

Wedding stationer refuses service to gay couple because of Jehovah's Witness beliefs

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PinkNews Exclusive

A gay couple was refused service by a wedding invitation company, as the owner is a Jehovah's Witness.

A couple, who have been together for ten years, Gary O'Reilly and his fiancé, said they had "waited so long" to be able to marry, and were excited when the law changed in March in England and Wales.

After picking designs, and contacting Jill Wilson, who runs Just For You Invitations, the couple were told she could not offer her services to the couple, because of her religious beliefs.

Ms Wilson wrote in an email to the couple: "So sorry to let you both down but I am a Jehovah's Witness and therefore can't make you invitations."

The Chairman of MyLawyer Richard Cohen, who is also the legal adviser for PinkNews said: "The decision by Just For You Invitation appears that it could be in breach of the Sexual Orientation regulations of the Equality Act, which makes it clear that business cannot discriminate on the grounds of the sexual orientation of their customers or potential clients."

A spokesperson from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) told PinkNews: "If anyone thinks that they have been discriminated against unlawfully because of sexual orientation in respect of provision of services they can take steps to enforce their rights.

"A first step would be to make contact with someone who can give them advice in an individual case, such as the Equality and Advisory Support Service, and that's what our advice would be to anyone who thinks they have been discriminated against."

Mr O'Reilly told PinkNews he was upset at the refusal, saying: "We would understand if her company was solely aimed at her religious group – but it's not. She does not refuse anyone due to their religion yet she is quite happy to refuse us because of our sexuality."

Wilson's website states: "Jill is a qualified Food Technology teacher. She has recently left the teaching profession to concentrate on her already established wedding stationery and wedding cake business. She also now runs cookery classes."

When asked to comment, Wilson declined, other than to say that the Elders from her congregation were to consult with her on the issue.

The couple have since chosen a different company to provide their invitations.

A gay couple who were prevented from staying in a double room by the owners of a Christian guesthouse last year said they were "delighted" that the UK Supreme Court ruled in their favour.

In November, the court rejected a legal challenge by Peter and Hazelmary Bull.



The company's owner refused to offer her services to the gay couple

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