



# SIX REASONS TO SUPPORT EQUAL MARRIAGE


**Equality Network** is a national Scottish charity working for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) equality and human rights

**[www.equality-network.org](http://www.equality-network.org)**

**Equal Marriage** is the Equality Network campaign for same-sex marriage and mixed-sex civil partnership in Scotland

**[www.equalmarriage.org.uk](http://www.equalmarriage.org.uk)**

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# IT'S TIME FOR EQUAL MARRIAGE

**This year the Scottish Parliament has the historic opportunity to pass the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill, allowing same-sex couples to marry and taking Scotland a major step towards full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people.**

It is shocking to think that it is only three decades since Scotland decriminalised homosexuality in 1980. In the past 33 years, Scotland has

made significant progress towards treating LGBT people as equal citizens – but we're not quite there yet.

The law still discriminates on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, and Equality Network research shows that LGBT people continue to face prejudice and unequal treatment across Scottish society.

By voting for this legislation MSPs will remove the

last major piece of sexual orientation discrimination from Scots law, and will give LGBT people an equal right to marry the person that they love.

This booklet outlines the case for allowing equal marriage in Scotland. We hope that the Scottish Parliament will make the right choice for a fairer, progressive and more equal future for Scotland.

**Tom French**  
**Policy Coordinator,**  
**Equality Network**





Jaye and Ruth Richards-Hill at the Equality Network's Equal Marriage Rally, July 2012



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# Six Reasons to Support



**It will make Scotland fairer and more equal**



**It matters to LGBT people**



**It strengthens freedom of religion and belief**



# Support Equal Marriage



**It has public support**



**It has political support**



**It's happening  
around the world**



Families join the Valentine's Day march for equal marriage in Edinburgh, February 2012





# IT WILL MAKE **SCOTLAND** **FAIRER** AND MORE **EQUAL**

As equal citizens LGBT people deserve equal treatment under the law and in society, including the equal right to marry the person that they love. That's why the Equality Network has been calling for equal partnership rights since 1997.

The current ban on same-sex marriage in Scotland is discriminatory, and is not in keeping with the Scottish values of equality, freedom, and social justice that have long been at the heart of our society.

We all want to see a fair and progressive future for Scotland, where everyone can play an equal and valued role. Ending discrimination against LGBT people is part of that fairer future.

If the Scottish Parliament votes in favour of Scotland's historic equal marriage legislation it will give same-sex couples an equal right to celebrate their love through marriage, and it will send a strong message about the kind of country we want to be.

IT WILL MAKE  
**SCOTLAND**  
**FAIRER** AND  
MORE **EQUAL**

“The Scottish  
Government must  
do the right thing  
and legislate for  
equal marriage”

The Scotsman, editorial,  
18 Jul 2012

## Equal status: Segregation is not equality

**Opening up marriage to same-sex couples will give the relationships of LGBT people an equal status under the law and in society.**

Currently we have a ‘separate but equal’ system of family law in Scotland, where same-sex couples are barred from marriage and are segregated into the separate and symbolically different legal institution of ‘civil partnership’.

As history has taught us, segregation is not equality.

Even with very similar legal effects, a segregated system can never provide genuine equality. Instead, the current system stigmatises and discriminates against LGBT

people. It treats LGBT people as though they are second-class citizens, and sends out a message to society that their relationships are inferior, not normal, and not good enough to be treated the same as mixed-sex relationships.

Put simply, equality means making the same choices available to all.

If mixed-race couples were denied the opportunity to marry, and instead offered civil partnership, that would rightly be deemed unacceptable discrimination. The ban on same-sex marriage is equally unacceptable.

# Marriage as the 'gold standard'

**While civil partnership gave same-sex couples most of the legal effects of marriage, the two are not perceived of equal value and status.**

Civil partnership is seen as a legal contract, while marriage is seen by many as the 'gold standard' for celebrating the joy of love and commitment.

Marriage is globally understood for its symbolism and its personal, cultural and, in some cases, religious significance.

People don't propose to their partner by asking "will you civil partner me?" because civil partnership does not have the same meaning as marriage.

In 2008, the Connecticut Supreme Court considered whether civil unions were consistent with the state constitutional equality guarantee. The Court concluded, "in light of the history of pernicious discrimination faced by gay men and lesbians, and because the institution of marriage carries a status and significance that the newly created classification of civil unions does not embody, the segregation of heterosexual and homosexual couples into separate institutions constitutes a cognizable harm."

The Court ordered that marriage be opened up to same-sex couples.



“It is a long-overdue measure to make Scotland a fairer and more equal society”

**The Herald, editorial,  
31 Aug 2012**



“Permitting gay and lesbian people to marry is a progressive social reform whose time has come”

The Guardian, editorial,  
5 Feb 2013

## Equal rights and Responsibilities

**While civil partnerships provide most of the same legal effects as marriage there are some key differences:**

### Less favourable treatment

Equality Network research shows that civil partners are treated less favourably than married couples. In our Partnership Rights survey (2009), 58% of couples in a civil partnership said they had not been given the same rights and respect that a married couple would get. That rose to 64% for female civil partners.

