How would you characterise your views on the Bill in general?

In support

The Unitarian Church supports equal marriage and the need for other reforms.

How would you characterise your views on the introduction of same sex marriage, so that same sex couples can marry each other?

In support

Unitarian celebrants are willing to conduct same sex marriage ceremonies.

How would you characterise your views on putting belief celebrants on the same footing as religious celebrants?

In support

Generally supportive. Some form of accreditation of celebrants is required with a commitment to maintaining standards of practice.

How would you characterise your views on the arrangements for authorising celebrants to solemnise opposite sex and same sex marriage (including the opt-in procedures)?

In support

It is very important to us that our church can solemnise both opposite sex and same sex marriages. We accept that the liberty of conscience must be recognised and that opt-in procedures are necessary to fulfil reassurances given to the major faith communities.

How would you characterise your views on civil partnerships changing to marriages?

In support

In practice there is little observable difference between civil partnerships and civil marriages. It is important that those same sex couples who would choose a religious ceremony have that option.

How would you characterise your views on allowing civil marriage ceremonies to take place anywhere, other than religious premises, agreed between the couple and registrar?

In support
How would you characterise your views on allowing the religious and belief registration of civil partnerships?

In opposition

Our observation is that the opposition to marriage comes mainly from those who associate it with traditional religious and patriarchal connotations. In fact civil marriage is a contract between two people based on a public commitment. Those who seek a religious or belief ceremony are likely to be comfortable with being married rather than "civil partnered".

How would you characterise your views on allowing transgender persons to stay married when obtaining a full Gender Recognition Certificate, which provides legal recognition in the acquired gender?

In support

We welcome this change for the sake of those faced with the current dilemma.

Would you like to comment on the wider issue of protections for those in society who may have concerns about same sex marriage?

As we stated at 7, we accept that the liberty of conscience must be recognised and that opt-in procedures are necessary to fulfil reassurances given to the major faith communities.

Would you like to comment on the wider issue of freedom of speech?

We support protection for freedom of speech.

Would you like to comment on any other wider issues in relation to the Bill that are not mentioned above?

We observe a widespread confusion about the distinction between marriage and civil partnership. The origin of civil partnership was to provide for same-sex couples the same or similar rights and responsibilities as apply to those opposite sex couples who are married. We have observed no difference between a civil (non-religious) marriage ceremony and a civil partnership ceremony.

Are you responding as...

a celebrant
a faith/belief local group or congregation

Alastair Moodie
Glasgow Unitarian Church
14 August 2013