

Press Release

for immediate use

Church of England announce new discrimination rules against gay clergy

On the eve of London Pride weekend, the Church of England has formally excluded all clergy in Civil Partnerships from being considered as Bishops. While many church members suspected it, this is the first time the CofE has made a formal statement introducing such discrimination as official policy.

In a [press statement](#) the House of Bishops announced 2 reviews to look again at same-sex relationships, but added that in the meantime, "clergy in civil partnerships should not, at present, be nominated for Episcopal appointment". The reviews will take several years to complete.

Rev Benny Hazlehurst from Accepting Evangelicals said, "While we welcome the announcement of a new initiative to think again about the church's teaching on same-sex relationships, we deplore the increasing discrimination against gay and lesbian clergy who have subjected themselves to Church's teaching and discipline."

"Clergy in civil partnerships in the Church of England have already made huge sacrifices to continue in ministry. They have to commit themselves to a non-sexual relationship and affirm that they will abide by the teaching of the church. As such there are no grounds on which they should be excluded from senior posts."

Controversy has raged on the issue since leaked documents showed that covert discrimination already exists in choosing new Bishops. The immediate outcome of today's statement is to make that discrimination official.

ENDS

Note for Editors:

Accepting Evangelicals is an open network of Evangelical Christians who believe the time has come to move towards the acceptance of faithful, loving same-sex partnerships at every level of church life, and the development of a positive Christian ethic for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. www.acceptingevangelicals.org

The Church of England Press Statement can be found at <http://www.churchofengland.org/media-centre/news/2011/07/civil-partnerships-and-same-sex-relationships-%E2%80%93-a-statement-by-the-house-of-bishops-of-the-church-of-england.aspx>

For further comment and interviews, please contact:

Rev Benny Hazlehurst:

07788 426090

benny@acceptingevangelicals.org