Examples of less favourable treatment include people being referred to as “not really married”; banks not

understanding why civil partners wanted a joint account; employers refusing to change Miss to Mrs on documentation; hospitals refusing to recognise the civil partner as next of kin; forms not including civil partnership status options alongside marital status.

These kinds of discrimination and less favourable treatment are in part due to an ignorance of what civil partnership is, and are in part due to prejudice for which the separate status of civil partnership provides an excuse.

While the introduction of same-sex marriage would not eliminate this discrimination against same-sex married couples, it would remove the

problem of ignorance and one of the excuses for prejudice.

### **Discrimination in international recognition**

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Whilst marriage is almost universally recognised, international recognition of civil partnership is confused and irregular. In many countries civil partnership is not recognised at all or affords fewer legal rights and responsibilities than marriage.

A Scottish same-sex marriage would be recognised in any other country which allowed same-sex marriage, because of the well-established international legal framework for recognising marriage.

### **Pensions inequality**

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Same-sex couples in a civil partnership do not receive the same pension entitlements

as married couples. As the law stands, a bereaved partner in a civil partnership can get much less from an occupational pension scheme than a bereaved wife or husband in the same scheme.

This is because private pension firms are only obliged to provide survivor benefits to those in a civil partnership on pension contributions built up since civil partnership became law in December 2005, as opposed to 1988 for married couples – meaning same-sex couples can lose out on many thousands of pounds to which they would otherwise be entitled.

This is a reserved matter and the UK Government is currently considering providing pension rights based on contributions since 1988 for same-sex married couples.



“The legalisation of gay marriage would remove one of the last obstacles to full equality before the law and stand as a testament to more enlightened times”

**The Independent,  
editorial, 5 Aug 2012**

“The introduction of equal marriage would be an important step forward for trans and intersex equality in Scotland”

Jennie Kermode,  
Intersex Equality  
Campaigner

# Transgender equality

**The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill also has the potential to deliver equal partnership rights for transgender and intersex people.**

## Mandatory divorce

Transgender people obtained the right to have their gender legally recognised through the Gender Recognition Act 2004. But because of the ban on same-sex marriage, married transgender people are required to divorce their partner before they can get gender recognition.

The requirement to divorce in order to obtain gender recognition is a truly iniquitous aspect of the current law. It forces a transgender person to

decide between their marriage, which may have continued happily for decades, and their human right to have their gender legally recognised.

Faced with this choice, some couples have decided to forgo gender recognition in order to remain married. However, the consequences of not having your gender legally recognised are severe and harmful, as was recognised by the European Court of Human Rights in the cases of Goodwin and I v UK, which established gender recognition as a human right.

The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill will improve this situation by enabling married transgender people to get full gender recognition, whilst remaining



married for as long as both partners want to stay married.

## **Gender neutral marriage**

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Currently, intersex and trans people who do not identify as either male or female, have been excluded from legal recognition of their relationships or have feared that their marriages or civil partnerships were open to challenge.

Allowing same-sex marriage will go some way to improving this situation, and if the Scottish Parliament eventually introduces mixed-sex civil partnership too it will ensure that such people could have their relationships recognised in a truly gender neutral way.

## **Equality Network amendments**

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We have proposed five amendments to the Bill to

ensure that it provides equality for trans and intersex people:

1. Remove the spousal veto on gender recognition.
2. Change the minimum age for gender recognition to 16 in line with the age for marriage.
3. Introduce simpler gender recognition evidence requirements for long-term transitioned people.
4. Allow the option of gender-neutral marriage ceremonies.
5. Allow people with foreign civil partnerships to get married in Scotland.

The Equality Network will brief MSPs on the detail of these amendments and we hope they receive the strong support they deserve.



“It is vital that the Equality Network’s amendments are passed if we are serious about securing equal marriage rights for trans and intersex people”

**James Morton,**  
**Scottish Transgender Alliance**

“It would enrich the institution of marriage, enhance social stability and expand the sum of human happiness. It is a cause that has the firm support of The Times”

The Times, editorial,  
5 Mar 2012

## Wider benefits

**In addition to removing discrimination from the law, evidence suggests that lifting the ban on same-sex marriage would have wider benefits to Scottish society by reducing prejudice and creating a healthier and happier Scotland for all.**

### **Reducing prejudice and discrimination**

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The current segregated status of civil partnership and marriage, including the separate terminology, in itself defines same-sex couples as “other”, and thereby promotes stigma, prejudice and discrimination against LGBT people. This can lead to bullying and hate crime.

The introduction of same sex marriage would help reduce

these forms of prejudice, because it would eliminate the official “otherness” status of LGBT people and would be a clear public demonstration of Scotland’s refusal to accept discrimination, and our embrace of diversity, equality and freedom.

### **Increasing health and happiness**

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There is clear evidence linking the health and happiness of LGBT people to the levels of prejudice and discrimination they face in society (see, for example, ‘Minority Stress and Health: Implications for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) Young People’, Kelleher, Counselling Psychology Quarterly, Jan 2009).

By reducing prejudice and discrimination, the introduction of same-sex marriage will enhance the safety, self-esteem, health and wellbeing of LGBT people in Scotland.

