

## **Benefits Service - Civil Partnership**

We explain the effect of the Civil Partnership Act on your entitlement to Housing and Council Tax Benefit.

### **Civil Partnership Act**

The Civil Partnership Act came into force on 5th December 2005.

Any same sex couple wishing to form a civil partnership will be able to give notice of their intention to register from that date.

For Department of Works and Pensions benefits, **including Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit**, this means that same sex couples, who have formed a civil partnership or who are living together as if they were civil partners, will be treated in the same way as opposite sex couples who are married or are living together as husband and wife.

The new definition of a partner is:

- a person you are married to or a person you live with as if you are married to them, or
- a civil partner or a person you live with as if you are civil partners.

All questions regarding your partner on the Benefit application form should now be completed using the above definition.

From 5th December 2005, failure to inform the Benefits Department dealing with your Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit claim that you are forming a civil partnership or are living together as civil partners could mean that your Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit is overpaid and you may be asked to repay it.

If you would like further information on this or would like to discuss your circumstances, please telephone the Benefits Service on **0845 603 0595** to speak to a member of the team.