



## **Is the law letting cohabitants down?**

The Law Commission's consultation paper "Cohabitation: The Financial Consequences of Relationship Breakdown" will be published on 31 May 2006.

The Government has asked the Law Commission to examine the options for reforming the law that applies to cohabiting couples on separation and death. We are publishing this consultation paper to invite the public's views on the difficult issues raised and so assist us in making recommendations to Parliament for reform.

Stuart Bridge, the Commissioner leading the project, said

More people live together outside marriage than ever before. The law that applies if cohabitants separate is unacceptably complex. It often gives rise to results that many people would consider unfair.

We believe that there is a strong case for introducing more suitable financial remedies where cohabiting couples have children, and possibly in other circumstances.

We hope that this consultation paper will provide a basis for discussion about (1) whether there should be reform; (2) if so, how a new scheme of remedies between cohabitants could be designed; and (3) to whom it should apply.

The consultation paper rejects the view that cohabitants should have access to the financial regime that applies on divorce. Instead, it proposes a self-standing scheme of financial remedies for certain cohabitants on separation available only in strictly limited circumstances. The scheme would not apply to all cohabiting couples.

The scope of this project and further information (including details of how to respond to the consultation) are available from <http://www.lawcom.gov.uk/cohabitation.htm>.

The consultation period continues until 30 September 2006.

**ENDS**

### **Notes for Editors**

1. The Law Commission is a non-political independent body, set up by Parliament in 1965 to keep all the law of England and Wales under review, and to recommend reform where it is needed.
2. Further information about the legal issues currently arising from couples living together are available on the Advice Services Alliance website [www.advicenow.org.uk](http://www.advicenow.org.uk)
3. For all press queries please contact:  
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