### **Benefits for children**

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Discrimination against same-sex couples also affects their children. Equality Network research suggests that around 20% of same-sex couples have children, whether from a previous mixed-sex relationship, through adoption, or through assisted conception.

Contrary to some claims, research shows that children do as well with two parents of the same-sex as with mixed-sex parents (see, for example, 'How does the gender of parents matter?', Biblarz and Stacey, Journal of Marriage and Family, Feb 2010).

The introduction of same-sex marriage will benefit the children of same-sex couples by reducing prejudice in the ways described above.

### **Economic benefits**

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Studies in those countries that already have marriage equality suggest that introducing same-sex marriage could also have a positive impact on the Scottish economy by increasing the amount spent on wedding arrangements and tourism by same-sex couples and their guests (see, for example, 'The Economic Impact of Extending Marriage to Same-Sex Couples in Washington State', Kastanis, Badgett and Herman, The Williams Institute, Jan 2012).

### **Strengthening Marriage**

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Marriage is an institution that has changed significantly

over the years, including major changes to its legal definition and effects. The introduction of same-sex marriage will strengthen the institution by enriching it, and demonstrating that it is a modern, relevant and equitable institution, desired and valued across Scotland's diverse population.

### **Equal choices for all**

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The Equality Network has always supported equal partnership rights for all. To have full equality in partnership law we must also give mixed-sex couples the right to have a civil partnership. Polling shows 72% of people in Scotland support lifting the ban on mixed-sex civil partnership.

We welcome the Scottish Government review on this and hope it will lead to prompt legislation.





Celebrations at the Equality Network's launch event for Scotland's equal marriage bill, June 2013



# IT MATTERS TO LGBT PEOPLE

All of the Equality Network's policy work is based on wide consultation with LGBT people across Scotland. We have been calling for equal partnership rights since 1997 because it is an issue that matters to LGBT people.

## The evidence

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Equality Network research has consistently shown that equal marriage is a high priority issue for LGBT people, for instance:

- In our Time for Change survey (2013) of 1167

people equal marriage was identified as the top priority for tackling LGBT inequality in Scotland.

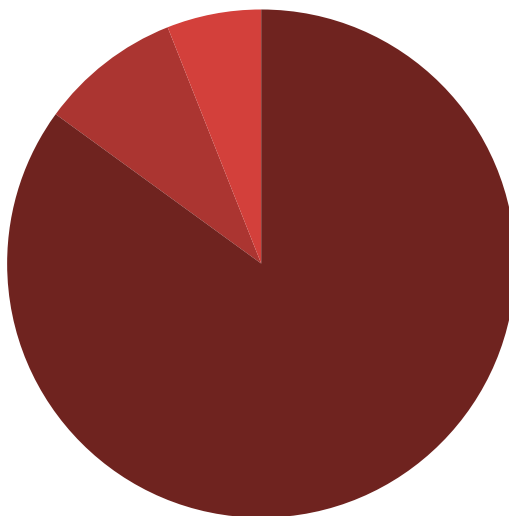
- In our Partnership Rights survey (2009) of 427 LGBT people 85% said that same-sex marriage was needed, 54% said it was a high priority and a further 31% said it was a medium priority.
- In our five equal marriage consultation events in autumn 2011, 100% of the 150 LGBT participants told the Scottish Government officials present that they wanted same-sex marriage.

# IT MATTERS TO LGBT PEOPLE

“We need to keep hammering on to Holyrood to get that Bill passed so that I can marry my wife as soon as is humanly possible”

Susan Calman,  
Comedian

## Support for same-sex marriage amongst LGBT people in Scotland



**85%** say same-sex marriage needed

**9%** say current system would be fine if religious civil partnership is introduced

**6%** say current system is fine

Equality Network,  
Partnership Rights survey (2009)

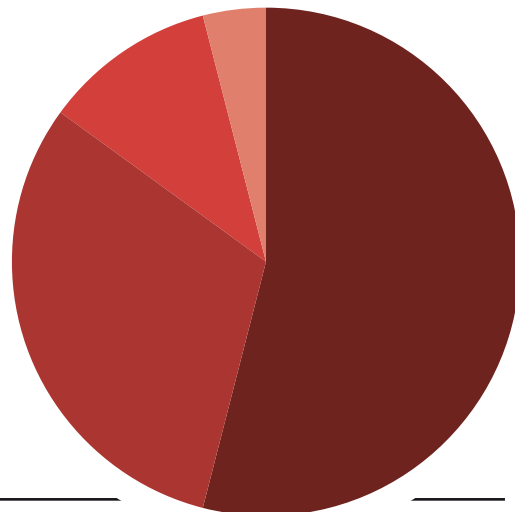
## “How important do you think it is for the Equality Network to work for a change in the law to allow same-sex marriage?”

**54%** it's a high priority

**31%** it's a medium priority

**11%** it's a low priority

**4%** it doesn't matter at all



Equality Network,  
Partnership Rights survey (2009)



# Why does equal marriage matter to LGBT people?

Nathan  
and Robert,  
Leith



“For us equal marriage is quite simply about equality. Our relationship is equal, our love is equal and the way our relationship is recognised should be equal as well.”

