, changing the law could lead to law suits brought against religious groups. This in turn could lead to religious groups being forced to carry out such ceremonies and would serve to erode religious liberty. Already the law is weighted against people trying to live according to their conscience in regards to homosexual relations, as many well publicised cases have shown. The move is also unnecessary, since civil partnership registration is readily and freely available. When civil partnerships were introduced it was promised that they would be wholly secular – this consultation process departs from that undertaking.

Question 2  (Paragraphs 2.14 to 2.19)

Do you think that the proposals in England and Wales on registration of civil partnerships in religious premises would be appropriate for Scotland?

Yes  ☐
No    ☐
Don’t know ☐

If you have answered no, please explain what elements of the proposals in England and Wales you consider inappropriate for Scotland.

Comments
Question 3  (Paragraphs 2.20 to 2.24)

Do you agree with allowing religious celebrants to register civil partnerships in religious premises?

Yes  
No  ☒
Don’t know  

Please give reasons for your answer

As with the answer to question 1, law suits could be brought against individuals who seek to live according their conscience, leading to people being forced to perform these ceremonies. We remember the case of Lillian Ladele, who was sacked for not performing a same-sex civil partnership. This has set a very worrying precedent, and we can only wonder and fear how much further the rights of Christians, and people of other faiths, will be encroached upon in favour of these proposals.

Question 4  (Paragraphs 2.20 to 2.24)

Do you agree with allowing religious celebrants to register civil partnerships in other places agreed between the celebrant and the couple?

Yes  
No  ☒
Don’t know  

Please give reasons for your answer

Again, the concern is for those who could so easily be forced by law into registering these civil partnerships against their will or risk losing their jobs or further legal action.

Question 5  (Paragraph 2.25)

Do you agree that religious bodies should not be required to register civil partnerships?

Yes  ☒
No  
Don’t know  

Question 6 (Paragraphs 2.26 and 2.27)

Do you consider that religious celebrants should not be allowed to register civil partnerships if their religious body has decided against registering civil partnerships?

Yes ☒
No ☐
Don’t know ☐

Please give reasons for your answer

Allowing religious registrations breaches the promises given by the Westminster Gov’t in 2005 that civil partnerships would be entirely secular.

Question 7 (Paragraphs 2.28 to 2.30)

Do you agree that individual religious celebrants should not be required to register civil partnerships?

Yes ☒
No ☐
Don’t know ☐

Please give reasons for your answer

Please see comments in response to earlier questions above.
Question 8  (Paragraphs 2.31 to 2.35)

Which of the options do you favour to ensure that religious bodies and celebrants do not have to register civil partnerships against their will?

Do you favour:

- Option 1  
- Option 2  
- Neither  

If you have another option, please describe it.

This question is weighted in favour of religious bodies having to register civil partnerships. If this legislation were to go through, the second option is the lesser of two evils, ensuring protection for those who live according to their religious beliefs and standards.

Question 9  (Paragraphs 2.36 to 2.40)

Religious bodies may not wish their premises to be used to register civil partnerships. Do you agree that no legislative provision is required to ensure religious premises cannot be used against the wishes of the relevant religious body?

- Yes  
- No  
- Don’t know  

Please give reasons for your answer

Strict legal guidelines are most definitely required which will protect religious liberty and conscience. Legislation is the only way to achieve that protection for religious groups, particularly small groups.
Same sex marriage

Question 10  (Paragraphs 3.11 and 3.12)

Do you agree that the law in Scotland should be changed to allow same sex marriage?

Yes ☒
No ☐
Don’t know ☐

Please give reasons for your answer

Marriage is a covenant between one man and one woman and is a creation ordinance given by God. Children need both a mother and father, but same-sex marriage denies this, and in fact, this ideology would be promoted to the detriment of Scotland’s children and the nation as a whole, should the legal definition of marriage change. What further redefinitions will take place after this? In Canada, a court case is seeking a redefinition to accept polygamy. Will polygamous marriage be acceptable for a group of men? Surely this wholly undermines what marriage is. Any redefinition of marriage in this way is an erosion of religious liberty and freedom of conscience.

Question 11  (Paragraph 3.13)

Do you agree that religious bodies and celebrants should not be required to solemnise same sex marriage?

