

Written evidence from Robert Newcombe [HAB0191]

The issue here relates to rights and responsibilities. Plausible as the proposal sounds - any proposal that seeks to give the same rights to cohabiting couples as to married ones – without the responsibilities – can only tend to further erode the huge benefits of stability for our society that have accrued from the institution of marriage as it has been practiced in the UK for generations.

Creating another additional relationship status is completely unnecessary. Couples either choose to get married or not. Extending rights to an extra 'cohabiting' group undermines marriage and creates confusion.

The public commitment made in wedding vows gives families great stability. The Government should recognise and promote this, rather than undermine marriage by offering equivalent rights to those who choose not to be committed.

Parental separation is far higher for cohabitation than for marriage. More than half of children of cohabiting parents will experience their parents' separation by the age of five, but this is only 15 per cent for children of married parents.

When couples get married, they promise lifelong commitment to one another. This is why the law makes provision for the death of a spouse. Such rights should not automatically apply to cohabitants who have made no such promises.

There are no difficulties that cohabiting couples can't already address through other means. Inheritance concerns can be dealt with by writing a will, for example.

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