Ruth  
and Jaye,  
Glasgow



“As a Christian couple equal marriage is really important to us. As our friends marry – many of them in a Church – we stand on the side lines like second-class citizens. This is a human rights issue; an issue of fundamental equality.”

Jerry  
and Larry,  
Kirkcudbright



“Having spent much of our lives with laws that discriminated against us the thought that equal marriage is now in sight is amazing. By giving its own people the right to equal marriage Scotland will show a lead to other countries who actively discriminate and deny human rights to their LGBT citizens.”

Leo  
and Sarah,  
Edinburgh



“We feel that the equal marriage bill being passed would be a real turning point for Scotland and for obvious reasons it is a very personal cause. At the end of the day it is about equal rights for everyone, getting rid of discrimination everywhere.”





Religious and belief groups voice their support for equal marriage, March 2012



# IT WILL STRENGTHEN FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND BELIEF

The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill will protect and extend freedom of religion and belief in Scotland, by:

- Giving religious and belief groups the right to conduct same-sex marriages if they choose to
- Allowing same-sex couples to get married and have a ceremony in line with their religious or philosophical beliefs
- Protecting the rights of those religious bodies and celebrants who oppose same-sex marriage

## Greater freedom for religious and belief groups

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Currently all religious and belief groups in Scotland are barred from conducting same-sex marriages, regardless of their wishes.

Many religious and belief groups in Scotland want to conduct same-sex marriages, in line with their deeply held beliefs, but are prevented from doing so for no good reason.

These groups include:

The Unitarians, Quakers, Humanists, Liberal Judaism, >>



“My Church, like many others, wants the right to conduct same-sex marriages. For us this is an issue of equality and religious freedom”

Rev Jane Clarke,  
Metropolitan Community  
Church

⇒ the Metropolitan Community Church, the Open Episcopal Church, some Buddhist Communities, and the Pagan Federation Scotland.

Freedom of religion and belief means respecting the rights of those bodies that want to conduct same-sex marriages too. That's why 68% of people in Scotland believe religious organisations should have the right to conduct same-sex marriages if they want to.

If passed, the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill will give religious and belief groups in Scotland the right to choose for themselves whether or not to conduct same-sex marriages or civil partnerships.

### **Greater freedom for people of faith**

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The current ban on same-sex marriage also restricts

the religious freedom of individuals, by preventing people of faith in Scotland from living in accordance with their beliefs.

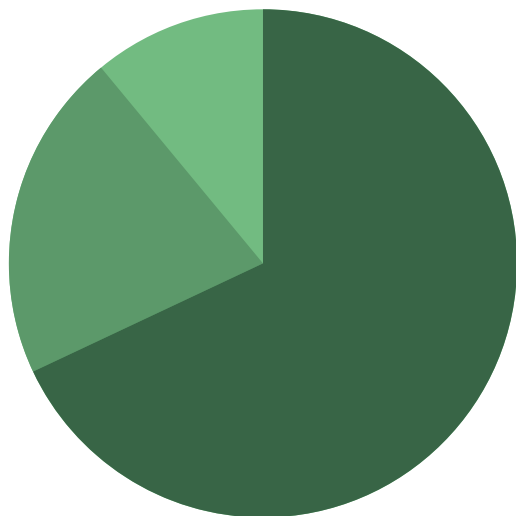
Many LGBT people are deeply religious. Like other people of faith they want to get married because marriage holds a special meaning and significance for them that civil partnership does not.

Equality Network research shows that 22% of LGBT people in Scotland would like to have a religious marriage and a further 22% would like to have a humanist marriage.

If passed, the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill will allow LGBT people to get married and have a ceremony in line with their religious or philosophical beliefs.

## Public opinion on religious freedom

“Religious organisations should have the right to decide for themselves whether or not to conduct same-sex marriages”



**68%** agree

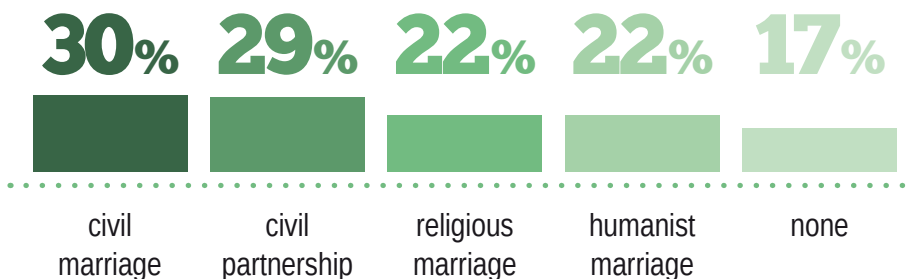
**21%** disagree

**11%** don't know

Ipsos MORI Scotland,  
June 2012

## LGBT people's marriage choices

“If marriage and civil partnership were both available for all couples to choose, which of the following do you think you might consider in the future?”



Equality Network,  
Partnership Rights survey (2009)



## Did You Know?

In March 2012, a coalition of 45 religious leaders and 25 religious groups launched the ‘Faith in Marriage’ campaign calling on MSPs to legalise same-sex marriage in Scotland.



