



CRISPIN BLUNT MP
Member of Parliament for Reigate

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Dominic Raab
Lord Chancellor
Ministry of Justice
102 Petty France
London SW1H 9AJ

27 January 2022

Dear Lord Chancellor,

We are writing to implore you to legally recognise humanist marriages as part of the ongoing reform to enable outdoor marriages.

Humanist couples in England and Wales simply ask to have the same freedom of choice to marry in line with their beliefs as their religious counterparts. The Government has had the power to legally recognise humanist marriages since the 2013 Marriage Act but has yet to act.

The recent legal case on humanist marriages, *Harrison*, found the current law to be discriminatory. However, the judge stopped short of issuing a declaration of incompatibility as the Government stated it wished to avoid undertaking piecemeal reform of marriage law ahead of the Law Commission's ongoing review on marriage. Inconsistencies around who could and could not marry outdoors were particularly cited as a reason why such piecemeal reform would be undesirable. However, this argument has been fundamentally undermined by the Government's recent announcement of a consultation to introduce outdoor marriage.

We see no reason for humanists to wait any longer. Granting legal recognition would strengthen families and marriage as an institution, give an economic boost to the Covid-stressed marriage industry, and is well supported by public opinion. It would bring England and Wales into line with Scotland, Northern Ireland, Ireland, Jersey, and Guernsey, which have all granted such recognition.

This is not just an issue for humanists. It matters to all of us, of all religions and beliefs, as it is a simple matter of freedom of belief. We urge you to legally recognise humanist marriages, even if on an interim basis, ahead of the implementation of the Law Commission's review on marriage.



Yours sincerely,

Crispin Blunt MP

Baroness Bakewell DBE

Co-Chairs, All-Party Parliamentary Humanist Group

Co-signed by:

Aaron Bell MP
Rehman Chishti MP
Janet Daby MP
Sir Ed Davey MP
Philip Davies MP
Dame Angela Eagle MP
Wera Hobhouse MP
Dame Margaret Hodge MP
Kevin Hollinrake MP
Christine Jardine MP
Ben Lake MP
Clive Lewis MP
Caroline Lucas MP
Kerry McCarthy MP
John McDonnell MP
Layla Moran MP
Luke Pollard MP
Lloyd Russell-Moyle MP
Virendra Sharma MP
Tommy Sheppard MP
Andy Slaughter MP
Jeff Smith MP
Karl Turner MP
Lord Aberdare DL
Baroness Barker
Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle
Lord Birt
Baroness Blackstone

Baroness Burt of Solihull
Lord Cashman CBE
Lord Desai
Lord Dubs
Baroness Featherstone
Lord Foulkes of Cumnock
Baroness Greengross
Lord Haworth
Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town
Lord Jones of Cheltenham
Lord Low of Dalston
Baroness Massey
Baroness Meacher
Baroness Murphy
Lord Rooker
Lord Soley
Lord Stevenson of Coddanham
Lord Taverne
Baroness Taylor of Bolton
Baroness Thornton
Lord Trees
Lord Warner
Baroness Whitaker