

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Ref:

I know there are fears that religious organisations and individuals will be forced into conducting same-sex marriage ceremonies. This Government and I value the role of Christianity and believe it continues to play an important part in the culture, heritage and fabric of the British nation. I have always been very clear that religious organisations who do not wish to hold same-sex marriages should not and will not be forced to do so. Instead, religious organisations will be able to “opt-in” to host same-sex marriages.





We are also introducing a “quadruple lock” of legal protections to ensure that individuals, churches, synagogues and mosques are properly protected.

- First, legislation will state explicitly that no religious organisation or individual can be compelled to marry same-sex couples or to permit this to happen on their premises.
- Second, the Equality Act 2010 will be amended to ensure that no discrimination claims can be brought against religious organisations or individual ministers for refusing to marry same-sex couples or allowing their premises to be used for this purpose.
- Third, it will be unlawful for religious organisations or their ministers to marry same-sex couples unless they have expressly opted to do so.
- Finally, the Churches of England and Wales have explicitly stated that they do not wish to conduct same-sex marriage and it will therefore be illegal for these churches to marry same-sex couples, or to opt-in to doing so.

European law already puts religious freedom beyond doubt, but this “quadruple lock” will ensure that people who do not want to perform same-sex marriages will be under no obligation to do so.

You raise particular concerns about the role of teachers. Teachers will continue to have the clear right to express their own beliefs, or that of their faith, in a professional way. This includes the belief that marriage should be between one man and one woman.

No teacher will be required to promote or endorse views which go against their beliefs. As with any other area of the curriculum, teachers will of course be required to teach the factual position that under law marriage can be between opposite-sex couples and same-sex couples. This already happens in many schools – such as faith schools - where subjects such as divorce or sex and relationship education are taught with sensitivity. Parents will continue to have the right to withdraw their children from sex education lessons that they do not consider appropriate.

I apologise for the length of this letter but I did want to address as many of your points as possible. Let me assure you that I wholeheartedly count on your support as your local MP so I do hope you will reconsider your decision and thank you again for writing to me.

David Cameron