# Why does equal marriage matter to people of faith?

Very Rev Kelvin Holdsworth,  
Scottish Episcopal Church



“As a Christian priest, it is my duty to stand up for equality. Although I can currently bless gay couples I look forward one day to being able to legally marry them.”

Rev Maud Robinson,  
Scottish Unitarians



“Unitarians believe that same-sex couples should be allowed to solemnise their relationships publicly and in the presence of God. We look forward to welcoming same-sex couples to be married in our churches.”

Rev Lindsay Biddle,  
Church of Scotland



“I support equal marriage because the human right to marry, whatever your gender or sexual orientation, is simply just.”

Phil Lucas,  
Quakers in Scotland



“Quakers see God in everyone and believe all committed loving relationships are of equal worth and should be celebrated in the same way. The day the first same-sex couple can marry in their Quaker meeting will be a wonderful day for marriage and a great day for religious freedom.”

## Clear protections for those that oppose same-sex marriage

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The Equality Network has always believed that religious bodies and religious celebrants who do not want to conduct same-sex marriages should be completely free to decline.

The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill allows religious and belief bodies to choose whether or not they want to opt in to conducting same-sex marriages.

Those groups and celebrants that choose not to opt in will have their rights firmly protected by:

- The provisions of the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill
- The Equality Act 2010

- Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights

As the experience of other countries has shown, when same-sex marriage is introduced the rights of religious groups who oppose same-sex marriage are protected.

Same-sex marriage is already legal in ten European countries, and same-sex marriages have been taking place in Europe for more than a decade. In that time no religious body in any country has been required to conduct same-sex marriages against its will.

Leading human rights experts including the EHRC, Amnesty, Liberty, and top lawyers all agree that the protections offered to religious groups and celebrants who oppose same-sex marriage are

strong (see, for instance, the Official Report of the Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, 19 Sep 2013).

## A fairer balance of rights

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Religious freedom on marriage in Scotland is long overdue.

In our view, no religious body should have the right to impose its view of marriage on any other body. Marriage is not owned by any religious body (and in fact predates any current religious faith), and no religious body should have a veto over the arrangements for marriage.

The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill will provide a fairer balance of rights and freedoms for all religious and belief groups, marriage celebrants and people of faith.



## Over 1000 join the Valentine's Day march for equal marriage in Edinburgh, February 2012





# IT HAS **PUBLIC SUPPORT**

Equal Marriage is supported by the large majority of people in Scotland, who believe that in 2013 it's time for LGBT people to have full equality.

## Opinion polls and studies

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Opinion polls conducted by Ipsos MORI, Populus, YouGov and Angus Reid have been consistent. They show that the level of support in Scotland has been steadily rising, and that around two-thirds now believe that same-sex couples should be able to marry.

The results from opinion polls are consistent with the

academic research. The 2010 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey asked "Do you agree or disagree that gay and lesbian couples should be allowed to marry?" 61% agreed, while only 19% disagreed.

## Consultations

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While Scottish Government and Parliament consultations are not designed to provide a representative sample of public opinion, the results of the three recent consultations on same-sex marriage showed:

- 77% of all responses to the Equal Opportunities >>



“The small minority who oppose gay marriage are on the wrong side of the argument and the wrong side of history”

The Sunday Mail,  
editorial, 23 Jun 2013

- Committee call for evidence on the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill (Aug 2013) stated support for the Bill
- 75% of all responses to the consultation on the draft legislation (Mar 2013) stated support for same-sex marriage
- 65% of full responses from Scotland to the Registration of Civil Partnerships and Same-Sex Marriage consultation (Dec 2011) stated support for same-sex marriage

### Where is support highest?

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Support for same-sex marriage is highest amongst young people, women and families.

- Young people: 75% of under 55s support same-sex marriage

- Women: 70% of women support same-sex marriage
- Families: 74% of households with children support same-sex marriage

[Source: Ipsos MORI, Jun 2012]

### Young people

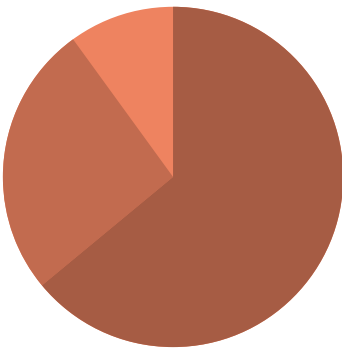
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The introduction of same-sex marriage has particular resonance for young people, who see it as being about Scotland looking forward as a modern 21st century country.