Yes ☒
No ☐
Don’t know ☐

Please give reasons for your answer

Please refer to answers to Questions 1 to 9 above.
Question 12  (Paragraphs 3.14 to 3.18)

Do you agree with the introduction of same-sex civil marriage only?

Yes
No
Don't know

Please give reasons for your answer

Comments

Question 13  (Paragraph 3.19)

Do you agree with the introduction of same-sex marriage, both religious and civil?

Yes
No
Don't know

Please give reasons for your answer

Marriage is a covenant between one man and one woman and is a creation ordinance given by God (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4-6). As such, same sex marriage should not be introduced, either religious or civil. Same sex marriage can only be harmful to Scotland and, and it is difficult to see any benefits.
Question 14  (Paragraphs 3.23 and 3.24)

Do you agree that religious bodies should not be required to solemnise same sex marriage?

Yes ☒
No ☐
Don’t know ☐

Please give reasons for your answer

It is somewhat disconcerting that in the consultation documents, there is continual assurance that religious freedoms will not be encroached upon, yet this question is part of the consultation. A strange contradiction.

Question 15  (Paragraphs 3.25 and 3.26)

Do you consider that religious celebrants should not be allowed to solemnise same sex marriages if their religious body has decided against solemnising same sex marriage?

Yes ☒
No ☐
Don’t know ☐

Please give reasons for your answer

Please see earlier comments regarding marriage and in particular the response to question 10.
**Question 16** (Paragraphs 3.27 and 3.28)

Do you agree that individual religious celebrants should not be required to solemnise same sex marriage?

- Yes [X]
- No [ ]
- Don’t know [ ]

Please give reasons for your answer

Please again refer to comments in response to questions 10 to 15 above.

**Question 17** (Paragraphs 3.29 to 3.33)

Which of the options do you favour to ensure that religious bodies and celebrants do not have to solemnise same sex marriage against their will?

- Do you favour:
  - Option 1 [ ]
  - Option 2 [X]
  - Neither [ ]
  - Don’t know [ ]

Please give reasons for your answer and if you have another option, please describe it.

As response to Question 8 above i.e. to protect the religious groups and their religious liberty and freedom of conscience.
Question 18 (Paragraphs 3.34 to 3.39)

Religious bodies may not wish their premises to be used to solemnise same sex marriage. Do you agree that no legislative provision is required to ensure religious premises cannot be used against the wishes of the relevant religious body?

- Yes ☐
- No ☒
- Don’t know ☐

Please give reasons for your answer

Strict legal guidelines are most definitely required which will protect religious liberty and conscience. Legislation is the only way to achieve that protection for religious groups, particularly small groups.

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Question 19 (Paragraph 3.41)

If Scotland should introduce same-sex marriage, do you consider that civil partnerships should remain available?

- Yes ☐
- No ☐
- Don't know ☐

Please give reasons for your answer

Comments
Do you have any other comments?

Yes ☐
No ☐

We are particularly interested in your views on:

- potential implications of the proposals for transgender people (paragraph 3.42)
- possible transitional arrangements (paragraphs 3.43 and 3.44);
- recognition of Scottish same sex marriages elsewhere (paragraphs 3.45 to 3.49);
- any comments on forced marriage (paragraphs 3.51 and 3.52)
- any comments on sham marriage (paragraph 3.53)
- potential financial implications (paragraphs 4.01 to 4.08);
- potential equality implications (paragraphs 4.09 to 4.14).

Please refer to our response to the questions above. For those reasons we do not believe that marriage should be redefined to allow for same sex marriage. As such a response to paragraphs 3.42 to 3.53 and 4.01 to 4.08 above is inappropriate and unnecessary.

Regarding equality, there appear to be two contradictory messages about religious liberty. The paper seems to be at pains to make clear there is no intention to harm religious liberty, recognising that many with strongly held religious beliefs consider same sex relationships to be against biblical teaching. If that was really true, the government would not seek to impose this on religious bodies and would not seek to redefine marriage. The paper goes further to suggest that this is in fact about increasing religious liberty. But how can an imposition of secular standards onto religious bodies be considered religious liberty?