**Civil partnerships review – terms of reference and timetable**

**Purpose**

To review the operation and future of the Civil Partnership Act 2004 (CPA) in England and Wales.

**Objectives**

To carry out a full public consultation, assess the evidence and publish a report on

* The functioning and operation of the CPA in England and Wales;
* The future of civil partnerships in England and Wales, including whether they should apply to all couples; and
* Options and recommendations for changes to civil partnerships in England and Wales.

**Scope**

The review of the CPA will cover England and Wales and will

* Examine evidence about how well the current arrangements for civil partnerships are working, drawing on views from the public and organisations with an interest and international comparisons
* Assess the need and demand for civil partnerships when marriage is available to all, and whether any changes to civil partnership arrangements are necessary
* Identify all the implications of and issues raised by the identified options (including risks and devolution issues)
* Assess the costs and benefits of the options
* Make recommendations for any changes to the operation and future of the CPA.

**Timetable**

We are currently conducting policy analysis and gathering evidence to inform the document we intend to publish for full public consultation after the summer recess, subject to Royal Assent of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill. This consultation will seek views from stakeholders and the public and will run for approximately twelve weeks. We will also commission research where necessary to fill any gaps in the evidence base. We will then analyse responses to the consultation and all other evidence obtained to inform decisions, and publish a report of the outcome as soon as a decision is taken. We anticipate that this will happen by winter 2014.