In 2011, a Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) consultation with 42,804 young people aged 14-25 found that 74% support same-sex marriage (Change the Picture, SYP, Mar 2011)



“Same-sex couples should have the right to get married”



**64%** agree  
**26%** disagree  
**10%** neither  
Ipsos MORI Scotland,  
June 2012

Same-sex marriage opinion polls in Scotland (2002-2012)

Year	Month	Poll	For	Against
2012	June	Ipsos MORI Scotland	64%	26%
2012	March	Populus	66%	25%
2010	-	Scottish Social Attitudes Survey	61%	19%
2010	April	Angus Reid	58%	19%
2006	-	Scottish Social Attitudes Survey	53%	21%
2002	-	Scottish Social Attitudes Survey	41%	29%

Support amongst people of faith



Surveys show that a majority of people of faith support same-sex marriage, for instance the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2010 showed:

- 55% of Scottish Catholics support same-sex marriage; 21% oppose
- 50% of Scottish Presbyterians support same-sex marriage; 25% oppose

Support across income levels



Support for same-sex marriage is similar across income levels in Scotland:

- 67% of those in the most deprived areas support same-sex marriage; 28% oppose
- 63% of those in the least deprived areas support same-sex marriage; 23% oppose

[Source: Ipsos MORI, Jun 2012]

Support in urban and rural communities



Support for same-sex marriage is at a similar level across urban and rural areas of Scotland:

- 65% of urban dwellers support same-sex marriage; 26% oppose
- 62% of rural dwellers support same-sex marriage; 25% oppose

[Source: Ipsos MORI, Jun 2012]



Scotland's political leaders back the Equality Network's Equal Marriage campaign, Spring 2013



# IT HAS **POLITICAL SUPPORT**

Equal marriage has strong support across Scotland's political sphere.

## **Support from party leaders**

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All of the leaders of the main political parties in Scotland have pledged their support for equal marriage, including Alex Salmond, Johann Lamont, Ruth Davidson, Willie Rennie, Patrick Harvie and Colin Fox.

## **Manifesto commitments**

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At the 2011 Scottish Parliament elections four of the five political parties now represented at Holyrood had commitments on

equal marriage in their election manifestos.

The Scottish Liberal Democrats and the Scottish Green Party pledged to legislate for equal marriage, while the SNP and Scottish Labour Party pledged to consult on the issue with a view to introducing it.

## **Support of MSPs**

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A clear majority of MSPs have pledged their support for equal marriage:

- 89 MSPs publicly support same-sex marriage >>

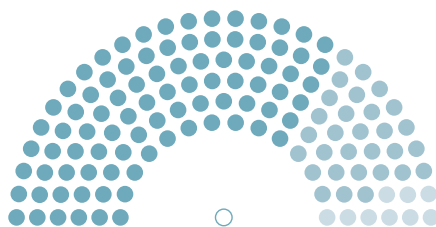




“My conscience tells me that allowing people to express their love through marriage, regardless of sexuality, is the right thing to do”

Alex Salmond MSP,  
First Minister and Leader  
of the SNP

- ⇒ • 29 MSPs have yet to publicly state their position
- 9 MSPs have said they intend to vote against



- Support
- Undecided
- Oppose

Data correct as of Oct 2013, see [www.equalmarriage.org.uk/support](http://www.equalmarriage.org.uk/support) for up-to-date figures.

## Support from party groups and affiliates

Many party groups and affiliates have pledged their support for equal marriage, including:

- The Youth and Student wings of all the political parties
- The LGBT groups of all the political parties
- The Scottish Cooperative Party and all of Scotland's major trade unions

## Views of party supporters

Opinion polls show that a clear majority of SNP, Labour, Lib Dem and Green party supporters back equal marriage, while Conservative Party supporters are evenly split:

- 72% of Scottish Lib Dem supporters back same-sex marriage; 16% oppose
- 67% of Scottish Labour Party supporters back same-sex marriage; 22% oppose
- 61% of SNP supporters back

same-sex marriage; 28% oppose

- 44% of Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party supporters back same-sex marriage; 45% oppose

[Source: Ipsos MORI, Jun 2012]

### **Support across the Scottish media**

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Equal marriage is actively backed by most of Scotland's biggest newspapers and many leading commentators. Major newspapers that have run editorials in support of equal marriage include: The Daily Record, The Herald, The Scotsman, The Times, The Independent, The Guardian, The Sunday Mail, and Scotland on Sunday.

### **Support from across Scottish society**

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In addition to the Equality

Network, our LGBT partners, many religious and belief groups, and a wide variety of Scottish organisations actively support equal marriage, including:

**Equality and Human Rights**  
Amnesty, EHRC, Liberty, SHRC, Inclusion Scotland, CRER, and the SIAA.

**Children and Young People**  
Action for Children, SCCYP, Barnardo's, YouthLink, Children in Scotland, and the Scottish Youth Parliament.

**Health and Wellbeing**  
The Royal College of Psychiatrists, NHS (Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Grampian, and Highland).

**Trade and Student Unions**  
NUS Scotland, the STUC, ASLEF, Community, EIS, FBU, GMB, NUJ, PCS, RMT, UNISON, and Unite.



“I believe in a fair and equal Scotland; the Labour Party believes in equality, and that’s why I’m supporting equal marriage”

**Johann Lamont MSP,**  
Leader of the Scottish Labour Party



Governor Mark Dayton signs Minnesota's same-sex marriage bill into law, May 2013



# IT'S HAPPENING AROUND THE WORLD

All around the world support for equal marriage is building momentum.

## United Kingdom

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The majority of people within the UK will soon have access to same-sex marriage.

