



Civil Partnership is a legal relationship available for same-sex couples over 16, from 05.12.05 of the same binding and exclusive nature as marriage.

This gives the partners considerable rights and legal obligations, including:

- Duty to maintain partner/children.
- Employment/pension benefits.
- Recognition under intestacy rules.
- Access to fatal accidents compensation.
- Protection from domestic violence.
- Recognition from immigration/nationality.
- Treatment as “spouse” for all tax purposes.
- Treatment as spouse for life assurance purposes.

Civil Partnership Registration would be available to adult same-sex couples, provided they are:

- Not already in a Civil Partnership.
- Not already married.
- Not too closely related (within the “prohibited degrees of relationships”)
- Are both over the age of 18, or alternatively are over the age of 16 and have the appropriate consents.

Couples give notice of intention to register at a registry office, and sign the Civil Partnership Register 15 days’ later.

If the Civil Partnership relationship breaks down, there is a formal, Court based process for dissolution, very much like divorce for married couples.

The Court will have the same powers of dividing the pensions of civil partners following the dissolution or annulment of civil partnership, as they presently do following divorce or annulment of marriage.

It is anticipated that means-tested Community Legal Service funding will be available in these proceedings, in the same way and to the same extent that funding is available to parties in divorce proceedings, and in any financial child or financial proceedings ancillary to those cases.

*Dunn & Baker – Here to help you*

*Disclaimer: The material contained in this fact sheet is for general guidance only. It is specific to the law of England and Wales, and represents a brief outline of the law current as at the date of the fact sheet. It is not intended to constitute, or to be a substitute for, legal advice specific to your case. Dunn and Baker will be responsible only for advice specifically given to you.*