



Civil Partnerships

What is the Civil Partnership Act?

The Civil Partnership and Certain Rights and Obligations of Cohabitants Act 2010 is two-fold as it provides for both the civil registration of same-sex partnerships and also the rights and duties of cohabiting couples whether same sex or opposite sex. The Act gives same-sex couples rights and responsibilities comparable to civil marriage. The Act came into force on the 1st of January 2011.

What is a Civil Partnership?

A civil partnership is legal recognition of a relationship between same-sex couples in Ireland for the first time. Announcing the signing of the Bill, Minister for Justice Dermot Ahern described it as "one of the most important pieces of civil rights legislation to be enacted since independence."

Civil partnership is a different legal union to that of civil marriage. However, civil partners will enjoy most of the same rights and responsibilities of a married couple with virtually all the same statutory rights and obligations being conferred upon the civil partners including maintenance, property, succession, pensions, social welfare and tax.

Who can enter into a Civil Partnership?

Any two people of the same-sex can enter into a civil partnership, once they are aged 18 years or over and are not already married or in an existing civil partnership.

Where can couples have their Civil Partnership ceremony?

Like a civil marriage, a civil partnership ceremony must take place in a public place, in the presence of the Registrar and at least two witnesses (aged at least 18). The civil partnership ceremony has two legal requirements – the oral declaration (where you make your commitment aloud) and the signing of the civil partnership register.

How serious a commitment is a Civil Partnership?

Civil partnership provides a very wide range of protections and rights to same-sex couples akin to those in civil marriages. It also provides a significant set of mutual obligations for each civil partner, for example the obligation to financially maintain your partner and share resources.