The UK Parliament passed the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill in July 2013, introducing same-sex marriage in England and Wales. The first marriages are expected to take place in 2014.

While Scotland has a proud tradition of standing up for

equality and fairness we are currently falling behind the rest of Britain on LGBT equality. If we don't introduce equal marriage soon we risk being seen as the less fair and less progressive neighbour of England and Wales.

## Europe

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In Europe there are 10 countries that already have same-sex marriage, including almost every country surrounding Scotland: The Netherlands (2001), Belgium (2003), Spain (2005), Portugal (2008), Norway (2009), Sweden (2009), >>



“Our journey is not complete until our gay brothers and sisters are treated like anyone else under the law. For if we are truly created equal, then surely, the love we commit to one another must be equal as well”

**Barack Obama,  
President of the USA**

➤ Iceland (2010), Denmark (2012), France (2013), and England and Wales (2013).

Other European countries are actively considering introducing equal marriage, with votes expected shortly in Luxembourg, the Faroe Islands, Ireland and Finland. Scotland has fallen behind on this key equality issue and if we don't act soon we could become the only country in Western Europe that doesn't offer same-sex couples equal marriage rights.

### **Around the world**

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Several other countries around the world are considering equal marriage, and an increasing number already have it, including: Canada (2005), South Africa (2006), Argentina (2010), New Zealand (2013), Uruguay (2013), Brazil (2013), as well as large parts of the USA and Mexico.

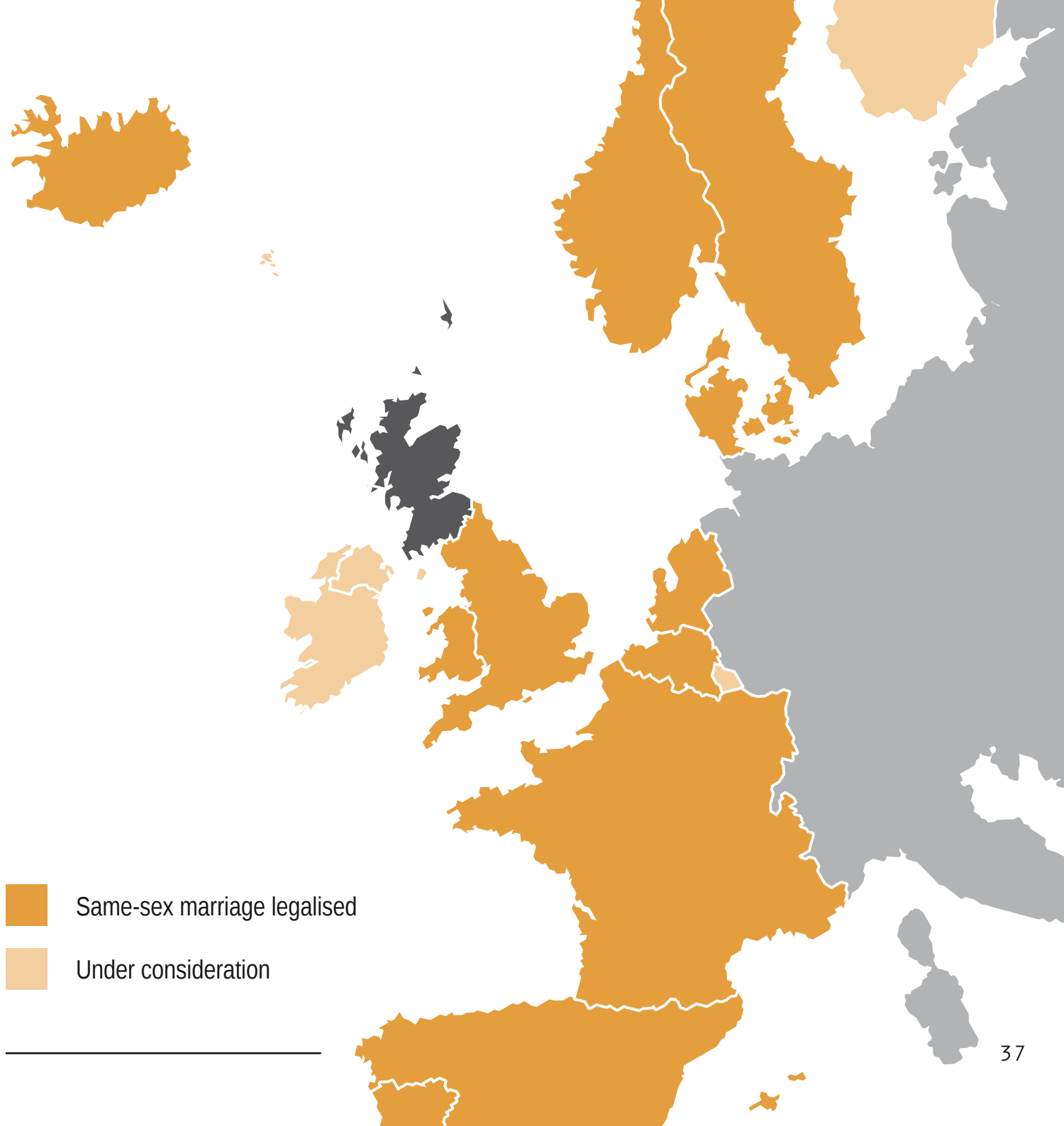
### **Scotland as a 'progressive beacon'**

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Many of us want Scotland to be a progressive beacon – a leading example of fairness, equality and progressive values. In order to be seen as a leading light around the world, Scotland must first put those values into practice at home.

