

Urgent Action: Government consultation on Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 - Shared Building Regulations

The UK Government has launched a public consultation seeking views on its proposals to permit a building to be registered to perform same sex 'marriages', where it is shared by more than one religious group, **including churches**.

The consultation, which forms part of the implementation of the (Marriage Same Sex Couples) Act 2013, focuses predominantly on churches with *informal* sharing arrangements, though churches with formal agreements are also covered.

Worryingly, it introduces the new concept of a "qualifying sharing church" whereby churches who make only "minimal" use of a building would not have a say in whether or not a building is registered for the purposes of conducting a same sex 'marriage'.

Please respond to the consultation to express your disagreement with the Government's proposals by completing this [online survey](#).

It is particularly crucial for churches, with both informal and formal sharing arrangements, to consider the proposals carefully and to make their views known to the Government.

If you are unable to respond extensively please write a short response notifying the Government of your opposition to the proposals. Please say that you do not agree that a building shared by a church should ever be registered to perform same sex 'marriages'. You could also add that:

- Permitting shared buildings to be registered to solemnise same sex 'marriages' would pose a threat to religious freedom, and could result in a sharing church being forced to conduct same sex 'marriage' against its will in the future.
- The concept of a "qualifying sharing church" undermines religious freedom by prohibiting certain churches from preventing registration and should not be introduced.
- Should a dispute arise, churches with *informal* sharing arrangements will have difficulties proving that they meet the "qualifying sharing church" criteria in the absence of a written contractual agreement.

The deadline for responding to the consultation is 1st November 2013.

[**Click here to complete the consultation online >**](#)

You can also download a PDF version of the questions and email your response as a Word document to [Marriage Same Sex Couples Act 2013@justice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Marriage_Same_Sex_Couples_Act_2013@justice.gsi.gov.uk) or post it to:

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[**Click here to download a PDF version of the consultation >**](#)