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**News Release**

29th January 2016

**Couple Vow to Appeal High Court Civil Partnership Ruling**

A heterosexual couple who want to enter into a civil partnership rather than marry have today lost a challenge at the High Court.

Rebecca Steinfeld and Charles Keidan argued that they are being discriminated against and that without the ability to enter into a civil partnership they would be forced to enter into marriage against their will in order to have their relationship legally recognised.

However, Mrs Justice Andrews dismissed their judicial review, stating that taking measures to amend the Civil Partnerships Act without doing further research would be taking a leap in the dark which could turn out to be an extremely expensive mistake. The couple have said that they intend to appeal.

This case came about because of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013. Prior to this, same sex couples who wished to form a legal relationship could not marry but instead could form a civil partnership.

Chairman and family law specialist at Andrew & Co LLP Julie Bailey explained: “The Government was and still is of the view that a civil partnership is a relationship which was specifically created and designed for same sex couples to give them similar legal recognition to that afforded by marriage, which at the time was not open to them. It was never intended for civil partnerships for opposite sex couples as an alternative to marriage.

“Now that they can marry that stance does not hold water as same sex couples have more options available to them in terms of the legal recognition of their relationship than opposite sex couples.

“What is more, the law in relation to couples who live together but are not married is very different from that which applies to married couples. The courts’ powers to deal with things when cohabiting couples separate is limited and based on land and trust law - very different to the wide discretion the court has on divorce. Unfortunately, cohabiting couples are not always aware of this and it can lead to inequalities.

“Even if a cohabiting couple enter into a cohabitation agreement to ensure fairness while they are living together and then separate that does not bestow the same inheritance rights that a civil partnership does.

“In 2014 the Government carried out a review of civil partnerships, but as the results were inconclusive it said it would wait and see what practical impact the 2013 Act has on civil partnerships. The prospect of scrapping civil partnerships is certainly an interesting one as it poses a question as to how the Government will deal with existing civil partnerships. The outcome of the appeal, if it goes ahead, will be of interest to many.”

**Ends**

**Notes to Editors**

* [Andrew & Co LLP](http://www.andrew-solicitors.co.uk) is one of the longest established independent law firms in the East Midlands, having been set up in 1832.
* It offers a comprehensive range of legal services to private individuals and businesses across a wide range of sectors including renewable energy, agriculture, personal injury, conveyancing, charity and not-for-profit, family and employment law.
* Andrew & Co has 60 staff based at its offices in on Nettleham Road in Lincoln and Kirkgate in Newark.

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