Scotland's international reputation with key partners will be enhanced by the introduction of same-sex marriage. We can be a world leader on equality, including by voting for equal marriage and sending out a strong message about the kind of country we are.

This change is one whose time has come – future generations will look back with surprise that the law ever prevented same-sex couples from marrying.





Equality Network supporters campaign for equal marriage at Pride Scotia, June 2013



# IT'S TIME: SUPPORTERS SPEAK OUT

**Over the past year we met with Equality Network supporters around Scotland to hear why equal marriage is important to people across the country.**

As part of our 'It's Time' video project we filmed supporters sharing their views in Dumfries and Dundee, Edinburgh and Lanark, Glasgow and Inverness, and further afield.

We interviewed a diverse range of couples, marriage celebrants, religious ministers,

political leaders, and a few other well-known faces.

You can find out what some of our celebrity supporters had to say on the next few pages. To find out why equal marriage matters to so many people in Scotland join the 100,000+ people who have already watched the It's Time videos on our Equal Marriage website. Scan the QR code below or visit:

**[www.equalmarriage.org.uk/itstime/video](http://www.equalmarriage.org.uk/itstime/video)**





## Lorraine Kelly

"I think if two people love each other and want to make a commitment to one another, that it's something very special and should be applauded. Why should the fact they happen to be gay make a blind bit of difference? We need more love and more equality in the world, and equal marriage would be a step in the right direction."



## Alan Cumming

"I support equal marriage because I think equality is great, marriage is great, and everyone in Scotland should have the right to get married. It's 2013 – come on people!"



# Sharleen Spiteri

"I support equal marriage because I believe that you should be able to love whoever you want to love, and you should be allowed to be with that person if you want to be regardless of sexuality."



## The Proclaimers

"We support equality and think it's vital that gay people be given the same rights as straight people. Scotland should be at the forefront of equal rights for everybody – it's our tradition – and equal marriage is part of that."

## Brian Cox

“I support equality and marriage should be just as equal as anything else. If two people want to get married it's up to them – irrespective of what their sex is. Marriage for me represents honouring, and that's why I believe in marriage and why I believe in gay marriage. If two people want to honour each other they should be allowed.”



## Michelle McManus

“Passing the law to allow equal marriage will say so much about Scotland, it will show that we're not afraid to come into the 21st century, and we're not afraid to say that we support each other. My message to the MSPs who are going to vote on this is listen to the people of Scotland and look into your own conscience.”



# Hardeep Singh Kohli

“People say ‘Why do you support equal marriage?’ Well I say, why don’t you? Why don’t you support something that fundamentally affords opportunity to everyone in society? People aren’t the same, everyone’s different, but there should be an equality of opportunity.”



# Billy Boyd

“Equal marriage matters to me as a human being. I think the most important force in the universe is love, and so for two people to say ‘we love each other’ and for anyone to say ‘well that’s not right’ and ‘we can’t support that’ just seems crazy.”





# Equality Network

**The Equality Network is a national Scottish charity working for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) equality and human rights.**

We were established in 1997 by LGBT activists who believed that Scotland needed a national organisation to voice the concerns of LGBT people and to work to secure full equality in the law and society.

## **Our work**

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Our work has always been based in the priorities of LGBT people, as identified through regular consultation and engagement across Scotland.

Over the past sixteen years a key priority for LGBT people

has been to remove inequality from the law. In that time the Equality Network has led successful campaigns to:

- ✓ Repeal Section 28
- ✓ Equalise the age of consent
- ✓ Allow gender recognition
- ✓ Introduce civil partnerships
- ✓ Secure protection from discrimination in employment & services
- ✓ Allow same-sex adoption, fostering and fertility treatment
- ✓ Establish hate crime laws

While our national campaigns have secured major steps forward in legal equality, our

work with key public services across Scottish society helps ensure that LGBT people receive equal treatment in their day-to-day lives.

## Equal Marriage

In 2008 we launched 'Equal Marriage', the UK's first major campaign for same-sex marriage. While we had called for equal partnership rights since we were founded, our renewed focus on marriage equality reflected the changing priorities of LGBT people in Scotland following significant changes in the law and society.

Five years on we are proud to have made the case for equal marriage, and to have played a key role in helping to build widespread public and political support.

## The Future for LGBT equality

The introduction of equal marriage is an historic step that will remove the last major piece of sexual orientation discrimination from Scots law and help reduce inequality more widely.

But there is still more work to be done to tackle prejudice and to ensure that LGBT people receive equal treatment across society.

In the coming months the Equality Network will be launching our 'Time for Change' report outlining the future priorities for LGBT equality in Scotland.

For more information on our work visit our website at:  
**[www.equality-network.org](http://www.equality-network.org)**



# EQUALITYNETWORK

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights in Scotland



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